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CONTENTS

Presidential Tribute iv

Editorial v

Festschrift for Dr. F. Alan Tomlinson

ARTICLES

What is the Perfect State? Investigating the Greek Perfect Tense-Form in the Epistle to the Hebrews
TODD R. CHIPMAN 1-25

The Pre-Eminence of Active Metaphors: Functional Linguistics and Earthen Vessels in 2 Corinthians 4:7
C. ERIC TURNER 26-50

An Introduction to the Hermeneutics of Old Testament Narrative
WILLIAM K. BECHTOLD III 51-73

Participating in the Life of God: Exploring the Trinitarian Foundation of 1 Peter's Missional Identity
KELLY D. LIEBENGOOD 74-91

Wholeness in Intertextual Perspective: James' Use of Scripture in Developing a Theme
DARIAN R. LOCKETT 92-106

Phoebe, the Letter-Carrier of Romans, and the Impact of Her Role on Biblical Theology
TERRY L. WILDER 107-118

Listen to Him: The Exhortation of Matthew 17:5 in the Context of the Transfiguration Narrative
THORVALD B. MADSEN 119-130

Sacrifice, Monotheism and Christology
JOHN J. R. LEE 131-147

Shalom and Khessed
D. MARK DeVINE 148-161

BOOK REVIEWS

Preston Sprinkle, *A People to Be Loved: Why Homosexuality is Not Just an Issue* (2015)
(Reviewed by Jason Alligood) 162-165

Thomas E. Bevan, *The Psychobiology of Transsexualism and Transgenderism: A New View Based on Scientific Evidence* (2015)
(Reviewed by Alan Branch) 165-168

D. A. Carson, *The Enduring Authority of the Christian Scriptures* (2016)
(Reviewed by Todd R. Chipman) 168-171

Steven W. Smith, *Recapturing the Voice of God: Shaping Sermons Like Scripture* (2015)
(Reviewed by Jason P. Kees) 172-174

Vern Sheridan Poythress, *Chance and the Sovereignty of God: A God-Centered Approach to Probability and Random Events* (2014)
(Reviewed by James J. Kragenbring) 175-177

Dan DeWitt, *Jesus or Nothing* (2014)
(Reviewed by Gregory E. Lamb) 178-180

R. Albert Mohler, Jr. et al., *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy* (2013)
(Reviewed by Steve W. Lemke) 181-183

Stephen C. Carlson, *The Text of Galatians and Its History (2015)*
(Reviewed by Daniel S. McNamara) 184-187

Owen D. Strachan, *Awakening the Evangelical Mind: An Intellectual History of the Neo-Evangelical Movement (2015)*
(Reviewed by John Y. May) 188-192

Jonathan Leeman, *Don't Fire Your Church Members: The Case for Congregationalism (2015)*
(Reviewed by Andrew William Steinbeck) 193-195

Books Received 196

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Apostle Paul's immortal words to his son in the faith, Timothy, "Teach these things to faithful men who will be able to teach others also," ring throughout the ages, resonating with every generation of Christian discipleship. In countless churches, seminaries, and ministerial settings, the Apostle's mandate is fulfilled day-by-day. Yet, there are rare occasions when an individual so uniquely fulfills the apostle's mandate, as to stand out above the rest, and merit a particular honor like a dedicated festschrift. Dr. Alan Tomlinson is such a man.

Throughout his 21-year classroom ministry at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Dr. Tomlinson has consistently fulfilled the spirit of II Timothy 2:2. His resolute commitment to the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of God's Word, and his passion to transmit it rightly has been a consistent mark of Dr. Tomlinson's ministry. He is a man known for his impassioned classroom presentations, his sacrificial devotion to students and, most of all, a humble and cheerful walk with the Lord Jesus Christ. These positive traits, and so many more, make Dr. Tomlinson a true luminary in the classroom–a man who will not be soon forgotten by his students or the generations who follow them.

Some students choose classes or professors because they have to take them. Dr. Tomlinson's students *got* to take him. Indeed, Dr. Tomlinson has mustered a tribe-like following, always enjoying a subculture of students who long to love the Scriptures as he loves them, and to know the Scriptures as Dr. Tomlinson knows them.

Thus, it is fitting and right that this issue of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's Journal of Theology be devoted to Dr. Alan Tomlinson. We are deeply grateful for his many years of service, and we are confident that Dr. Tomlinson's influence will persist onward through the many students he has touched in the past, and the many students he will no-doubt continue to touch in the future.

Jason K. Allen
President
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

EDITORIAL

Welcome to a very special issue of the *Midwestern Journal of Theology*. As has already been noted, we are honoring the contribution of a beloved professor at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Dr. Alan F. Tomlinson with this, our Fall 2016 *MJT*. The articles have all been submitted by his colleagues, friends and former students. I would like to again, thank all those who have given willingly of their time, to make this issue a reality. Special thanks are due to Dr. Todd Chipman, for his initial vision of such a tribute, and for his commissioning of the articles. Thanks go to Dr. Jason K. Allen, for his moving tribute to Dr. Tomlinson, and to Dr. Jason Duesing, for his valuable oversight of the Journal.

We have eight scholarly yet helpful pieces in this issue, all of which are reflective of Dr. Tomlinson's passion, the Word of God. We begin with Dr. Chipman's fruit of research into linguistic studies, with his 'What is the Perfect State', where he investigates linguistic aspects of the Epistle to the Hebrews. This is followed by Dr. Eric Turner's investigation into the use of Metaphors in scripture, especially in 2 Corinthians 4:7. Dr. Bechtold then expertly introduces us to the hermeneutics of Old Testament Narrative. 1 Peter then becomes the focus, as Dr. Liebengood explores the Trinitarian foundation of that Epistle's missional identity and in so doing, seeks to help his readers participate more fully, in the Life of God. Dr. Lockett then steers us towards another Epistle, as he reveals how James uses Scripture in developing a theme. We then shift from biblical books per se, to a study of a person, namely the letter-carrier Phoebe, with Dr. Wilder's analysis of her impact on biblical theology. Another of Midwestern's own, Dr. Madsen, then gives the very pointed challenge - 'listen to Him', as he carefully unpacks the exhortation given in Matthew 17:5, in the context of the Transfiguration narrative. Our penultimate piece is from the pen of Dr. Lee, with his research into the areas of sacrifice, Monotheism and Christology. Dr. Mark DeVine provides the final article, with his fresh analysis of the twin concepts of *Shalom* and *Khessed*.

This special issue of the *MJT* again concludes, with several relevant and thought provoking book reviews, edited by Dr. Blake Hearson.

Midwestern Journal of Theology: 15.2 (2016): 1-25

What is the Perfect State? Investigating the Greek Perfect Tense-Form in the Epistle to the Hebrews[1]

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The Perfect Conversation

The July 2015 Tyndale Fellowship Conference, "Linguistics and the Greek Verb," hosted by Tyndale House and sponsored in part by the Faculty of Divinity of Cambridge University and Faithlife Corporation, points up the recent fervor surrounding verbal aspect studies.[2] Papers there follow twenty-five years of research since the publication of Stanley E. Porter's and Buist M. Fanning's conflicting dissertations on verbal aspect in 1989 and 1990 respectively. In his 1993 review of Porter's and Fanning's dissertations, Moisés Silva concludes with wit:

> Something is rotten in the state of Denmark if two fine scholars, after their thorough and well-informed research, come to such diametrically opposed conclusions. I for one am not at all persuaded by either of them. At any rate, this difference of

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[1] An excerpt of this paper was presented at the Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Atlanta, GA, 17 November, 2015. I wish to express gratitude for comments received there, and specifically to Steven E. Runge and Constantine R. Campbell for their helpful and kind dialogue before the meeting.

[2] Essays forthcoming in *The Greek Verb Revisited: A Fresh Approach for Biblical Exegesis*, eds. Steven E. Runge and Christopher J. Fresch; Lexham Press.

> opinion gives the strongest support to the view that exegetes and pastors are well advised to say as little as possible about aspect.[3]

But Porter and Fanning foray a trail of Greek language and linguistics studies that many have traversed since. It is not within the scope of this essay to restate the full conversation concerning aspect.[4] One noteworthy event provides a point of departure. At the 2013 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, the Greek Language and Linguistics Unit hosted Porter, Fanning and Constantine R. Campbell to present their positions on the Perfect tense-form in a session titled, "The Perfect Storm." There it was noted emphatically that the three presenters differed not only in their conclusions but also in research methodology. Reviewing Porter's and Fanning's arguments, and the more recent proposals by Campbell, will establish a frame of reference for briefly analyzing aspect of the Perfect in four representative texts in Hebrews (2:8-9; 7:4-10; 7:26-28 and 9:6-10). Concerning Hebrews, B. F. Westcott wrote that, "the use of the perfect in the Epistle is worthy of careful study. In every case its full force can be felt."[5] It is noted *infra* that Hebrews qualifies as an apt research locus of verbal aspect of the Perfect tense-form because of the quantity of Perfects written in an imperfective verbal matrix, surrounded mainly by Present tense-form verbals.

Stanley E. Porter

Porter's initial publication on verbal aspect[6] set the course for verbal aspect studies in the modern era.[7] Porter applies principles of

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[3] Moisés Silva, "A Response to Porter and Fanning on Verbal Aspect," in *Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics: Open Questions in Current Research* (eds. S. E. Porter and D. A. Carson; JSNT 80; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 82.

[4] For a survey, see S. E. Porter and A. W. Pitts, "New Testament Greek Language and Linguistics in Recent Research," *CBR* 6 (2008): 214-55.

[5] B. F. Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews: the Greek Text with Notes and Essays (London: MacMillan, 1889), 177.

[6] S. E. Porter, Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament with Reference to Tense and Mood (SBG 1; New York: Peter Lang), 1989.

[7] Campbell highlights Porter's influence, writing "since Porter, one of the most important elements of the modern period of Greek studies is its engagement with linguistics in all areas of investigation, not just lexical semantics and verbal

systemic linguistics to Greek verbs, observing that tense-forms involve legitimate choice—a speaker/writer's employment of specific words and grammatical forms and the rejection of others—to transmit meaning of a particular verb. Here Porter's thesis should be quoted at length:

> Since systemic linguistics deals with language as it is actually evidenced in usage, systemic linguistics takes seriously the dictum of structural semantics that an element is only meaningful if it is defined wholly in terms of other elements. A given linguistic phenomenon that is wholly predetermined, i.e. there is no choice between this and some other grammatical unit, offers little for a discussion of meaning...Thus semantic choices may be defined in terms of what is not chosen, in contrast with the items that are chose, emphasizing that a distinction is made, rather than striving to find an appropriate metalanguage to define every semantic category fully.[8]

Porter suggests that in each instance a speaker/writer deliberately chooses a tense-form in order to encode their view of the action—perfective, imperfective or stative—without necessarily designating any temporal reference.[9] As it is the case that the same verbal form may

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aspect" (Constantine R. Campbell, *Advances in the Study of Greek*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 46.

[8] Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament*, 12-13. In, "In Defense of Verbal Aspect" (S. E. Porter, *Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics: Open Questions in Current Research* [eds. S. E. Porter and D. A. Carson; JSNT 80; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993], 28-29, 33), Porter argues that Biblical scholars have been slow to adopt or employ research from related fields, including linguistics, which could advance understanding of the Biblical text.

[9] Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament*, 107. "I am concerned to explicate what any of the verb tenses can be made by a speaker to do. The semantic category of verbal aspect can be imposed upon a process by a speaker no matter when it may have occurred or how it may have actually occurred" (Porter, "In Defense of Verbal Aspect," 44). Porter follows Bernard Comrie (*Aspect: An Introduction to the Study of Verbal Aspect and Related Problems*, CLT [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976]) in arguing that the Perfect is distinct from the Aorist and Present in that each has its own stem and thus semantic independence (S. E. Porter, "Greek Linguistics and Lexicography," in *Understanding the Times: Essays in Honor of D. A. Carson* [eds. Andreas J.

appear in any number of contexts and deictic spheres, the constant factor that needs to be observed concerning Greek verbs is aspect—the speaker/writer's subjective portrayal of the action.[10]

Porter devotes fifty of his 545 pages to analysis of the Perfect tense-form, concluding that it semantically grammaticalizes stativity without distinct temporal reference.[11] He argues that because the Perfect is morphologically distinct from the Present and Aorist, having (1) consistent reduplication of the stem vowel, and (2) the lack of a connecting vowel between the stem and the personal endings (i.e. it is athematic), with the result that the Perfect semantically encodes a unique verbal aspect: atemporal stativity.[12] "The Perfect is used to grammaticalize a state of affairs, the Present a process in progress, and the Aorist a process seen as complete, with the Perfect the most heavily

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Köstenberger and Robert W. Yarbrough; Wheaton: Crossway, 2011], 49). Campbell argues that Porter's tripartite aspectual theory is in the minority position in the current debate, most scholars advocating just perfective and imperfective aspects (Constantine R. Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect in Biblical Greek*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 32, 48-49; Campbell, *Advances in Greek*, 118-19). Porter counters by listing several linguists who sympathize with a tripartite aspectual frame for the Greek verb (S. E. Porter, "The Perfect Tense-Form and Stative Aspect: The Meaning of the Greek Perfect Tense-Form in the Greek Verbal System," in *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament: Studies in Tools, Methods, and Practice* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015], 205 n. 34). Campbell argues that if stativity is a semantic value of the Perfect, as Porter suggests, then it must be expressed in every occurrence of the Perfect, translated in English by the "-ness" suffix or the like, unnatural for many exegetical decisions (Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect*, 48-49). Porter counters that "the principal shortfall" of Fanning and Campbell's theories "is that they fail to recognize the triaspectual structure of the Greek verbal system, which necessitates that they contrive unconvincing explanations of what is in fact more easily explainable in other ways, especially in terms of stative aspect" (Porter, "The Perfect Tense-Form and Stative Aspect," 209).

[10] Porter argues the same in subsequent publications focused on not just verbal aspect but Greek grammar in general. In *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (London: Sheffield Academic, 2007, 28), Porter writes: "verbs function in Greek as indicators of the speaker or writer's view of a particular action, regardless of how that action might 'objectively' have transpired in the real world or 'when' it might have transpired."

[11] Porter, Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, 99-102; 254-70.

[12] Ibid., 247-48.

marked."[13] By marked, Porter means both the morphological features just noted, and the fact that the Perfect occurs much less frequently than the Present or Aorist, signaling, in a systemic-linguistics model, a speaker/writer's deliberate choice of the Perfect tense-form.[14] The Perfect semantically encodes a state of affairs that the author/speaker desires the audience to see as prominent in the surrounding context.

How is the audience to understand the temporal framework of the action described by the Perfect? Porter argues that temporal reference of the verb (past, present, future, omnitemporal, timeless)[15] is understood by deictic contextual factors, including the tense-forms of surrounding verbs.[16] Thus when the Perfect is surrounded by past-referring verbs, it often describes a state or condition occurring in past time.[17] Porter suggests that the present-time use of the Perfect surfaces more frequently in the active dialogues of narrative NT texts than in the discursive rhetoric of the epistles.[18]

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[13] Ibid., 258. Porter elaborates elsewhere that "semantic markedness forms a cline, from the semantics of the aorist to the present to the perfect. This is the movement from the undifferentiated whole or completed action, grammaticalized by the aorist; to the contoured (whether internally or not) or progressive action of the present; to the most highly defined, complex, and contoured of the perfect, what I have labeled as the stative" ("The Perfect Tense-Form and Stative Aspect," 212).

[14] Campbell questions the accuracy of Porter's theory of markedness noting however that the Perfect "generally may be found in comparatively significant positions" (*Advances in Greek*, 128).

[15] Porter, Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, 260-70

[16] Ibid., 260. This becomes the rub of Fanning's argument with Porter, Fanning suggesting that particular deictic temporal markers surface around a particular tense-form because that tense from semantically encodes that temporal frame, exceptions being explained through additional contextual factors (Buist M. Fanning, "Approaches to Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek: Issues in Definition and Method," in *Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics: Open Questions in Current Research* [JSNT 80; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993], 59).

[17] Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament*, 260; Porter, "The Perfect Tense-Form and Stative Aspect," 208.

[18] Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament*, 266. Porter argues that in narrative, the aorist serves as the background tense, and the more prominent events or descriptions are described with the Present or Perfect. In exposition, the present serves as the base tense-form, supported by the aorist or further

Porter's *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament* is noteworthy in its own right but it is frequently mentioned along with the contrasting views of Fanning expressed in *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*.[19] Their positions have led to what is known as "The Porter/Fanning Debate."[20] Understanding Fanning's propositions regarding verbal aspect is foundational for interacting with the more recent arguments of Campbell, analyzed in what follows.

Buist M. Fanning

Fanning's approach to verbal aspect begins from a different frame of reference than Porter. Where Porter investigates verbal aspect in light of systemic linguistics, Fanning seeks to understand aspect in light of the various contextual factors of Greek verbs in the New Testament. Fanning states that the purpose of his work "is to present a more detailed analysis of New Testament verbal aspect than is given by the standard grammars, using insights from contemporary research in linguistics and in NT studies."[21] He concludes that "fully subjective choices between aspects are not common, since the nature of the occurrence of the procedural character of the verb or verb-phrase can restrict the way an occurrence is viewed by the speaker."[22] Fanning argues that since, semantically, aspect must be understood in connection with lexical and grammatical features, pragmatically aspect has temporal implications. The pragmatics of aspect thus give rise to nuanced designations within each tense-form (e.g., historic-present, futuristic-aorist).[23]

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heightened by the perfect tense-form and stativity ("In Defense of Verbal Aspect," 35).

[19] Oxford Theological Monographs; Oxford: Clarendon, 1990.

[20] See D. A. Carson, "An Introduction to the Porter/Fanning Debate," in *Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics: Open Questions in Current Research* (eds. S. E. Porter and D. A. Carson; JSNT 80; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 18-25. Campbell notes that the Porter/Fanning debate casts such a shadow over aspectual studies, that all subsequent scholarship is positioned in relation to their views (Campbell, *Advances in Greek*, 47).

[21] Fanning, Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek, 6.

[22] Ibid., 421.

[23] See also Fanning, "Approaches to Verbal Aspect," 46-62.

Fanning argues that aspect of the Greek verb corresponds to either the Present (imperfective aspect) or Aorist (perfective aspect), these functioning in contradiction. He gives the Future and Perfect less attention, because, "in purely aspectual terms the perfect is secondary to the primary contrast of present and aorist,"[24] and the Future does not encode aspect in any way. Fanning notes that like the Present, the Imperfect tense-form encodes continuous aspect—although always signifying past time—and he thus analyzes the Imperfect with the Present.

The thrust of Fanning's argument is that to fully understand an author's oppositional choice between the imperfective aspect of the Present tense and the Perfective aspect of the aorist, one must evaluate corresponding lexical, semantic and contextual factors of the verb. He states: "as a matter of fact, verbal aspect is part of an immensely complex system of interactions between various elements of meaning, and simple definitions are not sufficient for guiding one through such a tangle."[25] It can thus be said that Fanning argues for a holistic approach to understanding aspect. In the conclusion of *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek* he writes:

> The primary argument of this book has been that understanding verbal aspect requires a grasp of both the basic meanings of the aspects themselves and their function in combination with other linguistic and contextual features...More particularly, it has been argued that aspect should be analyzed both at a *definition* level and at a *function* level (italics original).[26]

Fanning's analysis of the historic present, which he argues is "clearly past occurrence as though it were simultaneous with the writer/reader which produces the vivid or immediate effect. In this regard it is similar to the

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[24] Fanning, Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek, 421.

[25] Ibid., 4. Fanning thus prioritizes the pragmatics of aspect over semantics—contra Porter, discussed *supra*. Responding to Fanning, Porter argues that the system of Greek verbs he espouses "does not suffer exceptions gladly" ("In Defense of Verbal Aspect," 34). Campbell observes that how tightly or loosely interpreters value the semantics of aspect will likely determine if Porter's or Fanning's argument about aspect gains their approval (*Advances in Greek*, 70).

[26] Fanning, Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek, 421.

instantaneous present, in that the *temporal* meaning predominates and neutralizes the *aspectual* force"[27] (italics original), underscores his differences with Porter.[28] Fanning's analysis of the Perfect gives less attention to aspect and more to the 'complexities' of the tense-form. He writes:

> The perfect in NT Greek is a complex verbal category denoting, in its basic sense, a state which results from a prior occurrence. Thus, it combines three elements within its invariant meaning: the *Aktionsart*-feature of stative situation, the tense-feature of anteriority, and the aspect of summary viewpoint concerning the occurrence.[29]

This Fanning writes at the conclusion of just eight pages of fresh analysis of the Perfect tense-form—most of which is an argument that stativity be understood as an *Aktionsart* feature (not an aspectual one), and that the perfect generally has temporal anteriority extending to the present.[30] Campbell questions Fanning's conclusion regarding the Perfect, noting that Fanning does not address Perfects that are not stative or Perfects that are not present in temporal reference.[31]

Constantine R. Campbell

Campbell is foremost among those scholars combing the trails blazed by Porter and Fanning. His initial research is presented in *Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative: Soundings in the Greek of the*

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[27] Ibid., 228

[28] Fanning's conclusion regarding the historic present has led a few subsequent analyses of aspect to disagree with him on various levels. Besides Porter, see Rodney J. Decker, *Temporal Deixis of the Greek Verb in the Gospel of Mark with Reference to Verbal Aspect* (Studies in Biblical Greek 10; New York: Peter Lang, 2001).

[29] Fanning, Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek, 119-20.

[30] Ibid., 112-13.

[31] Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect*, 49-50. Campbell argues that Fanning takes up the traditional *Aktionsart* understanding that the Perfect semantically encodes past action with present effects and attempts to cast it as an aspectual, semantic value (*Advances in Greek*, 118).

New Testament.[32] Campbell identifies a default pattern in the various indicative tense-forms and strands of narrative literature: the Aorist correlates with mainline material; the Imperfect and Pluperfect with offline material; the Present, Perfect, and Future with direct discourse; and the Present and Perfect with both indirect and authorial discourse.[33] From these patterns Campbell employs recursive methodology, turning attention back to verbal aspect; the tense-form patterns he observes in narrative are used to define the semantic aspectual range of each tense-form regardless of genre.[34] Campbell argues that spatial values best describe the viewpoint (aspect) employed by the speaker/writer in choosing amongst the various tense-forms:

> The aorist indicative encodes perfective aspect and the spatial value of remoteness. The future indicative encodes perfective aspect and temporal futurity. The present indicative encodes imperfective aspect and the spatial value of proximity, while the imperfect encodes imperfective aspect and remoteness. The perfect and pluperfect both encode imperfective aspect and the spatial values of heightened proximity and heightened remoteness respectively.[35]

Campbell's paradigm reflects Porter's in that, save the Future, Campbell does not identify temporal reference as a semantic value of verbs. He chooses rather to employ spatial categories to describe their semantic aspectual character. Though Campbell admits that remote/near spatial values often accord remote/near temporal reference, the spatial designations are semantically uncancelable, always describing the aspectual value of the Greek verb.[36] Campbell tests his findings from

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[32] SBG 13; New York: Peter Lang, 2007.

[33] Ibid., 241-42; See also Campbell, *Advances in Greek*, 124-25.

[34] Porter argues that Campbell's analysis of narrative literature, representing just half of the Perfects in the New Testament, is insufficient to arrive at a semantic value of this tense form ("Greek Linguistics and Lexicography," 50).

[35] Campbell, Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative, 241-42.

[36] "An event that is distant will be interrupted first spatially (it's the remote past), but will also have temporal implications for the way the language user thinks about the event (it happened a long time ago). In Greek, the verb primarily conveys remoteness or proximity and yet has temporal implications

Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative by investigating verbal aspect in the oblique moods, the results of which are published in *Verbal Aspect and Non-Indicative Verbs: Further Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament*.[37] In the latter volume, Campbell argues that the oblique moods demonstrate similar aspectual implicatures as the indicatives, but at the smaller, clausal level.[38]

Campbell notes that of all the tense-forms, the Perfect opportunes the greatest level of exegetical volatility.[39] "How one understands the semantic nature of the perfect indicative will affect each of its 836 instances in the New Testament."[40] He argues that the correspondence between the Perfect and the Present in discourse sections of narrative text is so regular as to exhibit a fixed pattern of use.[41] From this pattern Campbell argues, recursively, that the Perfect semantically, always, resembles the aspectual character of the Present.[42]

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for our thinking" (Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect*, 135). See also, Campbell, *Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative*, 26-27.

[37] SBG 15; New York: Peter Lang, 2008.

[38] "The indicative mood by default retains the function of aspectually delineating the verbal structural shape of narrative, while non-indicatives generally function within that structural shape. Consequently, the differences between genres—such as narrative and epistolary literature—make little discernible difference to the function of verbal aspect in non-indicative verbs" (Campbell, *Verbal Aspect and Non-Indicative Verbs*, 123).

[39] Campbell, Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative, 161.

[40] Campbell, *Advances in Greek*, 118.

[41] Campbell, *Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative*, 184-89. Porter recognizes that the temporal frame of the Perfect is influenced by, among other deictic factors, the temporal frame of the surrounding verbal tense-forms (*Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament*, 260), observing that "the major problem remaining for a theory of aspect of the Perfect is to account for uses of the Perfect in at least past and present-referring contexts" (ibid., 252).

[42] In *Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative*, Campbell states that the literary genre of discourse attracts the imperfectivity of the Perfect tense-form. But in *Advances in Greek*, he states that all tense-form patterns are established by the aspectual character of the tense-forms themselves: "the patterns of indicative verbal distribution are created through the functionality of verbal aspect" (*Advances in Greek*, 125). So initially the generic patterns lead Campbell to uncover the semantic aspectual value of the tense-forms, and then later it is proposed that the aspectual values themselves determine the generic patterns.

Thus the Perfect, due to its relationship with the Present, is aspectually imperfective.[43] How does the Present then differ from the Perfect? Campbell argues that a speaker/writer employs the Perfect in order to describe the viewpoint of the action as having a higher degree of spatial proximity than the Present, events unfolding in full view.[44] Semantically, the Perfect can be understood as an enhanced Present with pragmatic implicatures of intensification or prominence.[45] Campbell's thesis that at the semantic level the Perfect tense-form is aspectually imperfective thus stands in contrast to both Porter and Fanning, who see the Perfect as aspectually stative or temporally anterior with abiding effects, respectively.

How does Campbell understand the temporal reference of the Perfect? He suggests that the imperfective aspect of the Perfect allows it a high degree of flexibility in terms of temporal reference.[46] Campbell draws on Fanning's argument that the Perfect interacts with various factors in a verb's context so as to demonstrate predictable patters of usage in a text,[47] and states that "the combination of aspect, lexeme, and context work together to create pragmatic *Aktionsart* expressions, or implicatures."[48]

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[43] See also Trevor V. Evans, "Future Directions for Aspect Studies in Ancient Greek," in *Biblical Greek Language and Lexicography: Essays in Honor of Fredrick W. Danker*, ed. Bernard A. Taylor (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 205-06.

[44] Campbell, Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative, 195-99; idem., Basics of Verbal Aspect, 51, 103.

[45] Campbell, *Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative*, 201-07; idem., *Basics of Verbal Aspect*, 51, 110-11. He suggests for instance that the Perfects in 2 Tim 4:6-7 Ἐγὼ γὰρ ἤδη σπένδομαι, καὶ ὁ καιρὸς τῆς ἀναλύσεώς μου **ἐφέστηκεν**. τὸν καλὸν ἀγῶνα **ἠγώνισμαι**, τὸν δρόμον **τετέλεκα**, τὴν πίστιν **τετήρηκα**· (For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; NAU) could be translated, "the time *is coming*; *I am fighting* the good fight; *I am finishing* the race; *I am keeping* the faith" (Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect*, 15; bold and italics original).

[46] Campbell, Basics of Verbal Aspect, 50-51.

[47] Ibid., 106-107.

[48] Campbell, *Advances in Greek*, 120.

The Perfect in Hebrews

It is worth repeating that Campbell's theory is the result of recursive methodology in narrative literature, not epistles. Since Campbell initially identifies the Perfect as imperfective because of its coherence with the Present in discourse sections of narrative, ideally, examining Campbell's model requires first identifying non-narrative units of text where the Perfect is used in relative proportion to the Present. Though it is nearly impossible to identify in epistles sub-generic units of text that correspond with the narrative/discourse sub-genres Campbell employed in his research, the Epistle to the Hebrews, as noted in the table *infra*, has the advantage of locating more Presents than any other tense-form. Hebrews thus qualifies as a (albeit brief) testing-ground for evaluating how the aspect of the Perfect tense-form might relate with Present.

Relevant to Campbell's argument, in Hebrews Perfect tense-form verbals are written in an imperfective verbal scheme dominated by Presents and not Aorists in Heb 2:8-10 4:14-15; 7:4-10, 11-17, 26-28; 9:6-9; 10:20-22 and 12:18-24. Due to time limitations, just Perfects in 2:8-9; 7:4-10, 26-28 and 9:6-10 will be considered in this essay. It will be observed that in Hebrews, the Greek Perfect aspectually presents a perfective state of affairs. It will then be argued that identifying the Perfect as either imperfective (Campbell) or temporally emphatic (Fanning) diminishes the robust capacity of the Perfect to convey the broad scope of the verbal action as it relates to the subject.[49]

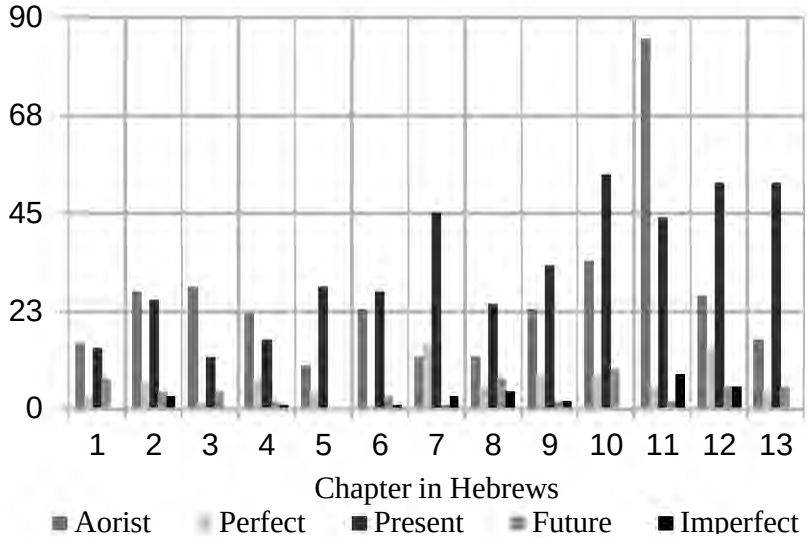
Tense-Form Distribution in Hebrews

Hebrews 2:8-9

The Author employs three Perfect participles in His interpretation of Ps 8:5-7 LXX in Heb 2:6-8a. The psalm text extols the exalted place of humanity over the created order, and in Hebrews 2, the

[49] So Porter: "the use by an author of the perfect tense-form encodes the action as reflecting a complex state of affairs of the subject. This may involve a previous action (although this may be true for the action encoded by any of the aspects), but the emphasis is upon this subject-related state of affairs" ("The Perfect Tense-Form and Stative Aspect"), 211.

psalm citation becomes a paradigm text for both Christology and eschatology. The eschatological hope that humanity would enjoy dominion over the earth was alien to the suffering congregation in view (cf. 3:12-14; 10:32-36; 12:1-3; 13:12-14). Their plight resembled that of Jesus.



In Heb 2:8b, the Author writes, "but now we do not yet see all things subjected to him" (Νῦν δὲ οὔπω ὁρῶμεν αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα ὑποτεταγμένα).[50] The use of the Present ὁράω establishes an imperfective aspectual frame for interpreting the Perfect participle of ὑποτάσσω, here an attributive adjectival modifying "all things" (τὰ πάντα).[51] Does the Author wish for the audience to see a state of affairs

[50] Unless noted otherwise, the Greek text is from Nestle-Aland 28 and all English translations from the New American Standard Bible, 1995 Updated Edition.

[51] As noted supra, Porter (Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, 260, 266), Fanning (Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek, 112-20) and Campbell (Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative, 184-89) note that the surrounding verbal matrix influences the interpretation of the Perfect. Their observation guides interpretation of all the Perfects analyzed in this essay.

in which all things (at his moment of writing) are not yet subject to humanity (so Porter)? The effects of a past action when all things became no longer subject to mankind, with the effects of that moment impacting the current distressed situation of the audience (so Fanning)? Or up-close continuously all things not subject to humanity (so Campbell)? Perhaps an answer should be suspended until investigating the Present verb and two Perfect adjectival participles in the following verse.

The contrastive conjunction "but" (δὲ) followed by the Present verbal phrase "we see Jesus" (βλέπομεν Ἰησοῦν), continues an imperfective aspectual frame into Heb 2:9. Here the author describes Jesus with two Perfect passive attributive participial phrases: "made for a little while lower than the angels" (βραχύ τι παρ᾽ ἀγγέλους ἠλαττωμένον), and "crowned with glory and honor" (δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφανωμένον). Lexically, ἐλαττόω and στεφανόω seem contradictory, but together they aptly describe Jesus' glorious death. Do the Perfects of ἐλαττόω and στεφανόω portray Jesus as lower than the angels within a complex state of affairs, without specific temporal reference (so Porter)? Perfective, such that Jesus was made lower than angels and then at some later point crowned with effects of that sequence of humiliation/glory extending to the present time (so Fanning)? Or, in accord with the imperfective aspect of the Present verb βλέπω, continuously viewed as lower and continuously viewed as crowned (so Campbell)?

I question whether imperfective aspect best explains the Perfect participles of ἐλαττόω and στεφανόω in Heb 2:9. Once an individual is crowned, even at the metaphorical level of being crowned "with glory and honor" (δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ; Heb 2:9), they are crowned. And in Heb 2:9, the Perfects of ἐλαττόω and στεφανόω are coordinated, describing the ironic victory Jesus accomplished through His suffering and death. If viewed imperfectively, the Perfect participles of ἐλαττόω and στεφανόω in Heb 2:9 do not seem to make sense of the sequence, and conclusions, the Author has in mind. I suggest that identifying the Perfect as aspectually imperfective isolates one aspectual feature of the Perfect at the expense of the broader state of affairs the Perfect espouses, limiting its potency in the discourse.

Imperfectivity aside, does the Author of Hebrews portray Jesus' humility and crowning as a completed action in the past with royal

effects applicable to the present (Fanning), or part of a complex state of affairs culminating in a description of Jesus' royal, crucified-ness (Porter)? One feature distinguishing Porter and Fanning is the issue of temporal reference, or lack thereof, in the Perfect. Fanning argues that in the Perfect, temporal reference of a past action predominates over aspectual reference.[52] Is a temporal reference necessary for understanding these Perfects? Though both Porter and Fanning's models might explain the Author's point with either ἐλαττόω or στεφανόω in Heb 2:9, the combination of these underscores Porter's position. Humiliation and crowning here verbalize Jesus' death, resurrection and current heavenly session—a broad state of affairs encompassing past action[53] that that Author will reference repeatedly in subsequent chapters.

Bypassing the combination of Presents and Perfects in Heb 4:14-15, we turn now to Hebrews 7, locating the most dense concentration of Presents and Perfects in the Epistle.

Hebrews 7:4-10

As the table *supra* notes, the concentration of Perfects and Presents in Hebrews 7 provides an especially apt field for examining Campbell's argument that the Perfect is imperfective, again, because the Perfect attracts to the Present so frequently in the discourse sections of narrative literature. "Would the same prove true in epistles?" this essay asks, and observes Hebrews 7 as a locus of investigation.

The Author's argument concerning Melchizedek in Hebrews 5-7 emphasizes among other points Jesus' superiority as a priest. In Heb 7:4-10, the Author writes one Perfect participle and three Perfect indicatives within a matrix of mainly Present tense-form verbals. The Present imperative "observe" (Θεωρεῖτε) in Heb 7:4 establishes an imperfective aspectual frame and calls the audience to continue considering Melchizedek's superiority to the great patriarch Abraham. In Heb 7:5-6 the Author observes that Melchizedek's greatness is demonstrated the fact that subsequent Levitical priests receive the command to tithe their brothers but Abraham spontaneously and freely paid tithes to

[52] Fanning, Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek, 228

[53] Porter, Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, 266.

Melchizedek. The Author uses the Present tense-form to describe the action of the sons of Aaron receiving (λαμβάνοντες; Heb 7:5) the priesthood, and the command that generation after generation the priests continue tithing their brothers (ἐντολὴν ἔχουσιν ἀποδεκατοῦν τὸν λαὸν; Heb 7:5). At the end of Heb 7:5, the Author writes that the priests receive tithes from their brothers, distinguishing the sons of Aaron within the people of Israel. Yet, both priests and non-priests, the Author hastens to add, "are descended from Abraham" (ἐξεληλυθότας ἐκ τῆς ὀσφύος Ἀβραάμ).

With the Perfect of ἐξέρχομαι in Heb 7:5, is the Author calling his audience to view the action of descending from Abraham as part of a state of affairs, a 'descended-ness' quality that serves to emphasize the commonality of priests and non-priests as heirs of Abraham (so Porter)? To see the action of descent from Abraham as a completed action of genealogical lineage emphasizing Abraham's patriarchal status and, by deduction, the commonality of all Israelites as Abraham's heirs (so Fanning)? Or, to continuously view with heightened proximity the action of both priests and non-priests descending from Abraham, (so Campbell)? Here, I find Porter or Fanning's models better able to explain the Author's argument; stative or perfective aspects make better sense of the Perfect form of ἐξέρχομαι than seeing the action as imperfective. The Author's argument is not that the audience continue to up-close see each successive generation in process descending from Abraham's loins; it seems to me that as soon as the first generation descended from Abraham, it is a given that all subsequent generations would as well, including Aaron, the Levites and the remainder of Israel. Reading ἐξεληλυθότας as imperfective tapers the wider capacity of the Perfect tense-form to present the broader state of affairs in view.

In Heb 7:5 the Author emphasizes the commonalty of priests and non-priests within Israel, all descended from Abraham. With an adversative δὲ ("but") in the initial clause of Heb 7:6, the Author distinguishes the priestly figure Melchizedek from all other priestly figures in Israel. Melchizedek, the Author notes using the Present substantival participle (ὁ γενεαλογούμενος), remains outside of Abraham's lineage. Melchizedek's superiority to the patriarch was demonstrated by the fact that he received tithes from Abraham (δεδεκάτωκεν Ἀβραὰμ). The Author writes the Perfect indicative of

δεκατόω here in Heb 7:6 again in Heb 7:9, there noting, creatively, that through Abraham even Levi himself paid tithes to Melchizedek.

Is Melchizedek's reception of tithes from Abraham, and by deduction Levi and all of Abraham's posterity, to be viewed with a stative (Porter), perfective (Fanning) or imperfective (Campbell) aspect? In Heb 7:6, the Perfect of δεκατόω is paired with the Perfect of εὐλογέω to note that Melchizedek received tithes from Abraham and subsequently blessed the patriarch (τὸν ἔχοντα τὰς ἐπαγγελίας εὐλόγηκεν). Does the Author wish for his audience to see Melchizedek's collection of tithes and blessing upon Abraham as part of a state of relational affairs that demonstrate Melchizedek's superiority to the patriarch? Porter's observation that δεδεκάτωκεν and εὐλόγηκεν are Perfects with past implicature[54] here resembles Fanning's schema. Melchizedek's actions upon Abraham are understood as aspectually perfective, with effects abiding to the present situation and Jesus' ministry as high priest of the new covenant.[55] Or should the Perfects of δεκατόω and εὐλογέω be viewed imperfectively with heightened proximity (Campbell), such that Melchizedek would continuously be seen to receive tithes and to bless Abraham? I suggest that the Author of Hebrews portrays the events of Genesis 14 with a stative aspect. Not only are these events completed as part of the broader state of affairs at the *Aktionsart* level of actual occurrence, but also in how the Author wishes for his audience to view them. The Perfects of δεκατόω and εὐλογέω aspectually dramatize the state of affairs demonstrating Melchizedek's great-ness over Abraham. Of the Perfects analyzed thus far, the indicatives in Heb 7:6-8, despite being used in coordination with Present tense-forms, perhaps most strongly challenge the theory that the Perfect semantically encodes imperfective aspect.

Hebrews 7:26-28

Again, the Epistle to the Hebrews was chosen as the locus of research for investigating aspect of the Perfect tense-form because

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[54] Ibid., 264.

[55] Concerning the combinations of Perfects in 7:6 and 9, Westcott wrote, "the fact is regarded as permanent in its abiding consequences." (Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 177).

Hebrews regularly locates the Perfect in a matrix of imperfective tense forms. This arrangement structurally corresponds to the framework Campbell observes in the discourse sections of narrative literature, the basis from which he recursively argues that the Perfect is aspectually imperfective, a super-Present.[56]

The final paragraph of Hebrews 7 locates two Perfect participles in the midst of aspectually imperfective tense forms. As noted *supra*, in Hebrews 5-7 the Author describes Jesus, God's unique Son, as a priest like Melchizedek. Melchizedek and Jesus: (1) are priests outside of the Aaronic line, and (2) Melchizedek seemed to have an eternal priesthood, as Jesus in fact does via His resurrection and ascension to God's right hand. Throughout Hebrews (cf. 2:17-18; 4:14-16; 6:18-20; 12:22-24), Jesus' supremacy as High Priest meets the needs of His followers, and in Heb 7:26 the Author brings together again human need and God's provision in Christ, writing: "for it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens" (Τοιοῦτος γὰρ ἡμῖν καὶ ἔπρεπεν ἀρχιερεύς, ὅσιος ἄκακος ἀμίαντος, κεχωρισμένος ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν καὶ ὑψηλότερος τῶν οὐρανῶν γενόμενος). The Imperfect of πρέπω establishes an imperfective aspectual frame for interpreting the Perfect participle of χωρίζω, here passive attributive of ἀρχιερεύς.

Does the Author use the Perfect of χωρίζω because it would semantically encode Jesus' state, His separated-ness as the unique Son-Priest (Porter)?[57] The fact that Jesus was separated to God's right hand via the past actions of His death and resurrection (cf. 4:14-16; 6:18-20; 12:22-24), the effect and benefit of which the Author wishes his audience to appropriate (Fanning)? Or imperfectively, to help the audience up-close and continuously see Jesus being separated from sinners (Campbell)? Though semantically distinct, I think each of these theories could explain Hebrews' point. Campbell's theory of imperfectivity may provide a heightened sense of drama to the verbal action, as the Perfect

[56] Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect*, 50-51, 103.

[57] Porter labels κεχωρισμένος in Heb 7:26 an example of the Perfect participle functioning without specific reference to the temporal sphere (*Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament*, 396). Though Jesus' "separateness," His state of affairs, is emphasized, a logical antecedent action, a moment when that "separateness" began, is not necessarily out of view in the aspect of the Perfect.

participle of χωρίζω is followed by an Aorist participial phrase, the latter perhaps bringing the scene to a hard stop. But in this case Campbell's continuous aspect of χωρίζω would, at the practical level, accord Porter's theory of stativity: the Son continues on in a state of separation from humanity, forever qualified to be the high priest of the new covenant—which the Author explains more fully in Hebrews 8.[58]

But how should we evaluate the Perfect of χωρίζω in Heb 7:26 in light of the parallel Perfect passive attributive participle Heb 7:28, where the Author writes that God's oath appoints the Son as a high priest "made perfect forever" (τετελειωμένον)? In Heb 7:27 the Author contrasts the Son's completed work as a high priest with the continual, necessary (ἔχει καθ᾽ ἡμέραν ἀνάγκην) sacrificial ministry of the high priest of Israel. The Son accomplished atonement once, offering Himself (τοῦτο γὰρ ἐποίησεν ἐφάπαξ ἑαυτὸν ἀνενέγκας). In Heb 7:27 the Author employs imperfective aspect to describe the service of Israel's priests, but perfective aspect to describe Jesus' once-for-all self-sacrifice.

This aspectual pattern surfaces at the beginning of Heb 7:28 as well. The Author writes that the law continues to appoint (καθίστησιν) high priests who continue to have weaknesses (ἔχοντας ἀσθένειαν), reflecting the statement in Heb 7:27 that Israel's high priest first atones for his own sins then those of the people. With a contrastive δὲ (but) the Author describes the Son as the high priest "made perfect forever" (τετελειωμένον). What semantic definition of aspect best explains the Author's thoughts concerning the Son's perfection in Heb 7:28? I suggested that Porter, Fanning or Campbell's theories could each do justice to κεχωρισμένος in Heb 7:26, but I do not see τετελειωμένον as offering the same flexibility. Campbell's theory of imperfectivity least explains the Perfect here. The Author does not tell his story[59] with a view to the Son's continuing to be perfected as a high priest; lexicography

[58] Campbell concedes that stativity works as an *Aktionsart* feature of the Perfect (*Basics of Verbal Aspect*, 48-50, 106-07). Porter argues that in some ways Campbell's conclusions about aspect reflect his, though Campbell arrives at his conclusion using recursive methodology ("Greek Linguistics and Lexicography," 54).

[59] "When I'm telling the story, I decide which way I will tell it...This is what it means when we say that aspect represents a subjective choice" (Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect*, 21).

aside, imperfective aspect does not do justice to the idea of the Son's perfected state as high priest of the new covenant. I am inclined that Porter's theory best explains the semantics of τετελειωμένον in Heb 7:28. The Author uses the Perfect to verbalize the state of the Son's high priestly ministry in comparison with the high priests of Israel. Fanning's position of past completed action with abiding effects would likewise explain Hebrews' point, though the surrounding temporal references (ἐφάπαξ, "once," Heb 7:27; and μετὰ τὸν νόμον, "after the Law," Heb 7:28) provide a temporal frame that is not dependent upon the semantic value of the Perfect tense-form such that the perfective aspect of the Aorists in Heb 7:27b does not diminish the stative aspect for τετελειωμένον in Heb 7:28.[60]

Hebrews 9:6-10

Hebrews 9 continues the series of comparisons the Author employs to explain the superiority of Christ *vis-à-vis* the old covenant system. In Hebrews 8, he describes the failure of Israel under the old covenant and cites Jeremiah's promise of a new covenant that would provide eternal forgiveness for its adherents. The Author then details the means of new covenant forgiveness by comparing the self-sacrifice of Christ with the Day of Atonement sacrifices (cf. Leviticus 16).

Hebrews 9:6-10 locates two Perfect participles and one Perfect infinitive in the midst of several Present indicatives and participles. The initial paragraph of Hebrews 9 is the Author's reflection upon Israel's magisterial tabernacle of worship and the functionaries of the inner and outer tents. The articles of worship were arranged therein not simply as decor but according to the duties of the priests and High Priests. In Heb 9:6 the Author transitions from his description of the inner and outer tents of worship with the phrase, Τούτων δὲ οὕτως κατεσκευασμένων (Now when these things have been so prepared). Does the Author use the Perfect, here part of the genitive absolute τούτων κατεσκευασμένων, to help the audience view progressively with heightened proximity the articles in the holy place and the Holy of Holies (so Campbell)? To see the

[60] Porter writes that, "the Perfect may be used in past contexts, often parallel with other past-referring verb forms" (*Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament*, 260).

cultic furniture as having been assembled, emphasizing the completed arrangement of the two tents such that they are prepared for the subsequent use at a later time (so Fanning)? Or to see them as a complex of items in an established state of affairs (Porter)?

Examining the rest of Heb 9:6 aids interpretation of κατεσκευασμένων. This participle is followed in the remainder of Heb 9:6 and Heb 9:7 by three Present tense-form verbals. In Heb 9:6, the Author writes that into the first tent the priests enter repeatedly (διὰ παντὸς εἰσίασιν) continuously performing their ministries (τὰς λατρείας ἐπιτελοῦντες),[61] while in Heb 9:7 the Author notes that into the Holy of Holies only the High Priest enters annually with blood, ὃ προσφέρει ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ ἀγνοημάτων (which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance). Whether describing the daily work of priests (εἰσίασιν and ἐπιτελοῦντες) or the annual ministry of the High Priest (προσφέρει), the Author uses the Present tense-form to help the audience view them imperfectively. In light of the flow of thought in Heb 9:6-7, what aspectual frame best interprets the Perfect κατεσκευασμένων at the beginning of v. 6? Identifying the Perfect as imperfective wouldhave the audience see continuously the setting-up of the inner and outer tents, and the ministries of the priests and High Priests the same. If the Perfect is distinguished from the Present by virtue of being a super-present, semantically encoding heightened proximity, then the constitution of the holy place and the Holy of Holies would have prominance over the priestly activities therein. I suggest that interpreting κατεσκευασμένων as a super-present in Heb 9:6 inverts the Author's emphasis on the minitries of the priests and High Priest with the establishment of the tents in which they minister. In Heb 9:6-7 the Author emphasizes the ministry of the priests and High Priest: the arrangement of the inner and outer tents establishes the stative situation for their repeated work—

[61] Harold W. Attridge writes, "The unspecified services probably include the regular priestly duties, the daily trimming of the lamps (Exod 27:21), the weekly placement of the breads (Lev 24:5), and the daily and Sabbath continual sacrifices. A daily incense offerings is also prescribed, but whether Hebrews understands Exod 30:7 as such a prescription is unclear" (*The Epistle to the Hebrews* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989], 239).

which the Author contrasts with the completed priestly work of Christ in what follows in Hebrews 9.

The coordination of οὗτος (this one, these) in Heb 9:6 and 8 progresses the Author's argument. In Heb 9:6-7 he uses the demonstrative to explain the work of the priests and High Priest in the holy place and Holy of Holies (Heb 9:1-5), and in Heb 9:8 οὗτος grounds his theological inference based upon the entire complex of Heb 9:1-7. Via the cumulative picture of priestly service in the inner and outer tents, the Holy Spirit signifies that entrance into the Holy of Holies[62] is not available so long as the outer tent remains (τοῦτο δηλοῦντος τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου, μήπω πεφανερῶσθαι τὴν τῶν ἁγίων ὁδὸν ἔτι τῆς πρώτης σκηνῆς ἐχούσης στάσιν; Heb. 9:8). The Perfect of φανερόω (to make manifest) in Heb 9:8 is the first of two Perfect tense-forms in vv. 8-9, each surrounded by Present tense-form verbals.

The Present participle δηλοῦντος establishes an imperfective asptectual frame for πεφανερῶσθαι in the second clause of Heb 9:8. The Author uses the negative adverb μήπω to modify πεφανερῶσθαι, emphasizing the restricted access to the Holy of Holies while the holy place, and the daily priestly duties therein, continue. Does imperfective aspect best explain the Perfect of φανερόω in Heb 9:8, such that the audience is to view with heightened proximity the closure of the second curtain? I suggest that interpreting πεφανερῶσθαι as imperfective might initially help the audience grasp the Author's point concerning the restriction to the Holy of Holies, but as was the case with discussed ἐξεληλυθότας in Heb. 7:5 discussed *supra*, progressively viewing an action that is logically stative inserts a degree of redundancy into the aspectual flow of the discourse. Once the curtain is viewed—even with heightened proximity—as closed, it is closed; progressively seeing the curtain as closed would soon lead the interpreter to conclude that in Heb 9:8 the second curtain has a closed-ness about it, it is in that state.[63] The restricted-ness of the Holy of Holies, the Author writes, will continue so long as the holy place stands (ἔτι τῆς πρώτης σκηνῆς ἐχούσης στάσιν).

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[62] For discussion of the ways the Author writes "holy places," see ibid., 232-33, 240.

[63] See discussion in Porter, "The Perfect Tense-Form and Stative Aspect," 210-11.

The coordination of the demonstrative οὗτος in Heb 9:6 and 8 is followed in Heb 9:9 with the relative ὅστις (which). Here the pronoun referes to ὁδός (way) in Heb 9:8, recalling the restricted-ness of the Holy of Holies so long as the holy place continued to stand. The Author invites his audience to see the inner and outer tents as a state of affairs, that from his Christian persepctive, inronically inhibits access to God.[64] He notes that these historic daily and annual cultic ministries demonstrate the restrictedness of τὴν τῶν ἁγίων ὁδὸν (the way into the holy place; Heb 9:8) and that that state of affairs continues to the time of his writing (παραβολὴ εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τὸν ἐνεστηκότα; a symbol for the present time Heb 9:9). The Perfect adjectival participle ἐνεστηκότα modifies καιρὸν, noting the continuity of Israel's cult from the time of its constitution under Moses and Aaron to the time of the current audience. The fact that the present time is described as a period when gifts and sacrifices are offered that are impotent to help the worshipper enjoy forgiveness (καθ᾽ ἣν δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίαι προσφέρονται μὴ δυνάμεναι κατὰ συνείδησιν τελειῶσαι τὸν λατρεύοντα; Heb 9:9), becomes the Author's point of departure for explaining the perfect ministry of Christ, detailed through Heb 10:18.

What theory of verbal aspect best explains the Author's use of the Perfect of ἐνίστημι, in Heb 9:9, especially in light of the Present tense-forms of προσφέρω and δύναμαι in the context? Here again, though imperfectivity would help the audience to see the continuing ministry of Israel's cult, I suggest that seeing it once, as a state of affairs corresponding to the long historic precedence of priestly ministry, best positions the interpreter to follow the Author's argument.

Conclusion

Again, the Epistle to the Hebrews was chosen as a locus of research concerning aspect of the Greek Perfect because in Hebrews the

[64] "The access that the high priest has to that sacred realm does not signify its openness, but is only, as it were, the exception that proves the rule. The exception has typological significance that will yet be exploited, but for the present it is the exclusion that is highlighted" (Attridge, *Hebrews*, 240). See also F. F. Bruce, *Hebrews* (rev. ed.; NICNT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 206 n. 48.

Perfect is regularly used in a verbal matrix dominated by Presents. This imperfective aspectual setting replicates, to some degree, the framework from which Campbell argues that at the semantic level the Perfect is aspectually imperfective. What then can be said about aspect of the Perfect tense-form, in light of Hebrews?

First, based upon this study, I am hesitant to advocate Campbell's position. If Campbell's theory is accurate at the semantic level, across the genres, then we would expect that it would be especially helpful in understanding Hebrews, an epistle where many Perfects are set in an imperfective environment. Though Heb 2:8-10; 7:4-10; 7:26-28 and 9:6-10 is an inadequately small locus of research to argue for a specific understanding of a grammatical phenomena common in various genres of literature, the fact that the Perfects studied in this paper are written within an imperfective aspectual matrix and yet resist imperfectivity legitimizes my hesitancy to embrace aspectual imperfectivity of the Perfect. I suggest that understanding the Perfect as aspectually imperfective isolates one possible feature of the Perfect tense-form at the expense of the broader semantic state of affairs in view. Nonetheless, Campbell's observations regarding the pragmatics of the Perfect, that authors use it to verbalize actions that are to be understood (spatially) as intensified or prominent, enhances exegesis. This being said, Porter makes roughly the same conclusion but bases his findings on the stativity, not imperfectivity.[65]

Second, in each of the passages studied in this paper, either Porter or Fanning would more or less explain the Author's point. Because so many of the Perfects in Hebrews have "past implicature."[66] Porter's argument for aspectual stativity often sounds like Fanning's model of perfective aspect. But Porter understands anteriority as only part of the larger complex expressed by the Perfect tense-form. Although now a bit dated, upon reviewing Porter and Fanning's theories, Silva identifies the interpretative strengths of Fanning's model and the theoretical strengths in Porter's, but stops short of a synthetic moment, saying, "I am not ready to suggest that we adopt Porter's explanation of the linguistic system and Fanning's interpretation of actual occurrences."[67]

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[65] Porter, Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, 258-259.

[66] Ibid., 263-264.

[67] Silva, "A Response to Porter and Fanning on Verbal Aspect," 77.

The brief analysis of the Perfects in Heb 2:8-10; 7:4-10; 7:26-28 and 9:6-10 in this essay nonetheless points in that direction. Silva labels the interplay between literary context and lexical domain "the biggest conundrum of all" when studying verbal aspect.[68] Silva's observation provides a fitting conclusion to the present study and calls attention to the man to whom this edition of *MJT* is dedicated. I have seen Dr. T, as he is affectionately addressed by students and friends, on bended knee pleading to students that they let the broader linguistic, historical and theological context of a passage inform exegetical interpretation of any isolated word or grammatical phenomenon in view. For two decades at MBTS Dr. T has happily resided in Silva's "conundrum," and called many to join him there. I for one am happy to be a part of that fellowship.

[68] *Ibid.*, 81.

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The Preeminence of Active Metaphors: Functional Linguistics and Earthen Vessels in 2 Corinthians 4:7

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Dedication

This article is written in honor of Alan Tomlinson, PhD, who I have enjoyed the privilege of knowing for the last twelve years. Dr. Tomlinson was, first of all, my New Testament and Greek professor and most recently, the chair of my dissertation. His influence on my academic writing, teaching, and preaching is immeasurable. It is no exaggeration to say that Tomlinson's impact is currently felt in classrooms and pulpits across the world. I am confident that on this side of heaven we will not apprehend the scope of his investment in the Kingdom. His knowledge of first century backgrounds and Greek are what make his classes at Midwestern Seminary some of the most enjoyable and sought after by students. I will always treasure the time he spent investing in my life and ministry, especially the hours spent drinking coffee in his office and pouring over the Greek text. Thank you Dr. Tomlinson for your faithfulness and example; your voice will continue to resound for many years. Your Christ-like humility is the touchstone we will strive to emulate.

Introduction

The study of metaphor has experienced dramatic shifts in the last decade, especially in the domain of linguistic modeling. These new methods are making it easier to examine the biblical metaphors which occur in the Greek New Testament (GNT). However, a divergence often occurs between the existence of these objective methods and the application of them by researchers to the biblical text. In other words, New Testament scholars have neglected available linguistic tools for studying metaphors

more accurately, especially with respect to the discipline of systemic functional linguistics (SFL).[1] It is time for new arguments to emerge that metaphorical analysis, understood through SFL models, deserves a central role in the practice of biblical interpretation.

SFL holds promise for how metaphors are identified objectively, rather than subjectively, a cornerstone of proper research methodology. Various answers are given for how to find metaphors in a literary text. For example, an interpreter could rely on simple intuition and often, this practice is all that is needed. However, simply locating a metaphor and arriving at a proper interpretation of it are not always guaranteed, particularly when the interpreter is working in a non-primary lanuage such as Koiné Greek.

The problem is that current research on Pauline metaphor is limited to texts read through the grid of cognitive intuition.[2] Furthermore, few scholars state their objective methodology for metaphorical analysis, primarily because they do not believe one is needed.[3] The aim here is to offer a new objective linguistic model that will provide a way forward for NT researchers in the study of metaphor. Thererfore, the focus of this article will be on identifying and interpreting one of Paul's strategic metaphors in 2 Corinthians 4:7, "treasure in earthen vessels" (θησαυρὸν ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν) using an objective, hybrid functional linguistic model.

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[1] Portions of this article are taken directly or adapted from this author's dissertation on linguistic metaphor in 2 Corinthians. See C. Eric Turner, "The Signalling and Syntactical Configuration of Active Metaphors: 2 Corinthians 10:1-6 as a Test Case" (PhD diss., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015).

[2] This statement is not meant to imply that intuition could never lead a person to the proper interpretation of a metaphor. The point here is that complete reliance on intuition may be a less reliable subjective methodology than one that is grounded in objectively measured evidence.

[3] The following will suffice as representative of studies on Pauline metaphor which rely on intuition: Reider Aasgaard, *My Beloved Brothers and Sisters! Christian Siblingship in Paul* (London: T & T Clark, 2003); Trevor J. Burke, *Adopted into God's Family: Exploring a Pauline Metaphor* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006); and Jerry M. Hullinger, "The Historical Background of Paul's Athletic Allusions," *BSac* 161 (2004): 343-359.

The Definition and Classifications of Metaphor

Metaphor is often described as nothing more than a rhetorical flourish of the pen or as verbal gymnastics, a sly turn-of-a-phrase. It has even been described as an ornamental decoration a writer adds a finishing touch.[4] If these opinions are true, then someone might ask, "Why does metaphor seem to be everywhere?" In modern culture, metaphor is not found just in literature, but also in music,[5] movies,[6] and certainly, in daily conversations.[7] Metaphor is as much a part of everyday life, it seems, as breathing and eating. As a result, metaphor is either ignored or misunderstood for the contribution it produces in linguistic comprehension.

Defining what one means by a metaphor is not an easy task. Admittedly, the definition of metaphor is not of the utmost importance, rather, it is the identification, function, and interpretation of metaphor that should be the focus. Goatly's defintion of a metaphor reveals several

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[4] This view, of course, is not new. The classical defintion of metaphor as a "deviant use of words" possessing "just an ornamental function in discourse" was first established by Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric* 1475b.7 (Freese, LCL).

[5] Kevin Cronin, the lead singer of REO Speedwagon, once wrote, "It is time to bring this ship into the shore and throw away the oars forever." See Kevin Cronin, "I Can't Fight this Feeling," by Kevin Cronin, recorded on November 11, 1984 with Gary Richrath, Neal Doughty, Alan Gratzer, and Bruce Hall, on *Wheels are Turnin´*, Epic Records, $33^{1/3}$ rpm. Clearly, Cronin was being metaphorical. No one imagines that he is writing a song about leaving behind nautical equipment after a difficult day of sailing.

[6] It is sometimes argued that James Cameron's movie *Aliens* is actually a metaphor for the Vietnam War where a group of American soldiers are sent to a strange land by incompetent leaders and as a result, they are slaughtered. See *Aliens,* directed by James Cameron, screenplay by James Cameron (20th Century Fox, 1986), DVD (1987).

[7] If you overheard the sentence, "Cori is a night owl," then you more than likely would not assume that the person is describing their new pet owl. You would correctly understand that the person being spoken about is someone who likes to stay up late at night. Because the metaphor is a common one in English, its meaning is taken for granted. In other words, you do not need to know anything about what species of owl the person is talking about in order to arrive at the correct interpretation.

important concepts.[8] Perhaps his definition can be re-worded for better comprehension in order to establish a foundation for this study. In other words, a metaphor occurs,

when a word, or group of words is used to refer to an object/process/concept that it normally would not refer or colligates in an unconventional way. This unconventional reference can be understood when the reader of the metaphor is able to match the metaphor in his mind with similar concepts. This matching primarily occurs when the reader reasons to the meaning of the metaphor by way of analogy, usually through shared knowledge, context, or common cultural experiences.

For instance, take note of the italicized metaphor in the following sentence, "*The politician is a fox,* you cannot trust what he says." According to the definition above, the word "fox" is used to refer to an object, "the politician." This unoconventional reference is understood because of the context which is supplied, that is, "you cannot trust what he says." Even if this context were not available, it would not be difficult to reason towards why the politician is described as a fox. Based on common cultural experiences that politicians are sly and cunning, like a fox, the interpretation is relatively easy. Again, this definition and example are a simplification, however, as pragmatics are applied, it becomes more accessible and workable for researchers.

Before this article goes further, it is critical to explain how metaphors are classified. Typically, metaphors are placed in one of three broad categories: *dead, inactive,* or *active.*[9] Dead metaphors are ones that are so commonly used that they are no longer recognized as metaphors.[10] In other words, they are lexicalized. They have moved from metaphorical

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[8] See Goatly, *The Language of Metaphors,* (2d ed.; London: Routledge, 2011), 9.

[9] Goatly, *The Language of Metaphors,* 29-38. The terminology for metaphorical classification is confusing, especially in the realm of classification. Rather than wade through all of the possible nomenclatures, this study will adopt Goatly's categories as sufficient ones.

[10] Stephanie was able to explain the three *branches of government*. It is doubtful that this metaphor evokes an image of the three sections of the federal government sitting on a tree. However, because of shared knowledge which comprehends that branches belong to trees, i.e., separate but connected, one readily grasps the meaning that different divisions of the government exist that are connected and dependent on one another.

to literal status, reducing their potential within language for rhetorical effect. Inactive metaphors have their foundation in shared cultural knowledge, yet unlike dead metaphors, they are easily recognized.[11] They have not reached lexicalized status for their readers. The final category is that of *active* metaphors. These are metaphors that are located in a specific cultural framework and are constructed with creative semantic potential, yet are unpredictable with respect to their interpretation because of an amputated lexical relationship.[12] Buss and Jost describe active metaphors as ones that possess innovative power to view the world differently, "For they produce strikingly novel, yet *unheard of* similarities."[13]

The battle against subjective interpretation is especially acute in the case of active metaphors. As Goatly rightly observes, "There is, in fact a decisive break between active and inactive metaphors."[14] The reason for this break rests in the reality that active metaphors are highly dependent on context for their interpretation. Thus, active metaphors are both *unique* and *unpredictable* apart from context. These factors increase the potential for misinterpretation, especially if they are present in a biblical text that is separated from its reader by both culture and time. In short, relying on intuition alone will not suffice for their interpretation – a new way forward must be offered in the study of biblical metaphor.

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[11] Chase is an *early bird*. This sentence contains an inactive metaphor. The interpretation of the metaphor is accomplished almost instantaneously in the mind of the reader. One does not have to stop and complete aviary research in order to understand that Chase likes to get up early in the morning.

[12] Carson was sitting at the table eating his *green day ice cream*. The metaphor of green day ice cream is unique because it stands apart as unpredictable apart from a specific cultural framework. However, with appropriate context the expression's meaning is illuminated. If green day refers to a student's good behavior at school and ice cream, or lack thereof, is a reward/consequence, then the metaphor communicates that Carson was being rewarded with ice cream because he behaved at school. The metaphor is unique and unpredictable.

[13] Mareike Buss and Jörg Jost, "Rethinking the Connection of Metaphor and Topos," *Metaphorik de* 23 (2013): 1-14.

[14] Goatly, The Language of Metaphors, 35.

A Proposed Model

Three areas within the field of linguistics that show methodological aptitude for the study of active metaphors are *systemic functional linguistics* (SFL),[15] *corpus linguistics* (CL),[16] and *relevance theory* (RT).[17] Thus, the proposed model for this article is one that cross-pollinates SFL, CL, and RT into one hybrid theory, bringing to bear on the interpretation of metaphors their complementary components of signalling, frequency,

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[15] SFL addresses what language does through the study of actual texts set within a historical context. It is often contrasted with cognitive linguistics which focuses on subjective reasoning to linguistic principles based on the assumption that the mechanisms for language are universal. The seminal works in the field of SFL are by M. A. K. Halliday and R. Hasan, *Cohesion in English* (England: Longman Group, 1976) and *Language, Context, and Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[16] Corpus Linguistics refers to the study of language as it is expressed in corpora, or relative samplings of texts. One of the genesis studies in CL was by W. Nelson Francis and Henry Kucera, *Computational Analysis of Present Day American English* (New York: Brown University Press, 1967). The primary way that words are examined is through the use of computers. For example, a useful computer model for linguistic study of corpora is called the COBUILD project, or Collins Birmingham University International Language Database developed by John Sinclair, ed., *Looking Up. An Account of the COBUILD project in Lexical Computing* (London: Collins, 1987). The COBUILD project is a result of a collaboration between Collins Publishing and the University of Birmingham. The purpose of the joint venture was to create the largest corpus of English in the world and thereby to use it for the publication of dictionaries and reference materials. Currently, the COBUILD database contains over 4.5 million words and is updated monthly. Thus, the advent of computers as a tool has become both critical and necessary for an accurate, objective sampling of how words work together.

[17] Relevance theory was first proposed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (2d ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 265. RT argues that metaphorical interpretation depends on three sources of knowledge between the writer and his readers: knowledge of the language system, knowledge of the context (situation and co-text), and knowledge of background schematics (factual and socio-cultural).

and context. This hybrid model is important for understanding *active* metaphors since they are neglected in the field of biblical studies.[18]

Signalling: The SFL component

One objective way for finding metaphors is known as signalling.[19] The concept of signalling refers to the main textual markers which identify a metaphor and the effect that these markers have on the metaphor itself. Signals may be overt and obvious or hidden and vague.[20] The problem of identifying active metaphors through signalling is that they are not only unconventional, but also rare. Furthermore, they may not emit explicit markers. Because of their inexplicitness, they are, more often than not, unmarked in a text. For this reason, researchers in the realm of functional linguistics have struggled to locate active metaphors in a corpus.

Of course, this effort to locate active metaphors need not be in vain. As Goatly remarks, "Researchers of metaphor might profitably use markers as a partial solution to the vexed problem of locating active metaphors."[21] What he means is that active metaphors might be identified through an expanded understanding of metaphorical marking. What kind of markers help to identify active metaphors? Active

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[18] The study of metaphor has, more often than not, only been addressed at the *conceptual* rather than the *functional* level. For an example of grasping metaphor at the conceptual level, see the signature work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1980).

[19] Andrew Goatly's theory is built on what is known as the "Genre Relevance, Graded Risk Approach to Metaphor Scalarity" [i.e., his so named 2(GR)AMS model]. It will be impossible in this article to completely explore his theory, but it is important for the following reason: most linguistic studies only provide a *framework* for metaphorical theory, while he provides the *pragmatic mechanisms* for metaphorical interpretation within a contextual framework.

[20] For example, if a person says, "I feel *like* I have been hit by a ton of bricks," then he/she is probably not making a literal statement. The word *like* signals that a metaphor exists. On the other hand, in the sentence, "Max is a beast," one could not be as certain if Max is metaphorically *a beast* or literally *a beast*. Max might be *a beast* on the basketball court or he might literally be *a canine beast*, a dog.

[21] Goatly, The Language of Metaphors, 183.

metaphors are primarily marked (*signalled*) through one of the seven categories listed below.[22]

Table 1.1 Markers (signals) of active metaphors

Types of Markers	**Examples**
Explicit	He is a **savage**, figuratively* speaking.
Hedges	Immediately, something* like **scales** fell from his eyes (Acts 9:18).
Downtoners	served the creation rather* than the **Creator** (Rom 1:25).
Superordinate terms	we would be a kind* of **first fruits** (Jas 1:18).
Copular similes	their message will spread its infection like* **gangrene** (2 Tim 2:17).
Clausal similes	as though* I were an **angel** of God (Gal 4:14).
Verbal processes	He was, so to speak,* a **bear** of a man
Conditionals	agitators would* go so far as to **castrate** themselves! (Gal 5:12).

[22] The marker (signal) for the metaphor is denoted by the symbol (*). The metaphor itself is in **bold**. The term which receives the characteristics of the metaphor is underlined.

As seen from table 1.1, other than the categories of *explicit* and *verbal processes,* the biblical text provides some clear examples of metaphorical marking. These examples reinforce the belief that metaphors may be located in a text using this component. It also indicates the potential for them to be categorized as active, even though some marking devices (*explicit markers* and *copular similes*) may reduce their perception. As a result, the reader may have to exert more effort recognizing a metaphor because of less than prominent signals in the text, producing greater rhetorical effect. Nevertheless, the fact remains that a newly created metaphor may still emit signals and exert considerable rhetorical influence upon the reader. At the most basic level, then, the markers for metaphors aid in the first step of the process, namely, *identification* which leads to *classification.*

Frequency: The CL component

The second component of the hybrid model is foundational for establishing the relative *frequency* or *infrequency* of metaphors in a corpus.[23] In order to understand frequency, this article will apply Luhn's CL methodology, i.e., his so-named key-word-in-context (KWIC) model.[24] Of course, two limitations are normally considered when adopting a KWIC method for locating metaphors in this manner. These include the size and the genre of the corpus. In short, a corpus must be balanced and relevant for the searches conducted.

While the study of how metaphors are used over time is an interesting endeavour, the primary goal here is to grasp how active metaphors are interpreted in their immediate context. For this reason, a

[23] A corpus is best defined as, "A collection of naturally occurring examples of language, consisting of anything from a few sentences to a set of written texts or tape recordings which have been collected for linguistic study." See Susan Hunston, *Corpora in Applied Linguistics* (eds. Carol H. Chapelle and Susan Hunston: Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 2.

[24] H. P. Luhn, "Keyword-in-Context Index for Technical Literature (KWIC Index)," in *Readings in Automatic Language Processing* (ed. David G. Hays; New York: American Elsevier, 1966), 159–67. The KWIC method takes the search term (*node*) results and places them into a table with their contextual terms (*collocates*) on either side. Usually, a limit of +/- 5 words is used as a proper span in order to determine how the nodes are used in context.

corpus must be appropriately balanced,[25] that is, large enough to adequately represent the language studied, including various styles and text types. Additionally, the corpus must be restricted in order to provide objective data and to avoid skewed samples.

For example, a quick search of the word σαρκικός, or "fleshly" in the GNT only returns 6 occurrences, all from Pauline literature. The Septuagint (LXX) has 0 returns and the Apostolic Fathers (AF) 11. The representative sample, 17, is too small. On the other hand, a different problem arises with a word such as δουλός, or "slave" which occurs 53 times in the AF, 572 times in the LXX, and 59 times in the GNT for a total of 684 occurrences. Such a sample is too large.

The main thrust of this component is not only one of balance, but of relevance. It is easy to see how word meaning can change depending upon its genre. The word *trunk* in a zoology journal would yield a different semantic field than if the same word occurred in a furniture store ad of a local newspaper.[26] Since metaphors in 2 Corinthians are under examination, it is important to study similar genres. Furthermore, research on metaphors should limit itself to genres which theoretically hold the greatest potential for containing metaphorical speech. Thus, the primary corpus for this article will include the genres of the NT, the LXX, the AF, and the OT Greek Pseudepigrapha. A secondary corpus will contain the genres represented by Philo, Strabo, and Josephus. Therefore, the corpora chosen includes

[25] The difference is between a *diachronic* analysis and a *synchronic* one. Diachronic studies examine language from a historical viewpoint, that is, how language has changed from its inception to the present day. Synchronic analysis refers to the study of linguistic change over a particular period of time. Clearly, in metaphorical interpretation, researchers should not be concerned with how a language has exhaustively developed with respect to a metaphor's interpretation. Instead, how these metaphorical constructions are used during a specific time period across similar literary forms is worthy of consideration. For this reason, synchronic analysis provides appropriate limitations for interpreting metaphors that are active in their classification.

[26] Anyone was has attended a class lecture with F. Alan Tomlinson, PhD will immediately get the *trunk* reference. Once of his favorite illustrations of the principle *context determines meaning* is to write the word "trunk" on the board and then ask students what he means. The exercise serves the purpose of explaining that apart from context you will never know what he means. It could be the *trunk* of a tree, the *trunk* of a car, the *trunk* of an elephant, et al.

epistolary, apocalyptic, wisdom, biographical, legal, and historical genres. This range of literature is more than sufficient for determining whether or not the metaphor "treasure in earthen vessels" (θησαυρὸν ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν) is *frequent* or *infrequent*.[27]

Context: The RT component

Once a metaphor is *signalled* as active and assessed for *frequency*, the proposed model may finally wrestle with the metaphor's interpretation. In this manner, the final component (RT) serves as a check for the other components. RT argues that metaphorical interpretation depends on three sources of knowledge: knowledge of the language system (*linguistic competence*), knowledge of the context (*situation* and *co-text*), and knowledge of background schematics (*factual* and *socio-cultural*). RT is important, therefore, because it supplies the final mechanism through which pragmatics are applied to the interpretation of the metaphor.

The aim of RT is to explain, based on the evidence (*context*) available how a reader understands a writer's meaning. What then is the importance of RT for the study of active metaphors? The degree to which metaphors are difficult to interpret, especially active metaphors, does not mean that they are less relevant or that their meaning cannot be apprehended in the text. Rather, it simply means that a *qualitative* difference exists between active metaphors and other kinds of metaphors. Active metaphors need more than just objective *signalling* and *frequency* in order to be understood. They need context.

It is safe to assume linguistic competence on the part of Paul's readers, that is, they could understand Koiné Greek. However, defining the term *context* is not as easy. Part of the problem in linguistic analysis

[27] John Sinclair, *English Collocation Studies: The OSTI Report* (London: Continuum, 2004), 17, suggests that a word count in the range of 90 – 290 times is necessary for establishing word meaning through collocation. This article will not employ CL in order to arrive at lexical meaning. Instead, CL will be used to reveal the *infrequency* of metaphors that may be active. It is believed that if a metaphor is newly created (*active*), then occurrences in similar genres across a sufficiently specified time period will be rare. This reverse use of CL may aid in establishing the uniqueness of Paul's metaphors in 2 Corinthians. Computers are easily able to handle this component. For this article, searches are done using *BibleWorks*, CD-ROM (Norfolk, VA: BibleWorks LLC, 2006).

is that context is left undefined, with researchers supposing that everyone involved understands the reference. Turan and Zeryk make this difficulty explicit when they write,

> The term *context* (original emphasis) is used in abundance in linguistics for a number of different phenomena, ranging from linguistic context to socio-cultural context and has a range of meanings. There is not a single established definition of context and its meaning is taken for granted by those who use it. This proliferation and the implicit use of the term make it difficult to define context.[28]

Their cautionary note is well-taken. For the purposes of this article, *context* will refer to the *immediate* words and clauses which precede or follow the metaphor,[29] the *discourse* environment in which the metaphor is located,[30] and the *extra-linguistic* socio-cultural setting.[31] This

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[28] Ümit Deniz Turan and Deniz Zeyrek, "Context, Contrast, and the Structure of Discourse in Turkish," in *Context and Contexts: Parts Meet Whole?* (eds. Anita Fetzer and Etsuko Oishi (Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2011), 148.

[29] Here is where the metaphor's G-term, if explicit or ambiguous, will present itself and allow for an understanding of which shared characteristics of the metaphor are applicable. A G-term is the immediate words or clauses which surround the metaphor. For example, in the previous example, "The politician is a fox, *you cannot trust what he says,*" the italicized portion is the G-term or Grounds of the metaphor. If a G-term is absent, then it is incumbent for the discourse and extra-linguistic context to provide a path forward for interpretation.

[30] This domain could include the paragraph, wider discourse section, or even the entire epistle. The issue of a controlling metaphor for an entire Pauline epistle could be a possibility that remains relatively unexplored in NT studies. For example, a controlling metaphor of stewardship could be argued as applicable to the Pastoral Epistles. See F. Alan Tomlinson, "The Purpose and Stewardship Theme within the Pastoral Epistles," in *Entrusted with the Gospel: Paul's Theology in the Pastoral Epistles* (eds. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Terry L. Wilder; Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2010), 68.

[31] The extra-linguistic context is often a combination of both the *present* and *historical* situation of the writer and his audience. Various terms are used for referring to this domain of contextual analysis. The term *meso-context* is

definition allows for a three-pronged approach for identifying the context that will assist in the interpretation of the active metaphor in question.

Rationale for the Study of Metaphors in 2 Corinthians

Several statements are necessary before proceeding with the interpretation of Paul's strategic metaphor in 2 Corinthians 4:7. An argument could be made that Paul's metaphor of "treasure in earthen vessels" (θησαυρὸν ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν) is active in its classification, that is, it is completely unique to Pauline literature and unpredictable apart from its context. As proof of this claim, the following methodology will be applied. First, if this metaphor is indeed active, then it may be *identified* as such through signalling (SFL). Second, it can be further tested for active status by how *frequently* or *infrequently* it occurs in a defined corpus (CL). Third, if active classification is bestowed on it, then the metaphor will need a detailed consideration of context (RT) for its proper interpretation.

Treasure in Earthen Vessels: 2 Corinthians 4:7

The phrase "treasure in earthen vessels" (θησαυρὸν ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν) is, at the most basic level, one of Paul's most paradoxical statements. Byrnes locates the meaning of this metaphor in the OT usage of clay jars in sin offering rites.[32] He argues that when the priests finished with the vessels, they were smashed as a symbolic picture of the destruction of sin. Harris comes closer to the meaning of the metaphor when he writes that the clay (σκεύεσιν) vessels, "although weak in

sometimes applied to refer to the combination of the macro-context (text genre of which a passage is a part) and the interdiscursive/intertextual context (outside texts to which the passage is connected). While these terms are helpful they still do not include or consider the overlap of background context, or the social-cultural environment which members of a society share. See Frans H. van Eemeren, *Strategic Maneuvering in Argumentative Discourse* (Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2010), 18-19.

[32] Michael Byrnes, Conformation to the Death of Christ and the Hope of the Resurrection: An Exegetico-Theological Study of 2 Corinthians 4, 7-15 and Philippians 3, 7-11 (Rome, Italy: Gregorian University Press, 2003), 49.

themselves, become God's powerful instruments in communicating the gospel."[33] The point offered here is that, once again, subjectively speculating over the meaning of a metaphor may lead to interpretations that are far removed or close to the text, but not *true* to intended meaning of the text. In light of these considerations, what does the objective methodology of signalling, frequency, and context have to say?

Signalling of the Metaphor

In general, the following rule in metaphorical classification is important to note: a metaphor that does not possess explicit syntactical markers is more than likely active. Explicitness, or inexplicitness, in marking aids in determining the ambiguity of the metaphor. The relationship of the terms to one another either highlights or reduces the ambiguity of the metaphor. So, it may be asked with respect to markedness, is the metaphor in question explicitly marked (*signalled*) for the reader? Moreover, if the metaphor is marked, what are its constituent terms?[34] These two questions provide the foundation for identifying the metaphor as active.

Two observations suggest that the metaphor "treasure in earthen vessels" (θησαυρὸν ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν) is unmarked in the text. First, the metaphor is located within a prepositional phrase. Halliday argues that prepositional phrases downgrade metaphors, causing them to lose their status as recognizable entities.[35] Because

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[33] Murray J. Harris, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 340.

[34] The terminology for metaphorical study is somewhat technical in nature. Usually, metaphors are described as possessing three important parts: the T-term (*unconventional referent*), the V-term (*conventional referent*), and the G-term (*similarity/analogy*). These are shorthand for a metaphor's topic, vehicle, and grounds. In other words, the vehicle (*V-term*) is the metaphor itself, the T-term (*topic*) is the referent to which the metaphor's characteristics are applied, and the G-term (*grounds*) is the further information provided which illuminates the characteristics of the metaphor. For example, in the sentence, "The politician is a fox, you cannot trust what he say," the T-term is *the politician,* the V-term is *fox,* and the G-term is the phrase, *you cannot trust what he says.*

[35] M. A. K. Halliday, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (4d ed.; ed. M. I. M. Matthiessen; New York: Routledge, 2004), 650.

prepositional phrases are syntactically subordinate, they push the metaphor further down the chain of interpretation making it secondary for the reader rather than primary. Second, the metaphor is introduced by an ambiguous first person plural copular verb, "we have" (Ἔχομεν). According to Goatly's markers (see table 1.1), the metaphor does not contain an explicit signal. Thus, since the metaphor is in a downgraded syntactical construction and it is indistinct in its signalling, then it initially may be classified as active.

As a result of this initial classification, the metaphor's terms may be disclosed. The T-term (*unconventional referent*) of the active metaphor is the embedded subject "we" in the first person plural verb. The V-term (*conventional referent*) is the phrase, "treasure in earthen vessels." The G-term (*analogy/similarity*) is conspicuously absent in the immediate context. The metaphor is followed by a purpose/result clause, "so that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us." It is preceded by an OT allusion to Genesis 1:3 (cf. Isaiah 9:2), describing light shining out of darkness in reference to the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." Certainly, either one of these phrases would need more attention to draw out the connections Paul is making for the reader. So, the G-term does not explicitly give an answer for how to interpret the metaphor.

The metaphor's marking, specifically with respect to how it is syntactically arranged, point to active status. In other words, the metaphor is both inexplicitly marked and syntactically ambiguous for the reader. This structural ambiguity creates tension for the reader and the possibility of multiple interpretations. While these characteristics provide a first step in objectively measuring the nature of the metaphor, it is also important to examine the metaphor's frequency in order to further test for active classification.

Frequency of the Metaphor

The principle of frequency is sourced in how *common* or *uncommon* a similar metaphorical construction appears in literature of like genres and time periods. Thus, if a metaphor is infrequent in a chosen corpus of texts, then it is most likely active, possibly even newly created by an author. The main tool for determining frequency is the search criteria established by the discipline of CL. Once more, the hybrid model presented in this article relies on applying CL in a reverse

direction, that is, to prove *infrequency* of collocation rather than frequency.

When adopting CL as a component, a similar phrase may show up frequently even though it is not being used metaphorically. Herein lies a vital point to be made about CL; the only contribution that CL can provide is the raw evidence of word occurrences and their collocations. In other words, a CL search will not reveal for a researcher if a phrase is employed metaphorically in a given set of texts. Intuition constrained by the context of the metaphor's occurrence must be applied to determine metaphorical existence.

So, a few parameters are in order before proceeding to the CL search for "treasure in earthen vessels" (θησαυρὸν ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν). Four hypothetical scenarios may exist when examining a phrase for metaphorical frequency. First, a phrase could return a result of *metaphorical* and *frequent*. In this case, the classification is potentially inactive or dead rather than active. Second, an expression might yield a result of *literal* and *frequent*. These outcomes are not considered metaphors. Third, a search might reveal that a phrase is *literal* and *infrequent*. Like a literal, frequent occurrence, these results are discarded. Finally, a search phrase might show a *metaphorical* and *infrequent* quality. It is these search returns that would qualify a metaphor as active.

The search phrase "treasure in" (i.e., θησαυρ* ἐν) will suffice for locating potential metaphors. It is unlikely that a CL search will yield this exact metaphor, but it is possible a similar construction of a "treasure in + substantive noun"[36] might occur. Furthermore, a parameter of N+/-5 will provide more than enough immediate context for determining which of the four possibilities just discussed exist.[37] For ease of viewing, the search results are located in Appendix A.

The primary and secondary corpora search results reveal several occurrences of the phrase "treasure in" (θησαυρ* ἐν), however, none of the instances outside of 2 Corinthians 4:7 appear metaphorical in nature.

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[36] It is probable that other semantic parallels may turn up once the CL search is completed. A reasonable expectation is that "treasure" could occur with a synonym for "earthen vessels."

[37] The linguistic convention N+/-5 denotes the boundaries of the CL search, where N refers to the node words (θησαυρ* ἐν) and +/-5 indicates how many words to the left or right of the node words were taken into consideration.

The initial instance comes from Genesis 43:23 and the well-known story of Joseph putting the treasures of Egypt in the traveling bags of his brothers. The only other example in the LXX was found in Jeremiah 48:8 (41:8), a context where the men who murdered Gedaliah offer Ishmael a bribe of "treasures (wheat, barley, oil and honey) in a field" so that they may not be killed and cast into the cistern.

In the NT, Matthew relates Jesus' use of the collocation, "treasures in heaven" to contrast that which is gathered on earth to what is given in heaven. The metaphorical use here is different from 2 Corinthians 4:7 in that Jesus grounds the metaphor in a principle of the desires of the heart (see Matthew 6:21). With respect to frequency, the phrase is observed only four times in the primary literature corpus, one of which is a parallel text between the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

In the secondary corpus, the *exact* phrase only occurs one time. Philo records how a reserve (θησαυρίζω) is stored up in certain cities (ἐν πόλει). An additional search of the works of Josephus yielded 34 examples of θησαυρ* and its cognates. Specifically, no instances of the node followed by the preposition ἐν or any other similar prepositional phrase were found.[38] Therefore, of all of the search returns in the secondary corpus, none were metaphorical.

It is reasonable to conclude that the linguistic construction used by Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:7, namely, the collocation θησαυρ* ἐν, is both *metaphorical* and *infrequent*. The metaphor could be described as *weak* in its frequency, that is, even though the signalled phrase *substantive* + *preposition* occurs 5 times in the corpora examined, of these 5 occurrences, none yield the syntactical construction, *substantive* + *preposition* + *metaphor*. The fact that the occurrence in 2 Corinthians 4:7 is *metaphorical* and *infrequent* implies that it is active in nature.

Context of the Metaphor

[38] Syntactically, the breakdown for the search was as follows: direct object of verb (13), object of preposition (10), genitive construction (6), indirect object of verb (4), and attributive adjective (1). Surprisingly was the fact that θησαυρ* was often the object of the preposition ἐν rather than the substantive governing the preposition.

Paul did not need to provide a detailed explanation for the cultural references he included in his letters, predominantly because it was a world his readers experienced every day. The problem for modern interpreters of the biblical text is that they are separated from this world, a culture that is completely foreign to them. However, it is not impossible for researchers to understand the cultural context in which Paul and his readers lived. The proposed model presented has benefits for merging Paul's world into the hermeneutical process.

Too often, an interpretation of a metaphor is rushed before all possible options are explored. As a result, readers of the text may unnecessarily or even unknowingly force an interpretation apart from context. Or, in the extreme, metaphorical interpretation is viewed through the lens of a poetically creative process which destroys worlds and opens up new, previously unknown linguistic worlds.[39] It is not difficult to argue that Paul's metaphors are grounded in *actual*, not *hypothetical* contexts. What is left for the modern reader, then, is to reconstruct this context and through intuitive processes, apply this knowledge to the active metaphor in question. The triad of contextual elements (*discourse, immediate,* and *extra-linguistic*) will aid in the interpretation of Paul's earthen vessel metaphor.

Immediate Context

An initial clue in the *immediate* context is the contrastive conjunction (δέ) that introduces Paul's argument. It is possible that Paul is beginning a new thought through the use of this conjunction, but more than likely he is setting up a contrast with the statement he has just made concerning the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of [Jesus] Christ" (φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ). Paul follows this metaphor with a purpose/result clause, "so that the surpassing greatness of power will be from God, and not from ourselves," (ἵνα ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως ᾖ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἡμῶν).

[39] This view is the one held by Paul Ricouer (following Hans-Georg Gadamer) who describes this process as *Horizontverschmelzung* or a "fusion of horizons." For Ricouer, this fusion is a necessity in metaphor because the literal world must be abolished for new worlds to emerge. See Paul Ricouer, *La Métaphore Vive* (Paris: Éditions du Sueil, 1975), 234.

The argument in the immediate words and clauses surrounding the metaphor appears heavily influenced by the knowledge of God's glory, rooted in the preaching of Jesus Christ, "for we do not preach ourselves, but [we preach] Jesus Christ as Lord, and [we preach] ourselves as your slaves through Jesus, (οὐ γὰρ ἑαυτοὺς κηρύσσομεν ἀλλὰ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν κύριον, ἑαυτοὺς δὲ δούλους ὑμῶν διὰ Ἰησοῦν). In short, "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God (φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ) is more than likely an expanded reference to the glory of the gospel which followers of Jesus Christ possess within themselves by virtue of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Discourse Context

The *discourse* context surrounding and leading up to the Pauline metaphor of earthen vessels reveals the qualifications for those who are set apart for new covenant ministry.[40] It provides an awareness of the burden that followers of Jesus Christ can expect to bear for the sake of this calling. Beginning in 2 Corinthians 1:23 and continuing through 7:16, Paul provides for the Corinthians his defense for the new covenant ministry God gave to him. Throughout this section of discourse, he portrays the dispatched gospel ministry in both a positive and negative manner.

Paul's opening statement in 1:23, "now I call God as witness on behalf of my soul," (Ἐγὼ δὲ μάρτυρα τὸν θεὸν ἐπικαλοῦμαι ἐπὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχήν), is the opening statement in support of his argument that he is legitimately grounding his character in the manifest judgment of God. He is aware that another visit could possibly cause the Corinthians pain. His delay in coming to them is not a sign of weakness, but is rather a test to see if they will be obedient to the gospel (2:1-2:13). The Corinthians

[40] I am indebted to F. Alan Tomlinson, PhD for this terminology. The phrase "new covenant ministry" is derived from the statement Paul makes in 2 Corinthians 3:6 that God is the one who made the Corinthians, and Paul, adequate as "servants of a new covenant." Not much later in the discourse, he declares that we "have this ministry," a reference to the previous context of the new covenant.

are to endure the test of suffering which will validate their character and prove their loyalty to Jesus Christ.

The reality of suffering on account of persecution is the core defense of Paul's ministry as he utilizes a stark metaphor from Roman life, the triumphal procession, to prove that God leads captive those who are obedient to the gospel (2:14-2:16b). In turn, this manifests the gospel to those who are being saved and to those who are perishing. The ironic truth is that suffering for the gospel is to the latter "death" while to the former it is "life." This progression in the discourse anticipates one of the key questions of the entire letter, namely, "who is sufficient for these things?" (καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ἱκανός;).

From this hinge in his argument, Paul then gives three answers to his question of who is sufficient to undertake new covenant ministry. He states that sufficiency is characterized by sincerity, not boastful self-promotion (2:17). In short, Paul is not like the so-called false apostles, who are using the word of God deceptively for selfish gain. Next, he claims that this sufficiency is characterized by the reality that the Corinthian church is his letter of recommendation (3:1-3). They are the evidence that Paul does not need outside commendation to legitimize his ministry for the gospel. Finally, sufficiency is characterized by those who possess the empowering Holy Spirit (3:4-6). The context makes clear, therefore, that suffering for the gospel is only able to be endured by those who have the Holy Spirit.

As the earthen vessel metaphor draws closer, Paul locates and further expands his argument for new covenant ministry in the example of Moses, specifically alluding to the incidents of Exodus 34:29-35. In a startling series of statements, Paul says that the ministry of the Corinthians will far exceed that of Moses. Whereas Moses engaged in a ministry of condemnation and death, their ministry will bring life through the Spirit. Ultimately, the glory of new covenant ministry will be greater because of unveiled boldness, a glory that is increasing rather than fading away. Nevertheless, Paul reminds them that their labor will be opposed by the god of this world. He concludes by encouraging them to not lose heart, even though the gospel is veiled by the schemes of the god of this world, it is not veiled in the sight of God. In fact, new covenant ministers are servants who proclaim the gospel right before the face of Christ.

The discourse leading up to the earthen vessel metaphor may be summarized as follows. New covenant ministry is positive in that it results in great glory, however, it is negative in that faithfulness to it results in suffering. This truth is further revealed in the statements Paul makes immediately following the metaphor. In a series of paradoxical word-plays, he describes how the life of Jesus is manifested in his mortal flesh. The participial chain in 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 connected by the contrastive conjunction "but" (ἀλλα) reveals that even if suffering brings physical death, the "the life of Jesus" (ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ) will still be proclaimed. Farther along in the context, Paul gives reassurance that even if "the tent" (τοῦ σκήνους), the physically persecuted mortal body, is torn down that the Corinthians possess a "building from God" (οἰκοδομὴν ἐκ θεοῦ), a permanently resurrected physical body. As a result, this promise leads to a life that is pleasing to the Lord, namely, boldly preaching the gospel in the face of physical suffering. It is this reality of physical suffering that prepares the readers for new covenant ministry. They should expect persecution in the present, but glory in the future.

Extra-Linguistic Context

Paul's earthen vessel metaphor is not only grounded in the context of his present difficulties, but also in the socio-cultural environment of the ancient world. Of possible significance is the discovery of Roman treasure hoards and the *containers* in which they are found. R. Anthony Abdy writes that, "Roman denominational system has left evidence of prolific hoarding of coins. The current number of recorded Roman coin hoards is approaching two thousand."[41] The *prolific* nature of Roman coin hoards is important to establish before one begins to draw connections to the *type* of containers in which they are found. If Roman coin hoards are numerous in the ancient world, then they may be said to reside in the arena of common knowledge within the society.[42] In fact, these finds are

[41] Abdy's estimation of the number of coin hoards as around two thousand was made in 2002; it is even larger today. See Richard Anthony Abdy, *Roman-British Coin Hoards* (Buckinghamshire, UK: Shire Publications, 2002), 7.

[42] Many examples of Roman coin hoards are available for examination. See Roger Brand and Robert Andrew Glendinning Carson, *Coin Hoards from Roman Britain: The Blackmoor Hoard* (vol. 3 of *Recent Coin Hoards from Roman Britain;* UK: British

so common that even amateur archaeologists are stumbling across them.[43] What follows, then, is that the containers in which these Roman coin hoards are stored are images that are understood by both Paul and the readers at Corinth.

Elena Minarovičová remarks that "Coin hoards were deposited in various places. They were hidden underground, in water, in wells, gardens and fields, inside the walls of houses, under floors, in lofts and cellars, under the foundation of buildings, etc."[44] She goes on to reveal that "Many such coin hoards, together with their containers or wrappings, [were] most frequently earthenware vessels."[45] It is significant that these clay jars are imperfect, that is, many of them are cracked or flawed. This first century imagery of a cracked/flawed vessel holding coins fits well with Paul's earthen vessel metaphor in 2 Corinthians 4:7. Therefore, it may be argued that Paul grounds this metaphor in a common visual experience of these treasure hoards to communicate a newly created message, namely, the treasure of the gospel inside of the persecuted Corinthians.

The socio-cultural *extra-linguistic* context of Corinth reveals that vessels were not
only well-known, but also widely used as treasure "hoards." The method of depositing coins in this manner, that is, in clay jars, evokes an image of value within a common instrument. It is not unrealistic to say that Paul's readers would be familiar with the usage of these jars in this manner. As a result, the *extra-linguistic* contextual evidence may be

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Museum, 1982); Robert J. Bull and Olin J. Storvick, "The Gold Coin Hoard at Caesarea," *BA* 56:3 (1993): 116-120; and Josette Elayi, "A Treasure of Coins from Arwad," *JANESCU* 18 (1988): 3-24. The best possible method for geographically locating Roman coin hoards is the electronic compilation by Kris Lockyear, *Coin Hoards of the Roman Republic Online* (New York: American Numismatic Society, 2013).

[43] Dave Crisp, a chef by trade, using a metal-detector found a Roman coin hoard containing 52,500 coins from the 3rd cent. AD. They were buried in an earthenware vessel made of black ceramic ware measuring approximately 50 cm in diameter. See Sam Moorhead, Anna Booth, and Roger Bland, *The Frome Hoard* (UK: British Museum Press, 2010).

[44] Elena Minarovičová, "From the History of Coin Hoards and Money Containers," *BIATEC* (2002): 33.

[45] Ibid.

enough to warrant a relevant connection between the characteristics of a treasure hoard and Paul's active "earthen vessel" metaphor.

Defining and establishing the parameters of context is not an easy activity, especially as observed in the θησαυρ* ἐν metaphor of 2 Corinthians 4:7. The *immediate*, *discourse*, and *extra-linguistic* context were all shown to be relevant factors for determining the interpretative possibilities. Two clues in the immediate context, the contrastive conjunction (de,) and the antecedent purpose/result clause (ἵνα) were presented as evidence for the preaching of the gospel grounded in God's glory and the subsequent humility brought about by obedience to this calling. The discourse context revealed an epistle charged with Paul defending his new covenant ministry in the face of tremendous suffering. The extra-linguistic context provided proof that Corinthian amphoras were not only well-known, but of prevalent usage in the ancient world. The possibility exists that Paul may be drawing the analogy between the fragility of normal, ordinary vessels and the glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Corinthians are comparable to earthen vessels because of their mortal flesh. As a result, the incomparable treasure of the gospel is revealed in this manner to demonstrate the greatness of God in the humility of man.

Conclusion

Metaphor will always contain a touch of uncertainty due to the ambiguity it occupies with respect to interpretation. Nevertheless, this article has sought to push the quantifiable study of metaphor forward so that interpretation may reside less in the subjective realm. Metaphor should not be viewed as an anomaly or even decoration within the rhetoric of Paul. It should be apparent that the objective analysis of metaphor deserves a central role in the faithful understanding and application of the biblical text.

The focus of this article was on identifying and interpreting one of Paul's strategic metaphors in 2 Corinthians 4:7, "treasure in earthen vessels" (θησαυρὸν ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν) using a hybrid functional linguistic model. An argument was made that Paul's metaphor of "treasure in earthen vessels" (θησαυρὸν ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν) is active in its classification, that is, it is completely unique to Pauline literature and unpredictable apart from its context. First, the metaphor was

examined for how it emitted linguistic signals in the text. It was concluded that the metaphor is best classified as active, that is, newly created by Paul for rhetorical effect. Additionally, the metaphor was tested for its relative frequency across a balanced sample of corpora. The conclusion was reached that the metaphor was infrequent, strengthening the claim of its active status. Finally, the contextual component was examined, resulting in a renewed understanding that Paul grounds this metaphor in the broader discourse theme of suffering in 2 Corinthians and in the first century socio-cultural context of clay amphora treasure hoards. His purpose is to reveal that the glory of the gospel can reside in persecuted physical flesh, a key signature of his new covenant ministry.

It is true that the potential for more research exists in the field of biblical metaphor. Hopefully, this article furthers the claim that language is best understood by interpreters at the functional level before subjective intuition is utilized. If metaphor is applied through the grid of SFL, both at the *theoretical* and *pragmatic* levels, then plausible and accurate interpretations may begin to emerge. Thus, metaphor should remain firmly entrenched as a central component of not only linguistics, but also faithful biblical exegesis. This article's contribution of a hybrid functional linguistic model is simply one step forward in this exciting new domain of metaphorical analysis.

Appendix A

KWIC Primary and Secondary Corpus Search for Treasure in (θησαυρ* ἐν)

Primary Corpus Search[46]

English translation

(1) Gen 43:23 Your father has given to you treasure in your sacks
(2) Jer 48:8 Do not slay us because there are to us treasures in the field

[46] No occurrences were observed in the Greek OT Apocrypha or Pseudepigrapha as well as the Apostolic Fathers.

(3) Matt 6:20[47] But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor
(4) Matt 19:20 And give and you will have treasure in heaven, and come follow me

Greek Translation

(1) Gen 43:23 πατέρων ὑμῶν ἔδωκεν ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐν τοῖς μαρσίπποις ὑμῶν
(2) Jer 48:8 ἀνέλῃς ἡμᾶς ὅτι εἰσὶν ἡμῖν θησαυροὶ ἐν ἀγρῷ
(3) Matt 6:20 θησαυρίζετε δὲ ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐν οὐρανῷ, ὅπου οὔτε σὴς οὔτε
(4) Matt 19:20 καὶ δὸς καὶ ἕξεις θησαυρὸν ἐν οὐρανοῖς, και δεῦρο ἀκολούθει μοι

Secondary Corpus Search[48]

English Translation

(1) Ios 1:111 Now food, a fifth part, will be treasured in the city

Greek Translation

(1) Ios 1:111 τροφὰς ἔσται δ' ἴσως μέρος πέμπτον θησαυριστέον ἐν πόλει

[47] See Mk 10:21 as a Synoptic parallel passage.
[48] No occurrences were observed in Strabo. There were 34 instances of θησαυρ* and cognates in the works of Josephus, but no instances of the node followed by the preposition ἐν or any other similar prepositional phrase.

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An Introduction to the Hermeneutics of Old Testament Narrative

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Dedication

One of my first seminary classes was Alan Tomlinson's Biblical Hermeneutics. Like many first year seminarians, I was both eager and confident. Eager to learn more about the biblical text I had been studying for the past ten years; confident that my knowledge was already at an advanced stage. By the end of that first class period, my eagerness remained, but my confidence did not. Tomlinson made it abundantly clear that I knew little to nothing about the Bible, and that my study skills were woefully inadequate for the task before me. In the decade since that first class, I have taken Dr. Tomlinson's first—and most important—lesson to heart: in order to study the Bible correctly, we must seek to understand the text in that most-important of all environments: its context. Any student (current or former) of Dr. Tomlinson will tell you that the one thing he drills into his students—the *sine que non* of his classes—is context. Context is king. To ignore the original context of the biblical material is to misunderstand that material.

Dr. Tomlinson passionately pleaded with his students to draw our theology *from* the text, not to lay our theology on the text. To do that, we had to learn how rightly find the author's intended meaning in the text, based on the original context. To do that also meant a lifetime of careful study in a variety of areas—such as language, historical backgrounds, and genre study—each area another tool in our hermeneutic tool kit. Because of Dr. Tomlinson's profound impact on my Bible study, I think it fitting to honor him by introducing Bible students to an important tool for their own tool kits.

The purpose of this article is to provide for students of the Bible with an overview of one of the methodologies that have developed within the field of Old Testament narrative criticism/theology: Poetics. Poetics studies how narrative has been constructed, as literature. Adele Berlin

writes, "Poetics, the science of literature, is not an interpretive effort—it does not aim to elicit meaning from a text. Rather it aims to find the building blocks of literature and the rules by which they are assembled."[1] Does this mean that Poetics have nothing to offer the field of theology? On the contrary: as this article will demonstrate, the "building blocks of literature" exist to construct the author's theological message.[2]

This article will provide an overview of how the field of Poetics relates to Old Testament hermeneutics. First, this article will then briefly sketch the development toward Poetics in biblical theology of the 20th century, and summarize the methodology of four significant scholars in the field. It will then address two concerns that students might have in treating the Bible as literature. As I will demonstrate, to interpret the biblical text as literature does not in any way diminish its inerrancy and authority. Indeed, Poetics can help the interpreter to find the intended theological lesson of the biblical material. With this in mind, I will conclude with a discussion of how one element of Poetics—characterization—can be used to identify the ideological/theological intent of the author. It is my hope that it can serve as a jumping off point for students to begin to study the method themselves to help with a lifetime of successful Bible study.

Movement Toward Poetics in the 20th Century (In Brief)

It has long been recognized that the biblical material has the mark of high literary merit, however there has often been difficulty, especially within Old Testament theology, with coming to terms with the literary nature of the text. Previously, the term "literary-criticism" referred to source-critical approaches that were not interested in literary devices, structure, or intent. The text was atomized, and interest was in tracing an evolutionary development of ideas across hypothetical strata reconstructed within a Hegelian dialectic. This "literary" approach, as Gros Luis notes, was quite different than what "teachers of literature

[1] Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 15.

[2] For the purposes of this paper, I will use the terms "ideological" and "theological" interchangeably.

do."[3] In the Old Testament, narrative makes up approximately 40% of the corpus, but scholars were breaking apart the narrative nature of the text, ignoring the possibilities of a truly literary approach.[4] This did not do the text justice. Sternberg writes that the Bible is, "[n]ot just an artful work; not a work marked by some aesthetic property; not a work resorting to so-called literary devices; not a work that the interpreter may choose (or refuse) to consider from a literary viewpoint or, in that unlovely piece of jargon, as literature; *but a literary work.*"[5] The clear implication of this is that to understand the biblical text, one must appropriately understand its literary nature.

Though a narrative approach to biblical studies has been present from ancient time, the real beginning of biblical narrative criticism proper came in the late 1960s. James Muilenburg's 1968 presidential address at the Society of Biblical Literature marked the beginning of a turn beyond Form Critical approaches to the text, and toward Rhetorical

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[3] Kenneth R.R. Gros Luis, "Some Methodological Considerations," in *Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives* (eds. K. R. R. Gros Luis and J. S. Ackerman; vol. 2 of; Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1982), 14. Clines writes that narrative study does not necessarily ignore the lessons that may be learned from the "vast investment of scholarly effort in analysis of the pre-history of the Pentateuchal text...." However, he also notes that "in the end he has to take his stand with the text that won out, and not with JEDP or whatever." David J. A. Clines, "Story and Poem: The Old Testament as Literature and as Scripture," in *Beyond Form Criticism: Essays in Old Testament Literary Criticism* (ed. P. R. House; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 33.

[4] Bruce K. Waltke and Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 93. Barr has noted that the clearest marking within the complex of information in the text is that of temporal sequence, meaning that there is an intentional presence of story. James Barr, *The Concept of Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999), 345. See also James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," in *Beyond Form Criticism: Essays in Old Testament Literary Criticism* (ed. P. R. House; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), who noted intentional rhetorical devices within the text that require closer study.

[5] Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (vol. The Indiana literary biblical series; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), 2. Emphasis added.

Criticism in biblical studies.[6] Muilenburg did not argue that Form Criticism should be abandoned—indeed, he considered himself a form critic—but noted the limits of the discipline. He further argued that the Old Testament material showed strong evidence of aesthetic and rhetorical construction. Around the same time, scholars such as Brevard Childs (1970) were developing theological approaches that shifted toward a more canonical reading, focusing on the final form of the text and the ways in which that form had been shaped to communicate theological intent.[7] He developed this in response to what he called a "crisis" in biblical theology that, among other things, shifted attention away from the text and toward revelation in history. Further, several scholars began arguing for a story approach to biblical theology, which began shifting the discussion from a historical approach to OT theology and toward a literary one.[8] However, these approaches, though taking the

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[6] Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," For more on the history of narrative theology, structuralism, and poetics, see Paul R. House, "The Rise and Current Status of Literary Criticism of the Old Testament," in *Beyond Form Criticism: Essays in Old Testament Literary Criticism* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992); Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1990), 1-10; John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1984), 141-54; Walter Bodine, "Discourse Analysis of Biblical Literature: What it Offers," in *Discourse Analysis of Biblical Literature* (ed. Walter Bodine; The Society of Biblical Literary Semeia Studies; Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1995), 1-18; Richard Jacobson, "The Structuralists and the Bible," in *Beyond Form Criticism: Essays in Old Testament Literary Criticism* (ed. P. R. House; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992) Gerhard Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 132-8. This is not to mention von Rad's own theology, which viewed the material as a constructed actualization of the traditions. On the surface, this is similar to a literary approach, but von Rad's interest was in tracing the tradition-history of the text, which was still atomistic in methodology.

[7] Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia,: Westminster Press, 1970); Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1978).

[8] See, for example, Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of BIblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1974), James Barr, *The Scope and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1980), For a list of other works on narrative theology

narrative seriously as literature, did not emphasize how the narrative itself functioned *as narrative*.

By the 1980s, the field of Poetics hit its stride. Developing out of Formalism, which had begun in non-biblical literary studies in the early 20th century,[9] Poetics addressed the form and function of narrative. In this section, I will discuss the most significant and influential scholars whose work drove and defined the field of Poetics for the next two decades. This is not intended to be an exhaustive discussion. Indeed, to interact with all of the authors working within Poetics (or other similar literary approaches) would extend beyond the space allotted here.[10] What this will show is that the field went from the vague readings of the 1970s toward a well-defined and fruitful field of its own. I encourage any student interested in further study of Poetics to begin with these four authors. Though not all of them are evangelical in their approach to or view of the biblical material, their methodology in analyzing the *final form* of the narrative text is quite helpful. In the section below, I will also highlight important terms so that interested students can know what to pay attention to in their own study of the field.

Robert Alter

In 1981, Robert Alter argued in *The Art of Biblical Narrative* that literary art plays a crucial role in shaping biblical narrative.[11] Rather than looking behind the text to the hypothetical sources to explain such features as repetition and apparent contradictions, Alter argued that such features may rather be explained via literary devices that the author (or redactor) intentionally utilized to fit his rhetorical purpose. In Alter, the literary

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during this time, see Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, 132-8.

[9] For instance, see Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (trans. W. Trask; Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1953), and the collection of works by Vladimir Propp, which was published after his death: Vladimir Propp, *Theory and History of Folklore* (Theory and History of Literature 5; trans. A. Y. Martin and R. P. Martin; Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1984).

[10] See, for example, the sources referenced in note 6 in Longman III, "Literary Approaches to Old Testament Study," 99.

[11] Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 1.

movement in biblical studies found a solid and purposeful methodology. Alter himself expressed his surprise that such literary approaches are new in OT studies, contending that the religious nature of the text hindered such study.[12] However, in lieu of the myriad of suggested meanings within the text, Alter (though he denies that any text can be said to have a single, absolute meaning) writes that "it seems to me that we shall come much closer to the range of intended meanings—theological, psychological, moral, or whatever—of the biblical tale by understanding precisely how it is told."[13]

Alter's approach cannot be characterized as evangelistic, since he is willing to cast the text in the category of fiction. For Alter, the artistic touches of the author reflect his freedom to mix historical data with fictional material, creating what he calls historicized prose fiction.[14] Regardless, his methodology (which is not meant to be exhaustive) allows the reader to appreciate the quality of the biblical material and determine the author's intended meaning. He writes, "Close attention to the literary strategies through which that truth was expressed may actually help us to understand it better, enable us to see the minute elements of complicated design in the Bible's sacred history."[15] In doing this, he suggests the reader pay close attention to certain elements in the text: 1) **words (or phrases),** particularly any that are **repeated**; also important is the fact that terse nature of Hebrew narrative makes any included word quite important; 2) **actions**; 3) **dialogue**; and, 4) **narration**.

Concerning **words and actions**, Alter makes much of the convention of **repetition**. A key element of this is the **type-scene**. Alter argues that the author draws on specific conventions that were based on tacit agreement between him and his audience. That is, they expected to find certain conventions within the text and the author knew and fulfilled those expectations. While many of these conventions have been lost to us in course of time, he believes that one element—the **type-**

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[12] Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative,* 13, 20-21. Alter's point is doubtful. The religious nature of the OT did not prevent the atomistic approaches that dissected the text. Indeed, literary analysis is much more likely to uphold a religious reading of the text. It is the source-critical enterprises that undermined the text as having religious power.

[13] Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative,* 222.

[14] *Ibid.*, 26-37.

[15] *Ibid.*, 53.

scene—is clearly evident in the text. For instance, the betrothal scenes that repeat in the Pentateuch are type-scenes that the author has purposefully built into the text. These are not evidence of multiple sources, but rather key scenes in the larger narrative. In suggesting this, Alter moves beyond the *Gattung* of form-criticism (beyond the *sitz im leben*), to posit a tradition that has been recast by the author to fit his purpose.[16] The type-scenes serve as a means to connect the scene to the larger narrative, and the convention provides a rubric by which the reader can interpret its significance. Thus, any deviation from convention would serve great rhetorical purpose. Further, while repetition of phrases or details may seem like primitive components of the Hebrew narrative, it is usually quite purposeful.[17] He writes, "The Bible does not employ symmetrical double plots, but it constantly insists on parallels of situation and reiterations of motif that provide moral and psychological commentary on each other."[18]

Similarly, Alter argues that **narration and dialogue** are quite deliberate means to an end. To him, dialogue is one of the main instruments by which the narrator allows the characters to reveal themselves.[19] Dialogue is important, and should be carefully noted. Narration, on the other hand, is often used to provide sufficient details that allow the reader to judge the words and deeds of a character.[20] Indeed, Alter points to these elements as important means of **characterization**. He contends that the biblical writer developed a quite sophisticated means of presenting its characters: 'Character can be revealed through the report of actions; through appearance, gestures, posture, costume; through one character's comments on another; through direct speech by the character; through inward speech, either summarized or quoted as interior monologue; or through statements by the narrator about the attitude and in tensions of the personages, which may come either as flat assertions or motivated explanations."[21] For Alter, this represents a **scale of reliability**: a character's speech (or

[16] *Ibid.*, 61.
[17] *Ibid.*, 111-112.
[18] *Ibid.*, 115.
[19] *Ibid.*, 82.
[20] *Ibid.*, 96.
[21] *Ibid.*, 146.

another's speech about him) is a more reliable indication of who he is than his actions; the narrator's words about a character are the most reliable.[22]

Alter does not reject source-criticism, but he does argue that many of the assumptions that drive the practice may not be as fruitful as is often claimed. He writes, "the supposedly primitive narrative is subjected by scholars to tacit laws like the law of stylistic unity, of noncontradiction, of non digression, of non repetition, and by these dim but purportedly universal lights is found to be composite, deficient, or incoherent. (If just these four laws were applied respectively to *Ulysses, The Sound and the Fury, Tristram Shandy,* and *Jealousy,* each of those novels would have to be relegated to the dustbin of shoddily 'redacted' literary scraps.)"[23] Thus, instead of a crude or simple text, Alter finds in the OT a highly sophisticated work of art.

Adele Berlin

In 1983, Adele Berlin published her own textbook on Poetics, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Literature.* Like Alter, her intent was not to produce an exhaustive description of the discipline. Instead, her focus was primarily on issues of **characterization** and **point of view**. Berlin expounds on a basic distinction between types of characters, particularly **round** versus **flat** characters. Round characters are full-fledged, given fuller description with more than a single characteristic. Flat characters (also known as types) are usually built around a single trait. She adds a third type, the **functionary character (or agent)** who is not characterized. Berlin uses the stories of Michal, Bathsheba, and Abigail to illustrate how the biblical narrative can utilize these types of characters. In fact, she demonstrates how the same character can be round in one scene and a flat one in another. Additionally, Berlin describes the means by which the biblical narrative provides characterization. In this, she does not diverge from Alter. Like him, she notes the **rarity of physical description** in the OT. When physical description does come, it is important.[24]

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[22] Ibid.

[23] *Ibid.,* 23.

[24] Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative,* 34.

Where Berlin provides the most headway in the discipline is her insight into **point of view**. Drawing on literary theory, she shows how the point of view of the narrative (which she likens to a camera in a movie) is the means by which the narrator mediates what he wants known about characters. In focusing on point of view, it is important to keep in mind that the reader sees only what the narrator (who is omniscient and completely reliable) wants him to see.[25] It is through the point of view, in fact the multiple points of view, of the narrative that the narrator is able to build ambiguity and irony. Berlin points to the example of Abraham's promise to his son that God would see to the sacrifice to come (Gen 22:8). The reader has a knowledge greater than Abraham, though Abraham's point of view is not as accurate. This instills into his words a fuller meaning, the irony of which is not lost on the reader.[26] She writes, "Recognizing the multiple points of view is the first step in discovering the point of view of the implied author; and this is the first step in discovering the meaning and purpose of the story."[27]

Berlin's description of poetic devices is short. However, she does the field a great service by illustrating the principles in an examination of the book of Ruth.

Shimon Bar-Efrat

Bar-Efrat's *Narrative Art in the Bible*[28] is similar in scope to Berlin's *Poetics and Interpretations*. Less theoretical than Alter and Sternberg, Bar-Efrat devotes a chapter to each of the following topics: the **narrator**; **characters**; **plot**; **time and space**; and **style**. He concludes with a discussion of how the narrative of Amnon and Tamar illustrates these principles. Bar-Efrat's book is broader in scope than Berlin's, but much more focused and practical than Alter's. While he does not tread much new ground (though his discussion of plot is much clearer than others), he does demonstrate that by the end of the 1980s, the field of Poetics had developed from an undefined method, to one with clearly defined

[25] *Ibid.*, 44.
[26] *Ibid.*, 52.
[27] *Ibid.*, 82.
[28] Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2004).

goals and foci.

Herbert Chanan Brichto

In his *Toward a Grammar of Biblical Poetics*, Hebert Brichto seeks not to provide "a guide, manual, or handbook of either literary criticism in general or biblical poetics in particular," but rather to show the ways that the biblical narratives have been constructed with a didactic purpose.[29] He writes, "The *poetical grammar* posited in the title of this work is thus a hypothesis to be demonstrated, namely, that there is a set of rules that will, when uncovered, show that the Hebrew Scriptures, as a whole and in its constitutive units, constitute a unitary design and a single 'authorial voice,' even though the several or many authors who contribute to that voice and design may have lived centuries apart."[30]

In his introductory chapter, Brichto outlines several elements of narrative that help with this goal. There are the standard features of most Poetic studies—setting, characterization, plot, and point of view—but Brichto makes significant contribution in two areas. First, he writes of what he calls "**free direct discourse**," which he defines as "the speech of a character that in some way must be understood as being *either more or less* than what the person portrayed as a character would have said in that particular circumstance in real life."[31] In other words, the dialogue found in biblical narrative is not necessarily a word for word record of what was said. It is a summary, worded as it has been to demonstrate some element of the character that the author deems most important for his didactic purpose. Additionally, Brichto discusses the **Synoptic/Resumptive Technique** in Hebrew narrative. This is the treatment of a single event twice in the text (e.g. the two creation accounts in Genesis). The first account is broader and less-detailed. The second account is usually longer and fills in details missing from the first. Such a technique allows the author to produce a dramatic effect that enhances the account.[32]

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[29] Herbert Chanan Brichto, *Toward a Grammar of Biblical Poetics: Tales of the Prophets* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), viii.
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] *Ibid.*, 12.
[32] *Ibid.*, 13-19.

Brichto also address the question of **genre** (which he notes that Alter and Berlin overlook). He is dissatisfied with the tendency of many critics to "pigeonholed" a text by laying on it, *a priori*, a classification of genre.[33] Similar to Meir Sternberg, Brichto is uncomfortable with classifying the biblical narrative as fiction, writing, "The difference, then, between fictional story (realistic and verisimilitudinous though it may be) and history lies in the mind of the author, in the intent that guided his pen."[34] The use of genre is tenuous, based on assumptions on which not everyone can agree, and often even based on the arrogant belief that the biblical text is "primitive," and thus simple (e.g. solely etiological). He writes, "But it is condescension to our grandparents and a childish generational conceit to attribute to the best of yesteryear's minds the kinds of childishness that attribute only to the youngest children or to the least sophisticated adults of our own generation."[35]

Brichto does not claim that his Poetics is science; indeed, he states that it is an art.[36] His discussion on this is an important definition of the usefulness of the method in interpretation. He writes:

> It aims to discern the nature of a literary text and to arrive at the message that the author was trying to communicate in it. Its discourse, therefore, is in the nature of argument, not proof or demonstration; it aims to persuade the reader as to the reasonableness of the argument—to convince him that essential elements of the argument correspond to what it was in the author's mind to convey. The argument, further, eventuates in *an* interpretation, not *the* interpretation.[37]

Having laid the historical (and, to some extent, methodological) groundwork for the field of Old Testament Poetics, I now turn to some of its practical matters. I want to address here two significant concerns that evangelicals—with a high view of the inerrancy and authority of the biblical text—may have concerning Poetics. As we saw above, many of

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[33] *Ibid.*, 22.
[34] *Ibid.*, 23.
[35] *Ibid.*, 29.
[36] *Ibid.*, 46.
[37] *Ibid.* Emphasis is original.

the scholars approaching the text as a work of literature are willing to dismiss the text as, to various degrees, fictional and unhistorical (or, at the very least, ahistorical). This may leave students wondering if Poetics is compatible with evangelical hermeneutics. Hopefully, this next section will allay any such concerns. As I will demonstrate, we can utilize the tools of Poetics while at the same time holding that the text is both historically accurate and theologically authoritative.

Poetics and History: Mutually Exclusive?

As we saw above, a narrative approach is not, strictly speaking, concerned with the historicity of events described in the text. For instance, George Stroup wrote, "it may be that the text's true authority is not that it refers to historical events or that it preserves eternal truths; rather its authority may be that of the world it portrays and the reality it depicts."[38] That is to say, that the construction of the story creates a world in and of itself, and historical events behind the text (if they even happened) are irrelevant. Barr prefers to read the biblical material as "story."[39] For him, the Old Testament is not history, though it may contain historical material. However, since it contains myth, legend, and folklore, it may not be called history. What we are left with is not history, but the text, constructed as a story. Barr thus creates a paradigm by which history and story are mutually exclusive.

Similar to Barr, Robert Alter believes that narrative may be drawn from historical events, but prefers the term "prose fiction," or "fictionalized history."[40] He writes that whatever the history behind the text, the author has put the elements into an "imaginative reenactment of history by a gifted writer who organizes his materials along certain thematic biases and according to his own remarkable intuition of the psychology of the characters."[41]

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[38] George W Stroup, "A Bibliographical Critique," *Theology Today* 32, no. 2 (1975), 142.

[39] This section is drawn from Barr, *The Concept of Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective*, 345-361. See also, Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, 133-136.

[40] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 23-54.

[41] *Ibid.*, 40.

Meir Sternberg has no problem reading a literary text like the Bible as history, though the events portrayed therein may not be completely factual. To him, the difference between fiction and historiography is not the presence of false details (for then any work of history that contains any inaccuracies must be dismissed from being history), but rather of intentionality.[42] A work is a piece of fiction only if the author exercises an "at will flaunting of free invention."[43] In regards to form, there is no clear differentiation between historiography and fiction—works within both can contain very similar elements. The biblical material intends to portray actual events and an actual God; this makes it history. Sternberg writes, "Were the narrative written or read as fiction, then God would turn from the lord of history into a creature of the imagination, with the most disastrous results."[44]

In Sternberg we find an appropriate response to the argument of Barr. However we may define history, there can be little doubt that the authors of the narrative material considered what they were writing to be based in actual events and especially actual saving events of God. Waltke has noted three elements that indicate the historical intent of the author: 1) they were "obsessed with locating events in time and space;" 2) they appeal to written records; and 3) they used "commemorative markers," such as "to this day."[45] To this we could add how essential the saving acts of God in history are to the covenantal relationship portrayed in the texts. Their obedience was due to Yahweh because He had delivered them from Egypt (Ex. 20:2).[46] The theological force of the narrative is based on the history it describes. As evangelicals, then, we can be assured that a literary approach to the narrative material of the Bible cannot, at the same time, be an historical one.

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[42] Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, 23-25.
[43] *Ibid.*, 29.
[44] *Ibid.*, 33.
[45] Waltke and Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach*, 96.
[46] Cf. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, p.25-35.

Scripture or Literature? Why Not Both?

The next question is this: is biblical narrative (or the Bible as a whole) simply literature, or is it something more? Krister Stendahl has noted the dangers of treating the Biblical material simply from a literary perspective, as a classic rather than a Holy Scripture. In his words, "The normative nature of the Bible requires, however, a serious attention to the original intentions of the texts."[47] Because of this, the Bible should be read as both a "classic" and as Holy Scripture. Its artistic features do not trump its normative purpose and function—instead they serve it. Grant Osborne writes, "The perfect example of this is the exodus narrative. It communicates meaning on two levels, the historical events it purports to transmit, and the theological perspective it provides for those events."[48]

The difficulty is that there is little to no direct theological reflection within the narrative material itself. As Barr writes, "the story is not theology, but is the 'raw material' of theology."[49] What he means is that the story does not contain abstract theological reflection. There may be bits of theology there—such as creeds that serve as theological reflections (or precursors) to the story—but the story is not written (in his view) to be theology.[50] This includes the Deuteronomistic History, of which Barr writes, "There is something unsatisfactory about this as a theological explanation for national disaster."[51]

Contra Barr, Meir Sternberg argues that the text is *both* literature *and* sacred text. He writes, "The question is *how rather than whether* the literary coexists with the social, the doctrinal, the philosophical. In

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[47] Krister Stendahl, "The Bible as a Classic and the Bible as Holy Scripture," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 103, no. 1 (1984), 9.

[48] Grant R. Osborne, "Historical Narrative and Truth in the Bible," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48, no. 4 (2005), 685.

[49] Barr, *The Concept of Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective*, 354; cf. Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (trans. J. A. Baker; 2 vols.; vol. 1; repr. of 6th edition; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), 32.

[50] Cf. Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (2vols.; New York,: Harper, 1962).

[51] Barr, *The Concept of Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective*, 357. Barr does not explain what he means by "unsatisfactory," but this betrays an alien standard that he is placing on the material. It does not satisfy *his* conception of what theology is; therefore, it is not theology.

ancient times, the two were so closely related as to become indistinguishable."[52] This is similar to Stendahl's position, but Sternberg is helpful in that he further explains how the text has come to hold both a literary and ideological function. He identifies three types of discourse within the narrative, which cooperate with one another: ideological, historiographic, and aesthetic.[53] Unlike Barr, Sternberg is not bound to historical-critical methodology that tends to dissect the narrative into constituent parts. He does not have to separate the historiographical nature of the text from the ideological or aesthetic. The three are symbiotic and together make up the whole, producing a text that is both historical and ideological, presented in a highly aesthetic way. It is on this basis that narrative analysis may serve theological purpose.

If the text is ideological (and thus normative), the question still remains: how do we sift through the aesthetics to arrive at ideology?[54] This is where the methodology of Poetics helps. Waltke notes the ways that biblical narrative produces its ideology. The theology of the text—the author's intended ideology—is buried "in the layers of discourse and story."[55] The author does this because story is able engage the emotions of the reader in a way that a pure theological discourse would not. As Auerbach writes, "Far from seeking, like Homer, merely to make us forget our own reality for a few hours, [the Bible] seeks to overcome our reality:

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[52] Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, 35-6. Emphasis added.

[53] *Ibid.*, 41. Sternberg means by aesthetic the material that may be invention. I would use a different definition: aesthetics includes the material that allows the author to produce literary effect, but within the scope of divine revelation. cf. Gordon J. Wenham, *Story as Torah: Reading Old Testament Narrative Ethically* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000), who would argue for a historical, literary, and rhetorical context within the text. By rhetorical, he means "how an author writing in a particular context organized his work to try to persuade his readers to respond in the way he wanted" (p. 3).

[54] "The pedagogical problem is how students are to be invited to notice, understand, comment on, and even offer judgments about the theology and moral values in a book that is sacred to a large part of our society." Thayer S. Warshaw, "Some Pedagogical Considerations," in *Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives* (ed. K. R. R. Gros Luis; vol. 2 of; Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1982), 33.

[55] Waltke and Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach*, 104.

we are to fit our own life into its world, feel ourselves to be elements in its structure of universal history."[56] This is an implicit style of teaching, rather than an explicit one, and it allows theological learning by the way it allows the reader to experience the development and growth of characters on a variety of levels.[57]

While such an interaction lends itself well to reader-response analysis, it is important to remember that the author has an ideological perspective and intent, and that ignoring it is dangerous. Though the narrative may affect and instruct different readers on different levels, as Stendahl noted above, it would extinguish the ideological intent of the author to ignore the message he is trying to get across. To use an example from modern fiction, a reader may react to *To Kill a Mockingbird* in a variety of ways, and relate to various characters on different levels. However, if the reader does not recognize the implicit critique of racial injustice that is the author's intent in the novel, one will misread Harper Lee's intended ideology. The same may be said for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Both novels can be enjoyed and experienced without appeal to ideology, but doing so ignores the texts' *raison d'être*. The narrative of the Old Testament (while not necessarily fiction) was written explicitly with ideological intent, and the narrative form allows the reader to experience the ideological world of the text on a more personal level.

I argue that in order to rightly use the text in a normative fashion, one must understand its narrative nature and literary features. John Goldingay correctly points out that though the biblical text exists to address theological concerns, it does so mainly in the form of narrative.[58] He writes, "God's person emerges in a series of contexts. God is a creator, then a destroyer. God relates to a family in the concerns of its ongoing

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[56] Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, 12; cf. Waltke and Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach*, 104.

[57] Waltke and Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach*, 105.

[58] He writes that systematic theology needs to "do justice to the essentially narrative character of the OT and NT gospel if it is to do justice to the nature of biblical faith." John Goldingay, "Biblical Narrative and Systematic Theology," in *Between Two Horizons: Spannig New Testament Studies and Systematic Theology* (eds. J. B. Green and M. Turner; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 130.

family life, such as the finding of a home, the birth of children, and the arranging of marriages; God then relates to a nation in the different demands of its life, which include God's becoming a war-maker."[59] The material, though presented in story form, shows the unmistakable mark of theological intent.[60] Though the text does contain literary devices, it transcends them, and is best described as *kerygma*.[61] This is evident in the designation of the first five books of the OT as *Torah*. Genesis through Deuteronomy were recognized as "instruction," though they contained as much history (i.e., narrative) as they did explicit teaching.[62] Genesis, though it contains little (if any) actual "instruction," is still Torah.[63] The implication is that the community recognized that the stories themselves contained a didactic significance. The Deuteronomistic History is another example. The histories were apparently shaped by a theological agenda, and were intended to be read in that light. Theology should then take into account the narrative nature of the text by shifting its focus to what that narrative teaches about God.

A "Building Block" of Ideology: Characterization

In the final section of this article, I want to discuss in a bit more detail how one specific element of Poetics can help us with our hermeneutics of the text. By paying close attention to this element (and others), the reader can understand how the author has constructed his story, and in so doing, better understand its ideology. One of the basic assumptions behind Poetics is that the biblical material does not contain incidental details. The author has carefully shaped the final form of the text. "Such

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[59] Goldingay, "Biblical Narrative and Systematic Theology," 131.

[60] Cf. Wenham, *Story as Torah: Reading Old Testament Narrative Ethically*, 3; and James L. Crenshaw, *Story and Faith: A Guide to the Old Testament* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1986), who writes that the OT has both "literary artistry and...religious power" (p. 1).

[61] Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981), 298-300.

[62] Sailhammer has noted that even the legal material in the Pentateuch is portrayed within a narrative frame.
John. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative : A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (vol. [Library of Biblical interpretation]; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1992).

[63] Cf. Wenham, *Story as Torah: Reading Old Testament Narrative Ethically*, 3.

is the economy of this art," writes Brichto, "that no descriptive detail is devoid of significant purpose; and the careful attention of the reader is called for when a descriptive detail seems merely ornamental or a detail is absent where one would most expect it."[64] At its most basic level, story narrative contains three essential elements: characters, plot, and setting,[65] and each of them contributes to the ideological picture of the text. Space limitations on this article do not allow me to examine each of these, so I will here only discuss one of these elements—character—demonstrating how Poetics allows the reader to determine the ideological/theological purpose of the narrative material.

The primary way in which ideology is expressed is through the way it portrays its characters. Careful attention paid to characterization allows the reader to determine the ideological perspective through which to judge the characters and their actions.[66] Bar-Efrat writes:

> Many of the views embodied in the narrative are expressed through the characters, and more specifically, through their speech and fate. Not only do the characters serve as the narrator's mouthpiece, but also what is and is not related about them, which of their characteristics are emphasized and which are not, which of their conversations and actions in the past are recorded and which are not, all reveal the values and norms within the narrative...The decisions they are called upon to make when confronted with different alternatives, and the results of these decisions, provide undisputable evidence of the narrative's ethical dimension (*sic*).[67]

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[64] Herbert Chanan Brichto, *Toward a Grammar of Biblical Poetics: Tales of the Prophets* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 6.

[65] Brichto, *Toward a Grammar of Biblical Poetics: Tales of the Prophets*, 5. Of course, Poetics addresses other elements within the narrative. The commonality of these elements is evident in that most works on biblical Poetics spend a lot of space discussing various aspects of them. See Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, who dedicates the bulk of his book (197 of 282) on these elements; Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, who focuses primarily on character; Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, who spends four chapters on various aspects of these elements.

[66] Cf. Waltke and Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach*, 109-110.

[67] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 47.

Not all characters are created equal within the narrative. Some hold an important place within a particular scene, while others are peripheral. The more important characters in a scene are generally portrayed in a fuller, more complex manner. These are the characters that have "opinions and emotions of [their] own."[68] In Berlin's terms, these are the full-fledged characters, and they are contrasted to the less important characters within a scene: the type (flat character) and the agent (a character that holds simply a functionary position in the scene, such as a servant who brings a message and leaves the full-fledged character to respond).[69] The full-fledged character holds the reader's attention and often serves as the focus for the ideological purpose of the narrative. For instance Jonah is the only full-fledged human character in the biblical book that bears his name. The sailors with whom he interacts, as well as the people and king of Nineveh, are simply types. The plant and worm of chapter four are agents in that they simply serve to push the plot tension (God vs. His prophet) ahead. The words and deeds of the types and agents provide the context through which we learn more about Jonah. They are not the focus of the book (or the individual scenes)—Jonah is. As the full-fledged character, Jonah captures the attention of the reader. Through his words and actions the ideology of the book becomes clear.[70] The merciless prophet shows much more concern for a plant than he does a city full of men (and cattle) and a ship full of sailors. The character types with whom he interacts are more caring than he is. When set against the declaration in 4:3 of God's loving nature, we discover that the "hero" of the book is nothing of the sort. The theological point is mercy, and the reader, by relating to Jonah through the story, is faced with the same rhetorical question with which the prophet is faced in the last verse: should not God have compassion; is compassion not important?

We may ask exactly what role God plays as a character in Jonah. Certainly God is an important character in this narrative, as He is in so

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[68] Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, 24.

[69] *Ibid.*, 23-24.

[70] For a more detailed poetical examination of the book of Jonah, see Brichto, *Toward a Grammar of Biblical Poetics: Tales of the Prophets*, *Toward a Grammar of Biblical Poetics*, 67-87. Brichto seems to argue that there are no full-fledged characters in Jonah (p. 86). I disagree. Jonah is clearly full-fledged, as defined by Berlin.

many other ones. Brichto makes a salient point when he notes that Moses (one of the most full-fledged characters in all of biblical narrative) ultimately exists within the story as an agent of God, "in his full-fledged roundedness as a human sorely taxed by God's call and overtaxed by human perversity he is yet a flat character, that is to say, a type of the prophet, who embodied God—voice and person—all the while he shows how great the abyss between human and Deity."[71] Indeed, the character of Jonah has no theological purpose without God. It is against God's mercy that Jonah is implicitly compared and found wanting. It is through God's words and deeds that Jonah's story is moved forward and shaped. Without the character of God, the narrative has no theological force. Indeed, without God, Jonah is no prophet, but rather the simple son of Amittai, another anonymous name lost in the rabble of history.

The narrative shapes the characters in the way it portrays them,[72] and in that characterization we can discover the author's ideological point. Not all characters (such as Jonah) are ideals to be copied, but object lessons from which to learn. Characters are most often revealed in what they say and do (we are shown, rather than told about the character): this can come in the form of inner dialogue, outer dialogue, or interactions with God and others.[73] Physical description may also be used, but it is rare and usually only comes when such a description plays an important role in the narrative (such as the great height of King Saul and Goliath).[74] All of these instruments are indirect methods of characterization and provide the reader with tools to evaluate the theological intent within the narrative. For instance, the actions and appearance of the character do not reveal clear ideology, and deeper evaluation is needed.[75] Direct characterization by the narrator, or by God, is clearer and provides specific ideological evaluation.[76]

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[71] Brichto, *Toward a Grammar of Biblical Poetics: Tales of the Prophets*, 8.

[72] Goldingay, "Biblical Narrative and Systematic Theology," 137.

[73] Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, 37-39; Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 64-92.

[74] Cf. Brichto, *Toward a Grammar of Biblical Poetics: Tales of the Prophets*, 6-8.

[75] Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 146-149; cf. Jerome T. Walsh, *Old Testament Narrative: A Guide to Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009).

[76] A clear example of this principle is the evaluation of Job (Job 1:1-5, 8, 22; 2:3,10). We find in the words of both the narrator and God an explicit positive

Closely connected to this is point of view. Shimon Bar-Efrat writes that, among the many contributions that point of view provides to the narrative, one is that "the point of view is one of the means by which the narrative influences the reader, leading to the absorption of its implicit values and attitudes."[77] He knows all details, even those that the reader might not expect a merely human author to know of historical figures: thoughts, emotions, motives, and private dialogue. In spite of this omniscience, he is selective in what he includes and omits.[78] The narrator has access to the mind and deeds of both God and man, which allows him to stand as something of a mediator between the two points of view. This shift may work at times to "limit" the omniscience of the narrator. At times the reader may see the scene through the narrator's eyes, at others he may see it from the perspective of one (or more) of the participants.[79]

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characterization of Job. Through these points of view, we receive a clear description of Job's moral character. However, we do not have the same concerning Job's friends (at least, until chapter 38). The narrator does not inform us of the blamelessness of Job's companions, nor does he express his opinion of their words. The reader becomes a participant, along with Job, in the conversation. However, the explicit characterization of Job by God and the narrator provides a rubric by which to judge the words of Job's companions through the first 37 chapters of the book. Their words do not align with the truth that both the narrator and God have established, and so the reader may determine that their words do not hold authoritative value. Thus, the theology of the book of Job is clear, though the narrator never directly explains the purpose of his book.

[77] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 16; cf. Waltke and Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach*, 106-112; Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 193-220; cf. Osborne, who writes, "[B]y ascertaining the implicit commentary and point of view, one can see how the author is developing the significance and moral content of the story." Osborne, "Historical Narrative and Truth in the Bible," 684.

[78] Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, 44. As Sternberg puts it, "And whether or not interpreters share this belief, they cannot make proper sense of the narrative unless they take the narrator's own omniscience as an institutional fact and his demonstration of God's omniscience as [an] informing principle." Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, 90.

[79] Space does not permit a detailed explanation of the types of POV at the narrator's disposal. For a more specific overview, see the following: Bar-Efrat,

For instance, when he presents the Woman's point of view in Genesis 3:6 ("When the woman *saw* that the tree was good for food...) there is no hint of the danger presented by the fruit. That danger comes via another point of view: that of the omniscient spectator in chapter 2. Thus, the narrator has created a tension between these two points of view. He reveals *and* conceals, thus making the reader both a spectator and a participant.[80] The reader is a spectator who has heard the warning from God concerning the fruit and recognizes the Woman's peril. The reader is also a participant in that he sees through the Woman's eyes, viewing the fruit from her perspective.

Conclusion

Since the middle of the 20th century, OT theology has shifted from a source-critical approach toward one that was more interested in its final and literary form. The field of Poetics, the science of literature, has been helpful in coming to terms with the literary art of the biblical material and identifying its theological message. As a methodology, it takes seriously the fact that much of the biblical material—which is intrinsically ideological—comes to us in the form of narrative. While this does not preclude the classifying the text as having a historiographical purpose, it also recognizes that the author has constructed his narrative in an artistic way that expresses theology through the art of story.

Dr. Tomlinson's tireless devotion to his students has had a profound effect on me. By pushing me to slow down and devote myself to developing the necessary skills to interpret the Bible, he has made me a much better student of the Bible. This is something I try to pass on to my own students. This article has been an effort to introduce students to an important area of Old Testament hermeneutics. Of course, this is just one tool in the interpreter's tool kit. Hopefully, this article can serve as a jumping off point for someone in a lifetime of biblical study. Such study means attention to detail, in this case, the detail of the narrative. Careful

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Narrative Art in the Bible, 13-46; Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, 43-82.

[80] Cf. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, 84-94.

attention paid to such details can reap great exegetical and theological rewards.

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Participating in the Life of God: Exploring the Trinitarian Foundation of 1 Peter's Missional Identity

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Dedication

This essay is dedicated to Dr. Alan Tomlinson, whose infectious love for the Scriptures inspired and compelled me to seek my place within the world of biblical studies. Dr. Tomlinson taught me that one of the ways that we love the Scriptures is by working hard to read texts in their context—both their literary as well as their socio-historical context. He modeled for me a humble and faithful critical engagement with the best of biblical scholarship (and not just those with whom he agreed); he demonstrated courage when he did not always accept the consensus readings of texts; and he illustrated how to argue your case from the evidence of the text within its own context. His fingerprints are all over my work, not least the conviction that the *telos* of biblical studies is communion with God and faithful participation with Him and His people for the life of the world.

Introduction

For most of the twentieth century 1 Peter was acutely neglected in the field of biblical studies, which also led to its neglect in the pulpit and in the hearts and minds, and the hands and feet of the church; fortunately this is no longer the case. In the past twenty years or so, scholars and practitioners alike increasingly have recognized that 1 Peter is a fruitful and formative text for better understanding the mission to which God's people have been called to participate, especially in places where the

church finds itself trying to live out its vocation in a post-Christian or even anti-Christian context.[1]

The growing body of research that has emerged regarding the missional identity of the people of God in 1 Peter has tended to focus on at least one of three themes: (a) the place of suffering and social alienation for those who are faithfully engaged in God's mission for the world; (b) the function of the Old Testament, or one might even say, Israel's missional identity, for elucidating the identity and mission of the church; and/or (c) the way in which Christology undergirds and informs the church's disposition and practice of its calling, especially in contexts in which Christian assumptions about the world are not embraced or considered normative.[2]

These lines of inquiry have been tremendously helpful in encouraging us to read 1 Peter "missionally". That is to say, recent research on 1 Peter has illuminated the missional direction and purposes of the letter, the missional locatedness of the implied readers, and the way in which this mission affects how the church ought to engage with (instead of withdraw from) culture.[3] As much as these advances need to

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[1] See for example Tim Chester and Steve Timmis, Everyday Church: Gospel Communities on Mission (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012); or Stephen Fagbemi, Who Are the Elect in 1 Peter? A Study in Biblical Exegesis and Its Application to the Anglican Church of Nigeria (Studies in Biblical Literature, Vol. 104. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007).

[2] See for example Feldmeier, Reinhard, *Die Christen Als Fremde: Die Metapher Der Fremde in Der Antiken Welt, Im Urchristentum Und Im 1. Petrusbrief* (WUNT. Tubingen: Mohr, 1992); Steven R. Bechtler, *Following in His Steps: Suffering, Community, and Christology in 1 Peter*. (Vol. 162 Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998); Mark Dubis, *Messianic Woes in 1 Peter: Suffering and Eschatology in 1 Peter 4:12-19* (Studies in Biblical Literature, Vol. 33. New York: Lang, 2002); J. Dryden, *Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter: Paraenetic Strategies for Christian Character Formation* (Vol. 209 WUNT. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006); Andrew Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile and Identity in 1 Peter*. London: Continuum, 2007); Kelly Liebengood, *The Eschatology of 1 Peter: Considering the Influence of Zechariah 9-14* (SNTSMS 157, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). Patrick Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016).

[3] These four categories of missional hermeneutics are taken from George Hunsburger, "Proposals for a Missional Hermeneutic: Mapping a Conversation" (Missiology: An International Review: Vol 39.3, July, 2011.)

be celebrated (and hopefully incorporated into the contemporary church's witness), in my view there has been inattention to the more foundational claims made in 1 Peter, which ground the mission and the missional identity of the people of God in an economy of shared activities between the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Spirit. In other words, I will suggest that recent articulations of the way in which 1 Peter shapes the mission of the church have not been sufficiently Trinitarian.[4]

In this essay, then, I seek to underscore the way in which 1 Peter characterizes (or frames) the mission of the people of God and highlight how that mission is inextricably linked to the life shared between the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Spirit, which is the grounds, the means, and the *telos* of the vocation of the church. Given the limitations of this venue, I will confine the bulk of my observations to the letter prescript (1 Peter 1.1-2), and a sampling of the way in which the themes developed there manifest themselves in a variety of strategic places in the rest of letter.

The Missional Paradigm of the People of God: "Elect-Sojourners"

The prescript (1.1-2) of 1 Peter is by no means an insignificant space-filler that functions merely to notify us of the sender and the intended audience. Rather, as many primopetrine scholars have underscored, in the opening lines of the letter Peter[5] immediately begins to construct a

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[4] I mean this in two senses. First, recent biblical scholarship has not adequately attended to the way in which Peter links the mission of the people of God to the three-fold economy of the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Spirit (Peter's "trinitarianism", if you will). Second, recent reflections on the message of 1 Peter done from within Christian communities that seek to be missional have tended to sideline the church's Trinitarian confession and hermeneutical approach to understanding the Scriptures. Joel Green (1 Peter [The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary], Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007.) is a noteworthy exception to this trend.

[5] Many biblical scholars doubt that 1 Peter could have been written by the fisherman-turned-apostle, Simon Peter. For more on the authorship of 1 Peter see Liebengood 2014:18-20 and Karen Jobes, *1 Peter* (Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 14-19. In this essay I will refer to the author as Peter, as he has identified himself at the beginning of the letter.

paradigm that informs the implied readers regarding how they might rightly conceptualize their calling and how it is to be lived out in the midst of their precarious situation of suffering and social alienation.[6] This paradigm is formed with what is initially an ambiguous epithet, ἐκλεκτοί παρεπίδημοι (**see table 1**).[7] Unfortunately, English translations can conceal this strategic rhetorical move by obscuring not only the missional function of the epithet used to describe the readers, but also the way in which the activities of the Father, the Spirit, and Jesus Christ are grounds and the means for that missional calling.

Table 1: *1 Peter 1.1b-2a in Greek*

Nestle-Aland 28
ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις...
κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρὸς
ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος
εἰς ὑπακοὴν καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

In what follows then, I will address the manner in which the epithet functions as a paradigm for the mission of the people of God. Then I will show how Peter grounds this paradigmatic epithet in the shared mission of the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Spirit.

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[6] For a helpful survey of the precarious situation of the recipients of 1 Peter see David Horrell, *1 Peter* (New Testament Guides, London: T&T Clark, 2008), 45-59.

[7] Achtemeier (*1 Peter* [Hermeneia, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996], 80.) for example, says that 'the opening two verses set the stage for what is to follow in the letter in terms of content and themes'; see also P. L. Tite, *Compositional Transitions in 1 Peter: An Analysis of the Letter-Opening* (San Francisco: International Scholars Publications, 1997); J.R. Michaels, *1 Peter*, (Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 49. Waco: Word, 1988), 4, 13; Leonard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eeerdmans, 1993), 64. For more on why I do not regard διασπορά as the controlling metaphor of the letter see Liebengood 2014:156-164.

As can be seen in **Table 2**, English translations tend to refer to the recipients as 'exiles'. This rendering of the Greek word παρεπίδημοι has the potential of misleading the reader, however, in part because the English word 'exile', as it is used in the Scriptures, carries connotations of wrong-doing and punishment, suggesting perhaps that the readers are in a precarious situation because of some sort of unfaithfulness or rebellion against God—which is precisely the sentiment that Peter is trying to combat! But perhaps more importantly, as I will soon show, to render παρεπίδημοι as 'exiles', fails to capture the essential point of the metaphor, which is to remind the readers that although they have been redeemed, their (re)new(ed) vocation to be a holy priesthood that shares in and mediates the life of God is to be exercised in a context of liminality; that is, their primary focus is faithfulness to their vocation in the wilderness as they journey towards their inheritance.

***Table 2**: English Translations of 1 Peter 1.1b-2a*

NRSV	***NIV***	***ESV***
To the exiles ...who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood:	To God's elect, exiles...who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood:	To those who are elect exiles ...according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood:

Additionally, in the original Greek, the word used to describe the readers, παρεπίδημος , is coupled and modified with the term ἐκλεκτός, which is most often translated as *elect* or *chosen*. These two descriptors of the readers, ἐκλεκτοί and παρεπίδημοι, are meant to be read together, to mutually inform one another, and to establish the paradigm by which the

readers are to understand not only their identity and vocation but also their suffering and social alienation. But some English translations conceal this rhetorical strategy, as can be seen **in Table 2**. The NRSV, for example, separates the two words into distinct phrases, and the NIV breaks them up with a comma. In so doing, some English translations obfuscate the way in which the two words work together to form an epithet that encapsulates the way in which Peter orients his readers: they are "elect-sojourners".

In what follows, I will put forth a reading of 1 Peter that suggests that the initially (and perhaps even strategically) ambiguous epithet, ἐκλεκτοί παρεπίδημοι, is best understood in the context of a particular theme that Peter develops throughout the letter, especially in the *exordium* (1.3-12) and the first *argumentatio* (1.13-2.10).[8] That is to say that Peter fills out the meaning of the initially ambiguous epithet for us as we attune ourselves to the implicit narrative that follows in his letter.[9]

For example, in the *exordium*, Peter explains that the resurrection of Jesus Christ has radical implications for how his readers are to conceptualize their lives of suffering and shame. These implications are described in terms that echo the first exodus and wilderness journey of Israel. Like the Israelites after they were ransomed from Egypt, followers of Jesus are now a newly-formed people (1:3, 23; cf. 2:10; Exod 19.1-6; Isa 43.21; Hos 2.23), who find themselves in a new wilderness experience, journeying towards a new, incorruptible inheritance (1:4).[10] As did the fathers, this newly-formed people can

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[8] In Liebengood 2014:130-140; 156-164 I argue that most research on παρεπίδημος focuses on discerning the range of meaning from other ancient sources. As helpful as these studies are, I suggest that the context of the letter, and in particular the implicit narrative of 1 Peter, actually develops and establishes the meaning for us.

[9] For a detailed account of the implicit narrative of 1 Peter see Liebengood 2014:175-214.

[10] Goppelt (*Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982], pg. 152) notes that "Peter views the church as being on the march, like Israel in the wilderness". For κληρονομία as a circumlocution for arriving and possessing the promised land see Num 34.2; 36.2; Deut 12.9; Josh 1.15; 13.1; Jdgs 2.6; 18.1; 21.23; 2 Chron 6.27; 31.1; Ps 134.12; 135.21,22; Jer 2.7; 3.19; 16.18; Ezek 11.15; 25.4, 10; for the use of

expect to encounter a variety of trials (πειρασμοί) along the way (1:5-7), in which their allegiance to God will be tested. These "fiery" trials will be met with God's sustaining power and faithfulness (1:5-7). All of this, according to Peter, is in keeping with the prophets, who bore witness beforehand not only to the glory which is to come, but also to the present sufferings which must be endured until the Christ's return (1.10-12).[11]

This second exodus narrative which has been alluded to in 1 Peter 1.3-12 is more fully developed in the letter's first *argumentatio* (1.13-2.10). Drawing on Passover language, Peter exhorts his readers to 'gird up the loins' of their mind (cf. Exod 12.11), and to conduct themselves with fear during the time of their wilderness sojourning (1.17), since they have been redeemed with the precious blood of the lamb who was without defect or blemish, Jesus (1.19). Within this narrative, Peter draws attention to the admonishment given to the original wilderness sojourners, in which they were urged to "be holy in all you do" (1 Pet 1:15). He follows this exhortation by quoting the often-repeated refrain from Leviticus, a foundational wilderness text, "be holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet 1:16; Lev. 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7). Several other significant OT texts are drawn on in this first *argumentatio,* which confirm that Peter understands his readers to be participating in a new exodus/wilderness journey. Their new birth (1.3, 23) is said to be in keeping with the word that was announced in Isa 40.6-8, a passage that many scholars have noted serves as the prologue to Isaiah 40-55 and its program of restoration, regularly described in terms of a second exodus.

κληρονομία in conjunction with the promise of restoration see Isa 49.8; Jer 12.25; Psa 2.8;67.10; 110.6; Ezek 45.1.

[11] It is important to stress that when Peter speaks of journeying to an inheritance he is not setting up an earth-heaven dualism. That is to say, that what makes the implied readers sojourners is not that they live on earth and that their real home is in heaven; salvation in 1 Peter is not an escape from this world. Rather, for Peter the implied readers are sojourners because their values, commitments and shared life together as followers of Jesus do not concord with their neighbors and compeers. For Peter, the eschatological journey concludes when Christ returns to earth (1 Pet 1.5; 5.4) and presumably renews creation, including the social-political order (especially given the way inheritance language is used in the OT [see note 13 above] and Peter's reliance on OT conceptions of redemption, restoration, and inheritance).

The priesthood imagery of 1 Pet 2.4-10, perhaps counter-intuitively, reiterates and even intensifies this wilderness/second exodus theme that Peter has been developing thus far in the letter. This can be seen in 1 Pet 2:9, where there is a conflation of terms which are derived from Exod 19:5-6 and Isa 43:20-21:

> you are a chosen people (Isa 43.20), a royal priesthood (Exod 19:6), a holy nation (Exod 19:6), a people belonging to God (Exod 19:5), that you may declare the praises of him (Isa 43:21) who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

In the literary setting of Exod 19:1-6, YHWH has chosen and gathered his freshly redeemed and newly formed people in the wilderness at the foot of Mount Sinai, and has commissioned them to be a kingdom of priests who have a communal vocation to share in and mediate the life of God to one another and to their neighbors. It appears that Peter's appropriation of Exod 19:5-6, then, is intended to substantiate that, in a manner similar to their fathers in Egypt, they have been redeemed from their slavery, their futile way of life (1 Pet 1.19), and to evoke in his readers the call of recapitulating the wilderness journey of their fathers, this time in faithfulness, as they communally bear witness to the mighty acts of God.

This recapitulating call is confirmed by the appropriation of Isaiah 43 in 1 Peter 2.9, where Peter draws his readers' attention, not to the first exodus, but rather to the promise of a second exodus as is developed in Isaiah 40-55. It is within this section of Isaiah that YHWH speaks of a new day to come, one in which He will ransom His exiled people, renew His covenant with them, and make a way in the desert for them to journey to their inheritance (cf. 1 Pet 1.3-4). That Peter envisions his readers as already redeemed (from exile) is further confirmed by his allusion to Isa 43.21 and 42.12 in the latter part of 1 Pet 2.9 ("in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light"). In its original literary context, this text charges YHWH's people to proclaim his saving

wonders once they have been redeemed from Babylonian exile.[12] This appropriation of Isa 43:20-21 suggests that Peter understands this promised second exodus to have been actualized in Jesus, who as we learn later in 1 Peter 2.23-25, has redeemed (healed) and gathered his scattered, straying sheep through his sacrificial death.

The first *argumentatio* concludes in 1 Pet 2.10 with an allusion drawn from Hosea 2.23. This refrain from Hosea is the climax of a prophetic oracle in which YHWH declares that he will deliver Israel in spite of her idolatry and radical infidelity, alluring her to the wilderness where "she will respond as in the days of her youth, as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt" (Hos 2.15). According to Hosea 2, it is in the desert, having been redeemed from Babylonian exile, where YHWH will proclaim that those who once were not a people, are now a people of God; those who once had not received mercy, have now received mercy'. Peter seems to be suggesting that this prophetic oracle is realized now through Jesus and appropriated by those who follow him.

This brief survey of 1 Peter 1:1-2:10 fills out the picture that Peter wishes to paint when he opens his letter with the epithet ἐκλεκτοί παρεπίδημοι. The term ἐκλεκτός reminds his readers that they have been chosen to be a kingdom of priests who orient their lives around the propagation of God's will and who mediate the life of their God to one another and to their neighbors.[13] That they are elect παρεπίδημοι, highlights that for now their vocation is to be expressed in a kind of the wilderness liminality (the eschatological "now-but-not yet" of the kingdom of God), where, like their wilderness fathers, they will be tested until they reach their inheritance (1 Pet 1.5-7; 2.11-12; 4.12-17).[14]

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[12] It is illuminating that in the LXX of Isaiah 42-43, the ἀρέτας (mighty acts) refer specifically to God's saving acts in the first exodus, and his future saving acts in the exodus to come.

[13] '1 Pet. is the only NT work in which *eklektos* has from the very outset thematic significance. Here everything is worked out in terms of this controlling concept' (Schrenk 1967:190, taken from John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [Anchor Bible, Vol 37b; New York: Doubleday, 2000]), pg. 446.

[14] Tim Laniak develops a similar line of thought (*Shepherds after My Own Heart* [Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 20; Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2006]), pgs. 225-229): Peter encourages these churches as 'aliens and sojourners',

The Foundational Claims of the Letter Prescript (1 Peter 1:1-2)
Having said all this, it is important to underscore that there is a more foundational claim being made in the prescript of 1 Peter; namely, that the ground and means for the vocation of these 'elect-sojourners' is the related activities of the Father, the Spirit, and Jesus Christ.

As can be seen in **Table 1**, Peter amplifies the pregnant epithet ἐκλεκτοὶ παρεπίδημοι with three prepositional phrases. First, he underscores that their status as 'elect-sojourners' is in keeping with the foreknowledge of God the Father (κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρός). Given the proliferation of OT prophetic texts appropriated in 1 Peter, not to mention Peter's own words in 1 Pet 1.10-12, the point of this prepositional phrase is to highlight that the Father has predetermined the salvation and renewal of His people, as previously has been revealed in the Scriptures.[15] In other words, this unique status and vocation that they have been given and which they must now live out is in keeping with what the Father planned and which he revealed to the prophets (cf. 1 Pet 1.10-12).

Second, Peter credits the work of the Spirit (ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος) with providing the means by which the 'elect-sojourners' are empowered to live out their calling.[16] As we have already seen 'holiness' is a foundational injunction to the would-be faithful elect-sojourners (1.15-16). The prescript reminds us, then, that this injunction to be holy is enabled by the Spirit, who himself is characterized by holiness (1.12), and who in turn makes holy those who share in the life of God.[17]

We find this theme of holiness and its dependence on the enabling of the Spirit illuminated in the midst of another key paradigm-forming passage, namely 1 Pet 2.4-10. In 1 Pet 2.5, the people of God are described as a 'spiritual house' that is 'being built' for the purpose of being a 'holy' priesthood that offers 'spiritual' sacrifices that are pleasing

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understanding their identity as God's renewed covenant community, freshly formed in a new wilderness of testing, and anticipating glory in their future home' (2006:225).

[15] See also Green 2007:19.

[16] To be clear, ἐν expresses instrumentality or means, and πνεύματος is a subjective genitive and refers to the Holy Spirit.

[17] See Green (2007:215), who underscores the importance of 'being made holy' in the letter and that "Peter makes it clear that the agent of sanctification is the Spirit".

to God through Jesus Christ.[18] It seems clear from the context that the term 'house' in 1 Peter 2 is polyvalent: it is both an architectural term that points to the temple, but it also connotes the notion of a royal dynasty, a kingly priesthood, as is indicated in 2.5 and 2.9.[19] It is important to note that this house is 'being built' (passive voice). That is to say, there is an external agent who is making the house into a 'holy priesthood'. This agent is indicated by the qualifying term 'spiritual', which is not a circumlocution to indicate that the 'house' is immaterial, but rather is Peter's way of crediting the building and transforming of the people of God to the sanctifying work of the Spirit.[20] Just as Jesus' life and obedience are characterized as a sacrificial offering in 1.2 and elsewhere (1 Pet 1.19; 2.24; 3.18), so also the spiritual house is being equipped to offer their lives as a "spiritual" sacrifice to God—that is to say, the Spirit empowers them to live the totality of their lives in a manner that pleases God. It should be noted that in this one verse (1 Pet 2.5), we find these three distinct individuals working in unity of purpose, and presented as the ground, means and the end of what the "house" is up to: the Spirit empowers the people of God to offer their lives as pleasing sacrifices, which are offered to God (the Father), 'through Jesus Christ', whose sacrificial death enables union with the life of God and models a life which is pleasing to God.[21]

The final manner in which Peter amplifies the epithet ἐκλεκτοί παρεπίδημοι (elect-sojourners) can also be obscured by English translations. As you can see in **Table 2**, the English versions make 'obedience to Jesus' the *telos* of the activities of the Father and the Spirit. While this is a possible rendition of the Greek, it fails to follow a pattern that Peter seems carefully to have arranged in the prescript, and it does not run with the grain of what is developed in the rest of the letter.

Regarding the pattern that Peter has arranged, in the two previous prepositional phrases the genitives are clearly subjective, which

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[18] Elliott (2000:418) argues that 'spiritual house' "constitutes the root metaphor for Christian community in 1 Peter, the fundamental concept that identifies the collective identity of the Christians, their relation to God and to one another, and the basis of their behavior as a family or brotherhood".

[19] For more on the polyvalence of 'house of God' language in 1 Peter, see Liebengood 2014:145-153; 164-170

[20] Cf. Elliott 2000:418.

[21] This claim will be developed further in the next section of this essay.

is to say that the Father and the Spirit are the subjects doing the activities described in the head nouns (predetermining and sanctifying). Given this pattern, it seems most natural to at least give consideration to the option of Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive. Such a reading would alleviate the unnecessary, awkward, and confusing fragmentation of ὑπακοὴν καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος.[22] What has perhaps discouraged some English translators from keeping with the subjective-genitive pattern is the preposition εἰς, which is frequently used to indicate purpose or goal (*"for"*), thus making the subjective genitive impossible. Some, however, have argued for a causal meaning of εἰς (*because*), which enables a subjective-genitive reading of Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ such that Jesus Christ is doing the obeying and sprinkling of blood.[23] The Common English Bible translation of 1 Peter 1.2 reflects this exegetical judgment: "To God's chosen strangers....*because* of the faithful obedience and sacrifice of Jesus Christ". As attractive as this reading might be, there seems to be no lexical support for the claim that εἰς can have casual force.[24]

There is lexical support, however, for the usage of εἰς to communicate instrumentality (*by means of*).[25] With this reading, the third prepositional clause explains that the ἐκλεκτοί παρεπίδημοι are made so by means of Jesus' obedience. Furthermore, it characterizes his obedience in a particular way—not as a tragic side-effect of speaking truth to the Roman Empire, but rather as an intentional sacrificial

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[22] See for example the NRSV: "to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood"; or the ESV: "for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood".

[23] E.g. Liebengood 2014:160-61; Elliott 2000:319; Green 2007:20.

[24] See Sydney Page, "Obedience and Blood-Sprinkling in 1 Peter 1:2" (*Westminster Theological Journal* 72), 294-295. While I agree with his argument regarding the causal εἰς, I think his overall argumentation against a subjective genitive reading of 1 Pet 1.2 is unconvincing.

[25] See Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (3rd Edition, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). ; Louw-Nida (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains (2nd edition), [New York: United Bible Societies, 1996]) acknowledge εἰς, ἐν, and διά as "markers of the means by which one event makes another event possible". E.g. Acts 7.53.

offering.[26] In sum, if we regard the third preposition phrase to be communicating instrumentality, then Peter is claiming that his readers are enabled to live out their calling as ἐκλεκτοί παρεπίδημοι by means of the faithfulness and sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.

This reading of the final prepositional phrase in 1 Peter 1.2 runs with the grain of rest of the letter. Jesus' life—the way in which He endured suffering and social alienation, the manner in which he entrusted Himself to the Father—was not only the *means* by which elect-sojourners are brought into God's house, but is also instrumental in that he serves as the *model* that these new-born children are now called to follow.

In various places we see that Jesus' death is characterized in terms of a sacrifice that brings people to God. In 1 Peter 1.19, as we have already discussed, Jesus' death is portrayed in terms of the Passover lamb that ransoms people for God; in 1 Pet 2.4-5 we see that the people of God are made a holy priesthood 'through Jesus Christ'; in 1 Peter 2.24, Jesus death is described as a substitutionary offering that enables us to live to righteousness; and in 1 Peter 3.18, Peter claims that Christ suffered once for sins in order to bring us to God.

But according to Peter, Jesus did not merely live in order to die as an atonement for sin; rather, his life of obedience serves as paradigm for faithfulness. So for example, in 1 Peter 2.21, Peter asserts that his implied readers are called to follow in the footsteps of the suffering and vindicated Jesus, who left them an example to emulate. In 1 Peter 2.23, the example that Jesus leaves to be followed is one of non-violent resistance to injustice and wrong-doing: in the face of revilement and threats, rather than respond in kind, Jesus "continued to entrust himself to the one who judges justly". Thus, Jesus becomes an example of faithful

[26] There may be more going on here. Most scholars see some kind of allusion to Exod. 24.3-8 in the phraseology "obedience and sprinkling of blood", but there are a variety of proposals for how to construe the way Peter is appropriating this reference. In light of the themes that I have developed in this essay, its seems likely that Peter is alluding to the "obedience and sprinkling of blood" in Exodus 24 in order to show that Jesus, the new Moses of the second exodus, mediates the renewal of God's covenant by means of His obedience and sacrificial death. Thus, the allusion does not point to the implied readers' self-commitment of obedience, but rather to Jesus, whose life and death make the mission of God's people possible.

obedience to the Father. In 1 Pet 3.9, Peter draws a line to the paradigmatic faithfulness of Jesus (cf. 1 Pet 2.23) by exhorting his readers to "not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling'. Additionally, in 1 Peter 4.19, he draws on Jesus' response to wrong doing by exhorting followers of Jesus to 'entrust' their souls (as Jesus did) to a faithful Creator while doing good. And in 1 Pet 4.1-2, Peter urges his readers to arm themselves with the same disposition that Jesus had—living no longer for the passions of the flesh but rather for the will of God.

Here I underscore two significant points in relation to this brief survey of Jesus' life in 1 Peter. First, apart from the disputed passage in 1.2, in 1 Peter Jesus in never presented as the object of obedience; rather He is held up as the paradigm of faithful obedience to the Father.[27] This should have some bearing on the way in which we interpret the last of the three prepositional phrases in 1 Pet 1.2. Second, Jesus is presented as the model of the kind of holiness that the readers are encouraged to pursue. That is to say, as the Spirit empowers the people of God to be a *holy* priesthood, he empowers the people to be more like Jesus, to conform them to the pattern that Jesus left for them to follow—a life in which they too are a sacrificial offering that mediates the life of God to the world (1 Pet 2.5). Thus, for Peter, holiness is cruciform. The injunction, 'be holy as God is holy' (1.16), then is a call to pattern one's life after the faithfulness embodied by Jesus Christ.

The Mission of the People of God in 1 Peter – Participating in the Life of God

When we read the prescript (1 Pet 1.1-2) in the manner in which I am suggesting, it enables us to see an economy at work throughout the letter that grounds and empowers the mission of the church. Salvation and concomitant vocation are integrally, inseparably connected to the life and activities of the Father, the Spirit, and Jesus Christ. Said in another way, the life and love of God are mediated through the interplay between the architect, the one who sanctifies, and the one who models faithfulness as He offers Himself in love. The Father predetermines

[27] This should not be construed as me suggesting that we need not obey Jesus; rather I am merely highlighting the pattern in 1 Peter and showing how it coheres with my reading of the third prepositional clause in 1 Pet 1.2.

salvation and mission as a gift for His people and for the life of the world. Before the foundation of the world the Father sends Jesus, the Lamb, who mediates the life of God by offering himself as an atonement for this sins of his people; in executing His mission, Jesus also becomes the model for the mission of the people of God, embodying what it looks like to mediate the life of God to others; and the Holy Spirit, who empowered the prophets to announce the coming of the Christ also actualizes the accomplishments of Jesus by equipping the people of God to live in holiness as they learn to conform to the obedience and faithfulness of the Christ.

First Peter, then, exerts pressure on us to think about knowing God as participating in the life and mission shared between the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. In particular, in 1 Peter the experience of knowing God is characterized as being caught up in Jesus' love and obedience to the Father, as enabled by the Spirit, for the sake of the world. In this sense, knowing God is less like facing a solitary being in worship and more like joining a drama already in progress.[28] When we come onto the scene, the Father has already sent Jesus (1 Pet 1.20), who has already willingly suffered on account of his faithful obedience for the sake of our redemption (1 Pet 2.23-24); the Father has raised him from the dead, vindicating his suffering; the Spirit (of Christ) has already anticipated the coming of the Christ and has equipped the prophets to announce such a day (1.10-11). Now, by the Spirit, we come to receive the suffering and vindication of Jesus as good news about God (1 Pet 1.12); through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead the Father now gives us a living hope and an incorruptible inheritance that enables us to endure hardships (1.3-4, 21); and by means of the Spirit we now learn to live a life of holiness (1 Pet 1.2), which is patterned after the life of the suffering and vindicated Jesus (1 Pet 2.21), all so that we can mediate the life of God to others (often by means of suffering) and continue to bear witness to the mighty acts of the one who called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light (1 Pet 2.9). This is the "grace that was to be ours" (1 Pet 1.10-12): the full participation of God in our salvation so that we can participate in the fullness of God, now revealed

[28] Mike Higton, *Christian Doctrine* (London: SCM Press, 2008), 93. Green 2007:208 "the God who is known on account of his revelatory activity...is the God disclosed in the divine drama as 'persons' and not only 'person'".

and experienced by the way in which we relate to the Father through Jesus Christ by means of the Spirit.

But perhaps more can be said about this economy of salvation that we find in this letter. There are two intriguing exegetical moves that Peter makes in chapter two which suggest that Jesus in some way shares in the divine identity.[29] In 1 Pet 2.3-4, Peter identifies Jesus as the "Lord" referred to in Psalm 34.8. This suggests that Jesus shares the divine name.[30] And in 1 Pet 2.25, Jesus is described as the Shepherd and Overseer of the implied readers' souls—an identity and function that is attributed to the one true God of Israel, and celebrated in such places as Ezekiel 34 and Psalm 23. What is more, in this letter we also learn that the Spirit "must be understood intimately in relation to the Father and Christ".[31] The Spirit "of Christ" bears witness to the prophets who would announce his (Christ's) coming (1.11); the Spirit is "sent from heaven" to enable the implied readers to receive the news of Jesus' suffering and vindication as good news; and the Spirit "of God" mediates God's favor as he rests on and blesses those who endure hardship because of their allegiance to Jesus Christ (4.14). This sampling is significant because it seems to suggest that for Peter, the Father, Jesus Christ and the Spirit not only share in a unity of will or purpose, but also that they somehow share in the same divine identity.

Conclusion

One important outcome of this reflection on 1 Peter is that we are reminded of the foundation of our missional identity and the theological impetus for the very notion of a *missio Dei* (mission of God), namely the doctrine of the Trinity.

As Bosch tells the story, in the middle of the twentieth century there was a decisive shift in understanding and articulating the mission of the church. Previously, the church's mission was understood in relation to soteriology (getting people saved from eternal punishment),

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[29] For a full account of "divine identity Christology" see Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

[30] See Phil 2.5-11 for a similar move by Paul.

[31] Green 2007:217.

in cultural terms (introducing people to the blessings and privileges of the Christian West), as church growth, or as the development of salvation-history, that is, the process by which the world would be transformed into the kingdom of God.[32] Bosch credits Karl Barth with rearticulating the mission of the church as an activity of God himself. And he suggests that Barth's *Trinitarian* insight led to the development of the concept of *missio Dei*: the Father sends the Son, the Father and the Son send the Spirit, and the Father, Son, and Spirit send the church into the world.[33] According to Bosch, it was the doctrine of the Trinity that fostered an understanding of mission as participating in the sending God: "to participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love".[34]

In this essay, I have tried to show that the mission of the people of God is grounded and enabled by the triune *missio Dei*. I have argued that there is a three-fold economy in 1 Peter that reveals that God—the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit—has fully participated in the salvation of His people so that the people of God can in turn fully participate in the life of God and mediate that life to others. I hope to have demonstrated that this Trinitarian grounding in 1 Peter is not an imposition of Nicene dogmatics upon the text, but rather is instigated by a close reading of the letter and the claims that are made therein. But it can also be said that the nicene-chalcedonian formulations regarding the triunity of God no doubt have helped us identify the economy of Father, Son, and Spirit in the letter, which otherwise might have escaped our attention.[35] Additionally, I want to make clear that I do not assume that when Peter speaks of the relations and activities of the Father, Jesus, and the Spirit, he does so with the same fullness and nuance that we find in the later ecumenical creeds. Having said that, I have demonstrated that there are hints that Peter has a rather full and nuanced understanding of

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[32] David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 389.

[33] Bosch 1991:390. Extending Barth's insight, Karl Hartenstein was the first to coin the term *missio Dei* in 1934. But John Flett (The Witness of God: The Trinity, Missio Dei, Karl Barth and the Nature of Christian Community [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010]) has argued that he did not root the *missio Dei* in the doctrine of the Trinity as Barth did.

[34] Bosch 1991:390.

[35] Green 2007:207.

the economy and ontology of God lurking under the surface of the letter that is hospitable with the ecumenical creeds.[36] What is more, we might even say that Peter's account of the life of the triune God helps attune us to the missional force of Nicene Trinitarians that otherwise might have escaped our attention.[37]

As important as it is to talk thoroughly about the missional direction and purposes of the Scriptures, the missional locatedness of the implied readers, and the way in which this mission affects how the church ought to engage with culture, this study in 1 Peter reminds us that being missional is first and foremost about being attentive to God and the life that we share with Him. That is to say that being missional is not merely a set of ideals that we must realize or implement; rather, more foundationally, being missional is a reality in which we are invited to participate—a reality created by God as an extension of the life shared between Father, Son, and Spirit. Being missional is attending to God (His will and His ways of doing things) through the Scriptures, and being attentive to the ways in which the Spirit is conforming us to the holiness of Jesus Christ, in the midst of and for the sake of the communities in which we have been placed, so that "grace and peace may be multiplied" to all (1 Pet 1.2).

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[36] *Ibid.*

[37] This because Nicene Trinitarians often reduces the discussion to ontology.

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Wholeness in Intertextual Perspective: James' Use of Scripture in Developing a Theme

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Dedication

Though it has been nearly twenty years since I stepped foot into Dr. Tomlinson's classroom, his passion for the text of Scripture generally and his wide-ranging grasp of language and backgrounds continue as a personal reminder of how one must allow the text itself to speak with its own voice. Hopefully his example of attending to the voice of the text before anything else might, in some small way, mark my own endeavors, including the present one. In the brief study that follows it is James' use of Scripture, especially Leviticus 19 and Proverbs 3, as it shapes his call to wholeness, which constitutes our focus. In this we hear a particularly Jamesian way of construing wholeness/perfection before God.

Though in the not too distant past one would be justified in lamenting over the scholarly neglect of James,[1] that is certainly no longer the case today. Within the last decade major commentaries by Dan McCartney, Scot McKinght, and especially the magisterial volume by Dale Allison in the ICC series have been published. These major contributions have been accompanied by a host of homiletical and student commentaries along with several major academic monographs appreciating various aspects of the Epistle of James. Within this general renaissance the common turn has been to appreciate James on its own terms. In keeping with Dr.

[1] For example, the opening two sentences of Andrew Chester's work are representative of this negative assessment: "James presents a unique *problem* within the New Testament. The questions that loom over it are whether it has *any* theology at all, and whether it should have *any place* in Christian scripture" (A. Chester and R.P. Martin, *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994], 3, emphasis added).

Tomlinson's example, one must attend to James' particular voice by listening for the reoccurring phrases or, perhaps, even better, listening for the dominant *leitmotif* which characterizes the letter. The textual voice of James strikes the thematic note of "perfection," or wholeness and whole-hearted devotion to God and this *leitmotif* is grounded in, so to speak, the *cantus firmus* of James' own hearing of Scripture.

The present thesis is that James' concern for perfection or wholeness cannot be understood apart from key intertextual allusions to two Old Testament passages because when modern readers encounter James' discussion of "perfection" incorrect assumptions regarding the sinless life quickly come to mind. Rather than a kind of religious perfectionism, the wholeness to which James calls his readers is characterized especially by the concern for holiness articulated in Leviticus 19 and the humility noted in Proverbs 3. The first section of this study will briefly describe the main theme of wholeness ("perfection") in James with a view to understanding how it aids the overall argument of the letter. The essay then turns to an examination of James' use of Leviticus 19:15, 18b and Proverbs 3:34. Here the study will consider the importance of the wider context of each passage and the role James' citation plays in his understanding of wholeness. Here the call to holiness, from Torah, and to humility, from Israel's wisdom tradition, necessarily inform James' notion of wholeness before God. In conclusion the essay offers some implications stemming from James' scripturally informed view of wholeness with regard to the "path" the renewed people of God must tread.

Wholeness or "Perfection" in James

The thematic importance of wholeness (or "perfection") in James has been articulated predominantly in German-speaking scholarship,[2] and

[2] For example: R. Hoppe, *Der Theologische Hintergrund des Jakobusbriefes* (FzB 28; Würzburg: Echter, 1977); J. Zmijewski, "Christliche 'Vollkommenheit': Erwägungen zur Theologie des Jakobusbriefs," *Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt* 5 (1980), 50–70; H. Frankemölle, "Das semantische Netz des Jakobusbriefes: Zur Einheit eines umstrittenen Briefes," *BZ* 34 (1990), 161–97; W. Popkes, *Adressaten, Situation und Form des Jakobusbriefes* (SBS 125/26; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1986); F. Mussner, "Die ethische Motivation im Jakobusbrief," in *Neues Testament und Ethik*, ed. H. Merklein (Freiburg:

only recently has received detailed exposition in English.[3] In several of these works wholeness is directly related to knowing and practicing the law and the working of wisdom. Consequently, these three elements—wholeness, law, and wisdom—constitute the hermeneutical key for understanding the argument and theological perspective of James. That is, James' understanding of the law of love as articulated in Leviticus 19:18b and the call to humility (and away from pride) in Proverbs 3:34 constitute key passages—Torah and Wisdom—which shape how James understands the law and wisdom of Israel generally. And James' understanding of wholeness or perfection is grounded by such an understanding of Israel's Scriptures.

A key lexical indicator of the importance of wholeness or "perfection" in the letter is the frequent use of the τέλ-word group. Terms from this word group appear eight times in James. Out of a total of nineteen occurrences in the New Testament, the adjective τέλειος

Herder, 1989), 58–59, 422–23; M. Klein *'Ein vollkommenes Werk': Vollkommenheit, Gesetz und Gericht als theologische Themen des Jakobusbriefes* (BWANT 7; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 1995); M. Tsuji, *Glaube zwischen Vollkommenheit und Verweltlichung: Eine Untersuchung zur literarischen Gestalt und zur inhaltlichen Kohärenz des Jakobusbriefes* (WUNT 2/93; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 53–54, 100–104; M. Konradt, *Christliche Existenz nach dem Jakobusbrief: Eine Studie zu seiner soteriologischen und ethichen Konzeption* (SUNT 22; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 267–86.

[3] Though only a few recognized "perfection" as an important theme in James (S. Laws, *A Commentary on the Epistle of James* [BNTC; London: Black, 1980], 28–32; *idem*, "The Doctrinal Basis for the Ethics of James," *SE* 7 (1982), 299–305; R. P. Martin, *James* [WBC 48; Waco, TX.: Word, 1988], lxxix–lxxxii; P. Hartin, *James and the Q Sayings of Jesus* [JSNTSup 47; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991], 199–217; E. Tamez, *The Scandalous Message of James* [New York: Crossroad, 1992], 56–68; J.H. Elliott, "The Epistle of James in Rhetorical and Social Scientific Perspective: Wholeness-Holiness and Patterns of Replication," *BTB* 23 [1993], 71–81; R. Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage* [London: Routledge, 1999], 165–68, 177–84) P. Hartin (*A Spirituality of Perfection* [Collegeville, MN.: Liturgical Press, 1999]), Moo (*Letter of James* [PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000], 45–6, 80), and Cheung (*The Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics of James* [Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003], especially chapter 4) have provided extended studies of perfection in James, which Hartin offering an entire text to the topic.

appears five times in James.[4] Beyond the adjective, James contains two τέλ-related verbs as well: τελεῖτε ("fulfill the royal law," 2:8) and ἐτελειώθη ("brought to completion," 2:22). This word group describes something as "perfect," or "complete" in the sense of the highest standard, or in some contexts it refers to something that is "fully developed" or "mature." In the Septuagint τέλειος often translates תמים ("unblemished"), a technical term originating in the sacrificial cult referring to the whole, unblemished offering. Though it regularly refers to the sacrificially pure animal it also refers to one's relationship to God, which is expressed in a certain manner of life. In these instances, תמים refers to wholeness of heart, or singleness of devotion, and is specifically applied to human conduct where it conveys the notion of walking blamelessly before the Lord. For example, in Genesis 17:1 the Lord says to Abraham: "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless [תמים; LXX ἄμεμπτος]." Moses commands the nation of Israel: "You shall be blameless [תמים; LXX τέλειος] before the LORD your God" (Deut 18:13). Furthermore Noah is presented as the model of the "perfect" person both in Scripture: "Noah was a righteous man, blameless [תמים; LXX τέλειος] in his generation" (Gen 6:9); and in subsequent Jewish tradition: "...he was 'perfect,' intimating by this expression that he was possessed not of one virtue only but of all..." (Philo, *Abr.*, 34).[5] Τέλειος is also used to translate the Hebrew phrase "a heart that is whole" (שָׁלֵם עִם). In 1 Kings 8:61 we find the command "devote yourselves completely [ἔστωσαν αἱ καρδίαι ἡμῶν τέλειαι LXX] to the Lord your God, waking in his statutes and keeping his commandments..." and in 11:4: "For when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not true [οὐκ ἦν ἡ καρδία αὐτοῦ τελεία] to the Lord his God." Here τέλειος conveys the notion of whole-heartedness (or lack thereof) in

[4] At 1:4a, b; 1:17; 1:25; 3:2 (note the concentration in chapter one). Of the nineteen occurrences of τέλειος in the New Testament, five occur in the undisputed Pauline epistles (Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 2:6, 13:10, 14:20; Phil 3:15), the term also appears in Matt 5:48 (2x), 19:21; Eph 4:13; Col 1:28, 4:12; Heb 5:14, 9:11; 1 John 4:18.

[5] Philo also refers to the fact that Noah was unaffected by evil in every way (τέλειος ὁλόκληρος ἐξ ἀρχῆς(*Abr.*, 47). This phrase is significant because James uses the same two terms to refer to the wholeness or perfection which is the goal of enduring faith (1:4).

devotion before God. One can say that these Old Testament individuals are תמים/τέλειος because they are wholehearted in devotion to God and in this sense perfect or whole.

With this background informing our understanding of the term it is significant to note how James strategically places τέλ-related words along with other key terms in his argument. Τέλειος is used with "work" in James 1:4 and with "work" and "faith" in James 2:22: "You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected [ἐτελειώθη]." More important for the present argument, James uses τέλειος to modify both "law" and "wisdom." First, James describes the law as perfect or whole. The one who is a "doer" of the word looks intently into the "perfect law" (νόμον τέλειον; 1:25) and further, one does well if one "fulfills [τελεῖτε] the royal law" (2:8). Second, though never directly modifying the term σοφία, in 1:5–8 wisdom is cast as the remedy for the one who lacks τέλειος as described in verses 2–4. The end of verse four articulates the result of steadfastness in trials as being "mature, complete, lacking in nothing." Yet, in the very next verse the author concedes that if one is "lacking" then seeking wisdom from God is the remedy. By implication the one possessing wisdom is also one who is "perfect" or whole before God. Furthermore, the δώρημα τέλειον ("perfect gift") that comes from the Father of lights in 1:17 is thematically connected to "wisdom from above" in 3:17.[6] That is, "wisdom" is that "perfect" gift that comes from above originating with the Father of lights. Thus, "work," "faith," "law," and "wisdom" are either designated as τέλειος or, in the case of wisdom, characterized as God's remedy for the one lacking τέλειος. Though anticipating some of the argument to come, James seems to not only view the law and wisdom as "whole" or "perfect," but also as agents of wholeness for God's people. As God's people receive the law and wisdom as interpreted through the Jesus tradition they are enabled to walk in wholeness before God.

Another indicator of the importance of "perfection/wholeness" in James' argument, which very few have noticed, is the relationship between "perfection" and "purity" language in the letter.[7] Τέλειος bears

[6] Zmijewski, "Christliche Vollkommenheit," 73.

[7] For a full discussion see D.R. Lockett, *Purity and Worldview in the Epistle of James* (LNTS 366; London: T&T Clark, 2008), 21–25.

a certain semantic and conceptual overlap with the idea of "purity," and, upon the backdrop of Jewish tradition, terms associated with purity such as "clean" (καθαρός), "undefiled" (ἀμίαντος), "pure" (ἁγνός), and "unstained" (ἄσπιλος) relate a similar concern for wholeness of constitution, or whole-heartedness. James uses each of these terms in his composition[8] beginning in the key section, which concludes the opening prologue of the letter. In 1:26–27 James summarizes his thematic introduction by describing the content of "pure and undefiled" religion, or better piety (θρησκεία). Here "worthless" religion is contrasted with "pure and undefiled religion" (θρησκεία καθαρὰ καὶ ἀμίαντος) before God. Furthermore, maintaining "pure" religion includes keeping "oneself unstained [ἄσπιλον] from the world." Elsewhere James reflects upon how "the perfect [τέλειος] man" is such by virtue of keeping control over his tongue, he declares that the tongue is a "world of iniquity"; "staining [ἡ σπιλοῦσα] the whole body."[9] The language of purity again surfaces in the climatic call to repentance in 4:7–10: "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse [καθαρίσατε] your hands, you sinners, and purify [ἁγνίσατε] your hearts, you double-minded." And finally, the first characteristic produced by the "wisdom from above" is "pure" (ἁγνή). Thus James applies the cultic language of purity to his understanding of "perfection" and suggests the notion of one walking in wholeness or purity before God.[10]

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[8] The LXX translates תמים ("unblemished", or in an ethical sense "blameless") with τέλειος in Gen 6:9; Exod 12:5; Deut 18:13; 2 Kings 22:26 (LXX). In its original context תמים most often describes an animal or crop intended for sacrificial offering as "unblemished," or "whole." And the term often appears in cultic contexts with specific reference to the composition of the sacrifice offered in Israel's worship (Lev 1:3, 10; 3:1, 6; 4:3; and throughout). In these texts תמים is rendered by ἄμωμος ("blameless") in the LXX.

[9] Note where the one who controls the tongue is "perfect" (3:2), the on failing to do, his religion is "worthless" (1:26).

[10] This association is further evidenced by a lexical connection which Bauckham comments upon: "We should...note that James' overarching paraenetic aim of 'perfection' (1:4) also has cultic resonances, since the Hebrew תמים, to which James' use of the τέλειος word-group (perfection, wholeness) corresponds, can mean both moral integrity and the unblemished wholeness of a sacrifice offered in the Temple" (Bauckham, *James*, 146).

Richard Bauckham has noted that the language of purity in James is connected to the theme of wholeness or perfection. He observes that

> [t]he overarching theme of James is "perfection" or "wholeness" (1:4). Wholeness requires wholehearted and single-minded devotion to God, and its opposite is that half-heartedness in devotion to God and that divided loyalty, vacillating between God and the world, which James calls double-mindedness (1:8; 4:8). Also part of this complex of thought in James is the cultic language of purity and defilement (1:27; 4:8). The unblemished wholeness of the sacrifice suggests the image of the pure heart as the state of integrity before God or entire devotedness to God that is, again, the opposite of double-mindedness.[11]

Bauckham goes on to articulate one specific aspect of wholeness, wholeness as exclusion, and links this notion to purity and its opposite, defilement. "This cultic language is closely connected, from its Old Testament and Jewish background, with wholeness. Its use belongs to this aspect of wholeness as exclusion: purity must be preserved by removing and keeping untainted by anything that would defile."[12] This concern for exclusive loyalty as voiced in the Jewish background of Old Testament cultic law (Leviticus 19) also surfaces in Israel's wisdom traditions in the form of humility. Both of these traditional sources—Old Testament law and wisdom—directly influence James' notion of wholeness.

Wholeness in James' Use of the Old Testament

The letter of James contains four direct citations,[13] and makes frequent allusion to specific phrases and larger narrative portions of the Old Testament.[14] However, the author pays special attention to Leviticus

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[11] Bauckham, 165.

[12] *Ibid.*, 180.

[13] James cites Lev 19:18b in 2:8; Deut 5:17–18 LXX in 2:11; Gen 15:6 in 3:23; and Prov 3:34 LXX in 4:6.

[14] Though not formally cited, James alludes to Isa 40:6–8 (1:10–11); Lev 19:15 (2:1, 9); the narrative in Gen 22 and Josh 2, 6 (2:21, 25 respectively); the

19 (in chapter 2) and Proverbs 3 (in chapter 4 and 5). It is evident that as an exegete of Scripture, James intended more than the portion of text quoted to play a part in his exegesis and application. Thus we will consider how the broader context of the citation in question forwards James' particular argument and how this argument informed by Scripture informs James' understanding of wholeness.

Leviticus 19 in James 2

Following the introductory prologue, a distinct unit begins at 2:1 with the vocative address and a negative imperative dealing with the incongruence of partiality and faith in Jesus Christ: "show no partiality as you hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory" (RSV).[15] What "partiality" entails is illustrated in verses 2–4 which climatically end in the rhetorical question regarding partiality in judgment. Then, moving from the paradigm challenging questions of 2:5–7, James appeals to the formative traditions of the community in 8–11: the law of love for neighbor and two of the Ten Commandments.[16]

James 2:8 cites Leviticus 19:18b following the LXX.[17] Where James elsewhere explicitly cites Scripture using variations of "says,"[18] here the text citation is introduced by the phrase "according to the

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combination of Deut 24:14, Lev 19:13, and Isa 5:9 (5:4); Hos 6:4 LXX (5:7); parts of the narrative in 1 Kings 18:42–45 (5:18); and Prov 10:12 (5:20).

[15] The NRSV takes this phrase as a question along with H. Ropes (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James* [ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1916], 46), but is better translated as a general prohibition giving the impression that partiality is inconsistent with faith in the Lord Jesus (Martin, *James*, 59; L. T. Johnson, *Letter of James* [AB 37A; New York: Doubleday, 1995], 220; Moo, *Letter of James*, 98). For the difficulty with the phrase τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης see Especially D. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of James* (ICC; New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 379–84.

[16] Respectively the citation of Lev 19:18b in James 2:8 and to Deut 5:17–18 in James 2:11.

[17] Lev 19:18 was influential in early Christian texts as it is cited in Matt 5:43; 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:31, 33; Luke 10:27; Rom 13:9; Gal 5:14 (allusion in Rom 12:19).

[18] ὁ εἰπών...εἶπεν 2:11; ἡ γραφὴ ἡ λέγουσα 2:23; ἡ γραφὴ λέγει 4:5; διὸ λέγει 4:6.

Scripture" (κατὰ τὴν γραφήν), using κατα with the sense of "in correspondence with."[19] Rather than only signaling the citation is from Scripture, James is stating that there is a way of life or conduct which is "in keeping" with or consistent to the scriptural principle of "love your neighbor as yourself." Thus Luke Johnson observes that "James obviously wants to place Lev 19:18b in its full context, which includes Lev 19:15."[20] Leviticus 19:15 reads: "You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor." Specifically, the phrase "you shall not be partial" is translated uniquely in the Septuagint as "do not receive the face" (ού λήμψῃ πρόσωπον). The term rendered "partiality" in 2:1 is a Christian neologism,[21] προσωπολημψίαις, which echoes the phrase ού λήμψῃ πρόσωπον in LXX Leviticus 19:18. Furthermore, the verbal form of the term is taken up in 2:9 (προσωπολημτεῖ). Keeping in mind the proposition stated in 2:1 regarding the incongruity between claiming faith in Jesus Christ and showing favoritism, James is arguing that rather than partiality, loving the neighbor is "in keeping with Scripture." Thus one may agree with Johnson that James is expounding upon the admonition against partiality and unjust judgment in Leviticus 19:15 in light of the "love command" in 19:18. James, having in mind the entire passage of Leviticus 19:15–18, creatively applies the law of love for one's neighbor not only as the hermeneutical principle for understanding Torah but also as a key characteristic of the one who is perfect or whole.

Further indication of an extended reflection on Leviticus 19, the author continues to add more authoritative evidence to his argument against partiality by citing two of the "ten words," from the LXX version

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[19] For the only other use of this construction see 1 Cor 15:3–4 (κατὰ τὰς γραφάς, 2x).

[20] Johnson, *Letter of James*, 231.

[21] Johnson states: "The term *prosopolempsia* is a Christian neologism, based upon the Hebrew *nasa panim*, translated in the LXX by *labanein prosopon*, literally "to life up the face/appearance" (see Lev 19:15 and, similarly, Mal 1:8), in the sense of "respecting persons" or showing favoritism (see Luke 20:21; Gal 2:6; also *Did.* 4:3; *Barn.* 19:4). The usage in Lev 19:15 makes it clear that the original context of the language was that of judging cases in the community: unjust judgment was that based on appearances rather than on the merits of the case" (*Letter of James*, 221).

of Deuteronomy 5.[22] The same law that says, "love your neighbor as your self," also says: "do not murder" and "do not commit adultery." In keeping with Second Temple tradition, James draws together the Decalogue with the principle of non-partiality characteristic of Leviticus 19; a combination seen in Philo, Josephus, and *Psudeo-Phocylides*.[23] The argument runs like this, partiality and faith in Jesus Christ are incompatible because the scripture says: "love your neighbor as yourself," and just as you should not commit adultery or murder, you should not show partiality because the law is a whole.[24] Furthermore, Leviticus 19 itself reflects echoes the Decalogue. Samuel Balentine notes: "all the instructions in this chapter function as commentary on the Decalogue given at Sinai...."[25] Some even assert that each of the commandments

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[22] The order of the commands are slightly different in the LXX and the MT. In the LXX of Exod 20:13–15, adultery is followed by stealing, then killing, yet in the LXX of Deut 5:17–18 stealing comes after murdering thus it is perhaps more likely that the author of James follows LXX Deut 5:17–18 here.

[23] Cf. Philo, *Hypoth*. 7.1–9; Josephus, *Apion* 2.190–219; and *Ps.-Phoc.* 9–41.

[24] In treating the command to love the neighbor as the summary of the whole law, has James neglected the commandment to love God, which Jesus placed first, before the commandment to love the neighbor (Matt 22: 37–38; Mark 12:29–30; cf. Luke 10:28)? The commandment to love God with all one's heart, soul, and strength (Deut 6:5; 11:13) is part of the *Shema'*, to which James refers twice (2:19; 4:12). He also twice refers to the eschatological reward as promised by God to "those who love him" (1:12; 2:5; cf. 1 Cor 2:9; Sir 2:15–16). Further, the commandment's requirement of devotion "with all your heart and with all your soul" is the implicit opposite of the attitude James calls "double-minded" (1:8; 4:8). Allison (*James*, 379) notes that James takes up the traditional "combination of the imperative to love God (Deut 6.5) with the imperative to love neighbor (Lev 19.18), which Christian tradition attributed to Jesus. But whether he knew that combination from the Jewish tradition or from the Jesus tradition or both cannot be ascertained." And again Allison notes, "there was a conventional, close relationship between Lev 19.18 and the second half of the decalogue, which would entail that breaking any one of the commandments in Exod 20.13–17 = Deut 5.17–21 would mean breaking Lev 19.18; and the latter was widely considered to be a general summary of the second half of the decalogue and so of the whole Torah" (*James*, 415; see sources cited in n. 328 and 406–7).

[25] S.E. Balentine, *Leviticus* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 161. Allison notes, "Given the conventional status of Lev 19.18 as the most important principle in the Torah, that verse is a part that stands for the whole, and James

specifically appear in Leviticus 19.[26] Whether or not each of the "ten words" are present in Leviticus 19, there is clear evidence that the chapter offers commentary upon the Decalogue as a whole. The significance of this observation is that James 2:1–13 seems to be an exegetical reflection upon Leviticus 19 and reference to two of the "ten words," though likely influenced by LXX Deuteronomy 5, could very well have also reflected the interpretive concerns regarding the Decalogue *present in Leviticus 19*. All of this makes clear that James was strongly influenced by the Torah in general and interpretive perspective of Leviticus 19 in particular. The author of James seems to have been reflecting on the entirety of Leviticus 19 here in chapter 2.[27] The point of

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seems to be writing about both part and whole simultaneously" (*James* 402–3). And further Allison argues, "James probably shows knowledge of one of the exegetical traditions associated with Lev 19.18, namely, that it summarizes much of Torah in general or the second half of the Decalogue in particular" (*James*, 406; see also Bauckham, *James*, 142–44; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, 169–76).

[26] W.C. Kaiser ("The Book of Leviticus," in *New Interpreter's Bible* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1994], 1131) lists the following connections: 1 and 2 appear in 19:4; 3 in 19:12; 4 and 5 in 19:16; 7 in 19:29; 8 and 9 in 19:11, 16; and finally, 10 in 19:18. Balentine notes however, "more than half of these parallels are inexact at best. The only Commandments clearly echoed are numbers, one, two, four, and five..." (*Leviticus*, 161).

[27] Allison thinks that Jas 2:8–13 is an exposition on Leviticus 19:18 (*James*, 381). Allison summarizes the logic of James 2: "The point rather is to make explicit that showing partiality to the rich is not an issue of etiquette but a matter of Torah...favoritism contradicts love of neighbor" (*James*, 401). Allison further states: "In this section James cites Lev 19.18, alludes to 19.15, and draws upon an exegetical tradition associated with the latter. Leviticus 19 has, moreover, influenced other passages in our book. One may wonder, then, whether the train of thought in vv. 10–12 has something to do with how that famous chapter ends: 'And you will keep all my law (LXX: πάντα τὸν νόμον) and all (πάντα) my commandments and you will do (ποιήσετε) them'" (*James*, 413). L.T. Johnson ("The Use of Leviticus 19 in the Letter of James," *JBL* 101 (1982), 391–401), argues that James chapter 2 alludes to Leviticus in multiple ways, which seems to make the text almost midrashic in parts. See also I. Jacobs, *The Midrashic Process: Tradition and Interpretation in Rabbinic Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), chapter 7 entitled "The midrashic background for James 2:21–23," 145–53; M. Gertner, "Midrashim in the New Testament," *JJS* 7 (1962), 267–92, especially, 285; and Gertner, "Midrashic Terms and

James' extended reflection on Leviticus 19 is that favoritism toward the rich is at odds with the command to love the neighbor—which for James is the command taken up by Jesus and summarizes the whole law.[28]

James selects and cites the epitome of the law, Leviticus 19:18b, and comments upon its implication for his readers. Those reading James' letter are challenged to view the love command as a summary and interpretive principle of the Torah and consequently as a *means* to freedom and "perfection." Loving the neighbor, as the summation of the law, not only excludes favoritism, but moreover is a primary means to a life of wholeness before God.

Proverbs 3 in James 4

James 4:6 cites Proverbs 3:34 and introduces the text citation with the phrase "therefore it says [διὸ λέγει]."[29] In the literary context of James, the citation functions as a transition from the indictment against the audience for living under the influence of earthly wisdom, which produces envy and strife in 3:13—4:6, to the call to repentance in 4:7–10. The citation not only marks the transition between the indictment on one hand and the call to repentance on the other, but also it constitutes the foundation for the following exposition regarding the penitent humble and promised judgment upon the arrogant.

In the verses following the quotation of Proverbs 3:34, James, in reverse order, expounds the second half of the text in 4:7–10, and then considers the first phrase of the citation in 4:11—5:6. Arguing for this structure, Alonso-Schökel observes that the thematic refrain of "humble yourselves" (ταπεινώθετε) in 4:10 recalls the "lowly" (ταπεινοῖς) in 4:6 thus framing James' exposition upon the second half of the citation: "God gives grace to the lowly." The first half of the citation, "God resists the proud," is then considered in 4:11—5:6, which is signaled by the

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Techniques in the New Testament and the Epistle of James, a Midrash on a Psalm," *Studia Evangelica* 3 (1964), 463.

[28] See Bauckham, *James*, 142–47. Allison notes: "Since Lev 19.18 was widely thought of as summarizing half of the decalogue, and since furthermore the decalogue was in turn thought of as a sort of summary or précis of the Torah, Lev 19.18 was not an isolated commandment but an imperative that stood for a large portion of the law" (*James*, 407).

[29] Again James follows the LXX except for the substitution of θεός for κύριος.

repetition of the rare verb ἀντιτάσσω in both 4:6 and 5:6. Read in light of this lexical connection, the subjectless phrase in 5:6 "he does not resist you" (οὐκ ἀντιτάσσεται ὑμῖν)—taken either as a statement or a question—may be read in light of in 4:6. In other words this might indicate that the subject of the verb in 4:6 (ὁ θεός) may be supplied for the verb appearing in 5:6 and that the entire phrase could be expressed as a rhetorical question rounding off James' exposition of God's judgment against the proud: "does he [God] not resist you?"[30] Alonso-Schökel outlines the logic of the passage as "God gives grace to the humble, therefore humble yourselves before God; God opposes the arrogant, you behave arrogantly; should not He oppose you?"[31] This effectively marks the end of the James' exposition of the proverb.

Not only has James offered an exposition of the text citation and made application for his present readers, he also calls the larger context of Proverbs 3 to mind. When Proverbs 3:34 is read in its original context a set of implicit contrasts emerge. The LXX version of Proverbs 3:33–35 reads:[32] "The curse of God is on the houses of the ungodly [ἀσεβῶν; רָשָׁע "wicked" MT]; but the habitations of the just [δικαίων] are blessed. The Lord resists the proud [לֵצִים "scorners" MT]; but he gives grace to the humble [tapeinoi~j; עֲנָוִים "humble" MT]. The wise shall inherit glory; but the ungodly [ἀσεβεῖς; כְּסִילִים, "foolish" MT] have exalted *their own* dishonor." Bauckham argues that if the preceding and following verses are aligned with 3:34, two sets of three terms result: "wicked," "arrogant," and "fools," contrasted with "righteous," "lowly," and "wise."[33] In light of the promise in Proverbs 3:35, that the wise will inherit honor but fools dishonor, James reads the wisdom tradition as referring to God's final retribution, and thus, interprets the traditional Jewish wisdom saying in

[30] L. Alonso-Schökel, "James 5,2 [sic] and 4,6," *Biblica* 54 (1973), 73–76; see also Johnson, *Letter of James*, 305; Penner, *The Epistle of James and Eschatology: Re-reading an Ancient Christian Letter* (JSNTSupp 121; Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1996), 155–58; both McKnight (*The Letter of James* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011], 399 n.142) and Allison (*James*, 687–8) are unpersuaded.

[31] As recorded in Allison, *James*, 688.

[32] The text of the LXX is in view as Allison notes: "The citation is of LXX Prov 3.34, except that the subject in the latter is anarthrous κύριος" (*James*, 623); the Hebrew is very different.

[33] Bauckham, *James*, 154.

an eschatological context. This complex of ideas is summarized in James' exposition in 4:10: "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you." The eschatological reversal of status before God reinforces the antithesis between how God generally deals with two opposite types of individuals: first the "lowly" (4:7–10) and then the "proud" (4:11—5:6).

Thus not only does James quote Proverbs 3:34 but he also intends to comment on the text allowing the logical pressure of the citation, as unpacked in his exposition, to influence his readers' actions. The "lowly" one God rewards with grace; the "proud" is promised judgment. Within the matrix of James' argument, the "lowly" one bears a key characteristic of one who is "perfect" or "whole" and in contrast the "proud" manifests his lack of "perfection." Here James interprets the wisdom traditions of Israel to refer to two different types of individual, one traveling the path of "wisdom" to "perfection" and one traveling the path of "foolishness" to "death."[34]

Wholeness in Intertextual Perspective

The distinctive melody line sounded in the letter of James is deeply influenced by his hearing of Christian Scripture. Both Torah and Wisdom are foundational to the way James understands wholeness. Using the Torah as his authority, James argues for one to live in keeping with the law as understood by Jesus, that is the Torah summarized in the love command. Here a clear contrast appears between judging with partiality on the one hand (which is tantamount to breaking the law and thus forfeiting wholeness) and loving the neighbor on the other. Living in light of the former is to embrace imperfection and ultimately death, while the one loving the neighbor lives in keeping with the law, and thus is walking blamelessly before God, choosing the path of life. Similarly, in James' exposition of "wisdom" one may either live in proud arrogance or in gentle humility, living either as a fool inheriting dishonor and punishment or as one who is wise inheriting honor and life.

Within James' overall strategy he associates both law and wisdom with wholeness or "perfection." The "the law of liberty" and wisdom "from above" are both perfect gifts which develop holiness and

[34] Commenting on James 1:5 Allison notes that the connection between perfection (1:2–4) and wisdom (1:5) is traditional (*James*, 156).

humility—both key components of wholehearted devotion to God. The law of liberty, summarized in the dual love command,[35] is a means by which wholeness before God is achieved. Likewise, wisdom, which is both a gift from God in response to prayer and a result of studying and practicing the perfect law, is a necessary component of the one possessing wholeness (1:4–5). Perfection is the goal and Torah and Wisdom, as read through the lens of Messiah Jesus, are the means to that goal.

Identifying the *leitmotif* consisting of the intersection of "perfection" and James' hearing of Scripture, specifically Torah and Wisdom, helps tune our ears to the hermeneutical and theological symphony of the letter. Yet acknowledging this connection may also demonstrate that "perfection" for James does not reverberate with the notion of perfection we see in the history of the western church. Rather than viewing perfection as achieving a state of sinlessness, James redirects our attention to living in wholeness before God—singular loyalty and wholehearted devotion to God alone. And though James does register a concern for separation from "the world" as part of perfection, sectarian isolation from the surrounding culture is clearly not James' primary view of wholeness.[36] James understands Christian "perfection" as consisting of loving one's neighbor and embracing the wisdom of humility. James articulates the concern for taking care of brothers and sisters in need and pointedly states that "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, [read "perfect"] is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress." And it seems this is the needed corrective the church must hear as it attempts "to keep [itself] unstained by the world." Thus in walking the "path of life" for James we must not neglect the corporate nature of "perfection" brought to fruition through the law and wisdom.

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[35] Whereas this study has focused on the law of love of neighbor, James also is clearly aware of the law of love of God (2:19).

[36] For a fuller discussion of whether James strikes a sectarian posture see D.R. Lockett, *Purity and Worldview*, 146–84; and *idem*, "Strong and Weak Lines: Permeable Boundaries between Church and Culture in the Letter of James," *Review and Expositor* 108 (2011), 391–405.

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Phoebe, the Letter-Carrier of Romans, and the Impact of Her Role on Biblical Theology

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Dedication

I count it a privilege to offer this article for my friend, Dr. Alan Tomlinson, on the occasion of this *Festschrift* in his honor.[1] I have known Alan for about 20 years and served as his colleague in New Testament at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary for 13 years. From day one, we have been of close kindred mind and conviction, probably because we both have Appalachian roots and learned from godly men who taught or were trained at Dallas Seminary. Over the years, we have traveled together to biblical sites, and discussed numerous NT passages, ancient texts, and inscriptions. Knowing him has enriched my life, built up my faith, and increased my knowledge, and I have come to the conclusion that he might possibly be the best NT exegete in the Southern Baptist Convention, or even beyond. Congratulations, my brother!

Introduction

Scholars are not only divided along ideological lines but also clearly undecided on what role Phoebe played in Paul's letter to the Romans.[2] In

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[1] A slightly different version of this article first appeared in the *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 56.1 (Fall 2013): 43–51; reprinted with permission.

[2] Paul wrote Romans to show that, in accordance with the gospel, "no distinction" exists
in the impartial judicial administration of God––the law condemns everyone, yet all who believe, Jew or Gentile, are justified by faith (Rom 1–11). In light of Romans 1–11, the apostle provoked an acceptance of all justified believers, "born

their discussions on this topic, they often particularly focus on how Paul used the word διάκονος as it pertains to Phoebe, mentioned in Romans 16:1–2. On the one hand, the term may be used generically to denote a "servant," i.e., one who performs various kinds of service.[3] On the other hand, the word can also designate the office of "deacon" (cf. Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8, 12; Ign. *Eph.* 2.1; *Magn.* 6.1). So, the question usually arises in Romans 16:1–2 whether Paul is commending Phoebe in his letter because she is a noteworthy "servant," or because she is specifically a "deacon" of the church at Cenchrea. A third possibility exists—*viz.*, Phoebe was the carrier of the letter to the church at Rome.[4]

A brief survey of commentaries written on Romans reveals that a majority of scholars say that Phoebe may have been the letter-carrier for Paul's epistle to the Romans, but then they often say, primarily on the basis of the word διάκονος, that she was a deacon. For example, though he provides no proof that Phoebe was a letter-carrier, F. F. Bruce maintained that the letter to the Romans evidently was taken by her to the church; he then states, however, that she was a deacon.[5] T. Schreiner also thinks that Phoebe was probably the bearer of the letter, but then he too goes on to say that she held the office of deacon.[6] Though D. Moo strongly alludes to Phoebe being the letter-carrier of Romans, he likewise believes that she was a deacon—however, he is cautious about saying she held the office because he notes that regular offices in the church were

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Jew" and "born Gentile," within the body of Christ (Rom 12–16). I am grateful to my friend Alan Tomlinson for sharing this view with me several years ago.

[3] See e.g. Barclay M. Newman and Eugene A. Nida (*A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans* [London/NewYork/Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1971], 290) who say "it is doubtful that this had become a technical term for an office in the church at the time that Paul wrote, and it is better to use a general term rather than the specific term 'deaconess.'"

[4] For quite some time, Alan Tomlinson and I have held that Phoebe was the letter-carrier of Romans. Scholars in general today are finally beginning to attribute this role to Phoebe, but few have actually discussed the impact of her being a letter-carrier on a biblical theology of women in ministry.

[5] F. F. Bruce, *Romans*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 252.

[6] T. R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 786-87.

still in the process of being established.[7] J. D. G. Dunn is no different and holds a similar viewpoint to that of Moo.[8] C. E. B. Cranfield says that it is highly probable that Phoebe was to be the bearer of Paul's letter to the Romans, but then he says it is "virtually certain" that Phoebe is a deacon of the church in question.[9]

I will briefly contend in this paper, however, that in Romans 16:1–2 Paul commended Phoebe as the letter-carrier for his epistle to the Roman church. That is to say, Phoebe was a "servant" exercising a service-oriented task—*viz.*, dispatch letter service. To put forth a case for the latter view, I will first point out various Greek texts in which the word διάκονος refers to one who is a letter-carrier or courier. Second, I will show that Paul's recommendation of Phoebe in Romans 16:1–2—though more extensive—nonetheless fits the pattern found in texts where letter-carriers are commended to the recipients of letters.[10] Finally, the impact of this conclusion on biblical theology will be briefly considered.

The Use of Διάκονος as "Courier" in Ancient Texts

That the word διάκονος often refers in ancient texts to a messenger, courier, or letter-carrier seems clear. A few examples should suffice to show that the latter statement is true.[11]

In Aeschylus' (c. 525/4-456/5 B.C.) Greek tragedy titled *Prometheus Bound*, Prometheus says that people should worship and adore those who rule them. He then expresses some considerable disdain for his ruler Zeus, before saying that he sees that god's

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[7] D. J. Moo, *Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 913-14; cf. also Moo, "Romans." Pages 2-99 in the *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary* Vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 90-91.

[8] J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans*. WBC 38b (Dallas: Word, 1988), 886-87.

[9] C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, ICC, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), 2: 781.

[10] As E. R. Richards (Silvanus Was Not Peter's Secretary: Theological Bias in Interpreting *dia Silouanou . . . egrapsa," JETS* Vol. 43, No. 3 [Sept. 2000]: 421) has correctly noted.

[11] The list of texts highlighted below were found in LSJ, 398.

messenger/courier (διάκονος) coming, no doubt to herald some news. At this point Hermes, the messenger of the gods, enters the scene.[12]

In Sophocles' (b. 490s B.C.) play *Philoctetes*, the mythological leader of seven ships to Troy is left behind in Lemnos after being bitten by a snake. He is portrayed as pleading for Zeus either to take his life or rescue him from being an outcast. In his plea to Zeus, Philoctetes longs to see his father again. He says that he has sent people to implore his father to take him home in his own ship. He fears, however, that his father is either dead or the envoys/couriers (οἱ διάκονοι) he sent cared little about his concerns and instead hurried to their homes.[13]

In his *Republic* Plato (c. 429-347 B.C.) discusses with Adeimantus the establishment of a city. After saying that a city cannot be set up in a place where it will not require imports, Plato stresses the necessity of persons who will bring to that city what it needs from other cities. He further opines that if the city's messenger/courier (ὁ διάκονος) departs not taking with him anything needed by those from whom they will obtain their required imports, then he will also return from them empty-handed.[14]

In his *Antiquities* the Jewish historian Josephus (b. A.D. 37/8) records that when David learned of Absalom's plot and later fled from Jerusalem (cf. 2 Sam 15:12), he had persuaded the Levites to remain behind in that city (cf. 2 Sam 15:24). He instructed them to keep him secretly informed of events that took place there while he was away. Josephus reports that, in all of these matters, Achimas, the son of Sadok, and Jonathan, the son of Abiathar, acted as David's faithful couriers (διάκονοι).[15] Likewise, he later records that the high priests had kept their sons in hiding outside of the city so that they might bring word to David of Absalom's plans. When the priests instructed their sons to take news to David, Josephus describes Achimas and Jonathan as setting off without delay, like obedient and loyal couriers (διάκονοι).[16]

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[12] Aeschylus, *Prometheus Vinctus* 942. Interestingly, the word διάκονος was translated as "servitor" in the Loeb Classical Library series volume.

[13] Sophocles, *Philocretes* 497.

[14] Plato *Republic* 370e. Again, the word διάκονος was translated as "servitor" rather than messenger in the older Loeb Classical Library series volume.

[15] Josephus, *Antiquities* VII, 201.

[16] Ibid., 224.

The New Testament is also not without its other examples in which the word διάκονος is used where letter-carriers are indicated. For instance, Paul mentions Tychichus as the letter-carrier in Ephesians 6:21 and Colossians 4:7–8, and most scholars recognize him as such in those letters.

Interestingly, though he did not do so in the second edition (1979), in Frederick Danker's 2003 revision of Bauer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Early Christian Literature* (BDAG), he described the use of διάκονος as it pertains to Phoebe in Romans 16:1 as "one who serves as an intermediary in a transaction, *agent, intermediary, courier*."[17] For some reason, however, this meaning has not yet readily carried over into New Testament scholarship.

Paul's Recommendation of Phoebe as the Letter-Carrier

Now that it has been established that the term διάκονος refers in several ancient texts to a courier, the question that now needs to be asked is, "Is this use of διάκονος the one present in Romans 16:1?" Since context determines the meaning of words, it needs to be shown by some contextual means that Paul is speaking of Phoebe as a letter-carrier. If the latter can be done, then this demonstration would lend support to the viewpoint that the apostle is using διάκονος in that sense. Thus, to demonstrate the hypothesis posed earlier, I will briefly show that Paul's recommendation of Phoebe in Romans 16:1–2 fits the pattern found in texts where carriers are commended to the recipients of letters.

Before doing so, however, it would be prudent to consider briefly something of the function of letter-carriers in antiquity. Besides carrying the letters, couriers sometimes read the letters they delivered, elaborated upon their contents, and also answered any questions the recipients might have. Something of the latter functions can be seen, for example, in a letter from a woman who seeks to enlist Zenon's help against someone who has treated her son badly. After her complaint she wrote, "The rest please learn from the man who brings you this letter. He is no

[17] BDAG, 230. This meaning was not present in the second edition (1979), but comes from one who, as far as I know, had no theological "ax to grind" in the complementarian-egalitarian debate.

stranger to us."[18] Or, consider a letter from Cicero in which he complains to one of his friends that a carrier did not provide some expected details for him.

I received your letter . . . and on reading it I gathered that Philotimus did not act . . . [on] the instructions he had from you (as you write) . . . [when] he failed to come to me himself, and merely forwarded me your letter; and I concluded that it was shorter because you had imagined that he would deliver it in person.[19]

The sender wrote a shorter letter because he expected the carrier to elaborate the details for the recipient. He also did not have to say that the courier would provide additional information—everyone presumed this would be the case.

For letter-carriers to be accepted in the communities to which they were sent it was often necessary for the senders to provide the couriers' credentials. Thus, a letter of commendation would be provided on their behalf.

Paul used letters of recommendation (cf. 2 Cor 8:18–24; Eph 6:21–22; Phil. 2:25–30; Col 4:7–8; cf. also Acts 9:2; 18:27; 22:5; 1 Cor 16:3).[20] In 2 Corinthians 3:1–2 he mentioned the practice and said that he did not need any letter of commendation. He told the Corinthians, some of whom were saying he was not qualified to do new covenant ministry (cf. 2 Cor 2:16),

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you? You are our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all men.[21]

As C. Kim has found, "For Paul, the act of commending someone actually meant sending credentials to the recipient on behalf of the recommended."[22]

Given that Paul had never visited the church at Rome (cf. Rom 1:10; 15:22–23), the need to present Phoebe's credentials as his letter-carrier was probably more important than usual; so, he commends her as

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[18] PCol 3:6 (as cited in E. R. Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004], 183).

[19] Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, 4.2.1 (as cited in Richards, *Paul*, 183).

[20] Chan-Hie Kim, *The Familiar Letter of Recommendation* (Missoula, MT: 1972), 119.

[21] Translation mine.

[22] Kim, Familiar Letter of Recommendation, 119.

a courier (διάκονος). Those who view Phoebe specifically as a deacon in Romans 16:1 should not see Paul's recommendation of her as a courier as diminishing her role or importance. To the contrary, she is a highly trusted individual who is a vital part of the apostle's missionary team; she is sent for the express purpose of delivering the letter to the Roman church and in doing so conveys Paul's apostolic presence (παρουσία).[23] The authority she conveys is not her own but the apostle Paul's.

Several scholars have written extensively on letters in antiquity and on letters of recommendation—notably, C. Kim,[24] J. L. White,[25] S. Stowers,[26] and more recently, E. R. Richards.[27] Each finds that Paul's commendation of Phoebe in Romans 16:1–2 shows some of the characteristics featured in Greek papyri letters of recommendation. One should also note here that scholars on letters generally acknowledge that passages of commendation often occurred within larger letters, as is the case in the text considered here.

What is the pattern found in texts where the couriers of letters are commended to their recipients? White's work is representative here when he states that the following kind and sequence of formulae are characteristic of letters of recommendation (*littera commendatica*): (1) a mention of the letter-carrier and his or her credentials; (2) the writer's request with regard to the courier; and (3) usually, an expression of

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[23] R. W. Funk, "The Apostolic *Parousia*: Form and Significance," in W. R. Farmer, C. F. D. Moule and R. R. Niebuhr (eds.), *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox* (Cambridge: CUP, 1967), 249. Letters substituted for their authors' actual physical presence to their recipients (cf. Cicero, *Letters to His Friends* 2,4,1). Paul's letters speak for him, with his authority as though he was actually present. In that sense, they are inseparably connected with Paul as a person and as an apostle (2 Cor. 1:15–2:4); see David Bartlett, *The Shape of Scriptural Authority* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 120.

[24] Kim, Familiar Letter of Recommendation.

[25] John L. White, "The Greek Documentary Letter Tradition Third Century B.C.E. to Third Century C.E.," *Semeia* 22 (1981): 89-106.

[26] Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter-Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986).

[27] E. Randolph Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004).

appreciation.[28] He provides the following letter of commendation as a representative example,

> *letter carrier/credentials*
> I think that you are aware about Aischylos, that he is far from indifferent to us. He has now sailed up the river to your party in order to be introduced to Kleonikos.
>
> *the request*
> Therefore, please make an effort to introduce him to Kleonikos; and if he does not find the latter in your company, get letters of introduction to him from his friends.
>
> *expression of appreciation*
> By doing this you would both favor me and the God. And write to me if you ever have need of anything, knowing that you will have it.[29]

The description of Phoebe and Paul's request in Romans 16:1–2 fits White's description of the letter of recommendation, though, as Richards rightly points out, "Paul's citation of his carrier was never merely formulaic; he commended the person more than was common and in ways that were not common."[30]

As far as the letter-carrier and her credentials are concerned in Romans 16:1–2 Paul says, "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a διάκονος from the church which is in Cenchrea (v. 1) . . . for she herself has been a benefactor of many, and of myself as well (v. 2c)."[31] Paul commended Phoebe as a fellow believer, as a faithful courier, and as a benefactor, a good friend of many, including Paul. This commendation tells the Roman church that she is someone who can be completely trusted—trusted to deliver Paul's letter without compromising and

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[28] John L. White, "The Greek Documentary Letter Tradition Third Century B.C.E. to Third Century C.E.," *Semeia* 22 (1981): 95-97.

[29] *Ibid.*, 96. Other examples of the letter of recommendation may be found in Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter-Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 155.

[30] Richards, 189.

[31] Translation mine.

opening it and thus rendering its contents suspect, trusted to elaborate upon its details, trusted to answer any questions that the believers might have of her, etc.

In Paul's *request* he asks "that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you . . ." (v. 2a–b, NASB). Paul asked his recipients to welcome this woman, to accept her in a worthy manner. Further, he instructed the Roman church to give her anything she needed while she was there. Paul was saying, "Receive this lady as my courier/envoy; take care of her; do whatever she asks."

The *expression of appreciation* that White mentions in his study on letters seems to be absent from Romans 16:1–2, but as he points out, and as others generally recognize, many letters which have a request as their primary purpose do not employ the full three-part sequence. Paul may have expressed his appreciation for the church elsewhere in Romans (e.g., 1:8–15) and felt no need to do it here.

To sum, one certainly cannot draw the conclusion based on word-use alone that Paul used διάκονος in the sense of "courier" as it pertains to Phoebe. When one combines, however, this potential nuanced word-use with the fact that Paul commended Phoebe as a letter-carrier in this passage of recommendation (a fact generally acknowledged by scholars who have written on ancient letters), then it stands to reason that διάκονος means "courier" in Romans 16:1, as Danker concluded in BDAG. If so, then scholars should perhaps stop thinking of Phoebe primarily as one who was a "deacon" in the church at Cenchrea—at least on the basis of this text; for, if the explanation of the text put forth above is correct, then it does not necessarily support that translation and interpretation. Phoebe is clearly a "servant," but here a servant specifically involved in dispatch-letter service; thus, the rather generic use of διάκονος as "servant" does not specifically seem to capture enough of what Paul said about her.

Some might object to the evidence put forth above by saying that couriers as the messengers of the gods is one thing, whereas calling a person like Phoebe a letter-carrier is quite another. Sufficient texts described above, however, do call various people letter-carriers. The word διάκονος may be used in that sense to refer to a courier.

Others might also protest the conclusion reached above because of the qualifying phrase, τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Κεγχρεαῖς, which they

translate to mean "of the congregation (church) which is in Cenchrea." In other words, for them the phrase localizes Phoebe's position as a deacon in the church and strongly suggests that Paul had in mind her specific status as a deacon rather than her general disposition as a servant. The phrase τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Κεγχρεαῖς, however, need mean nothing more than "from the church which is in Cenchrea." That is to say, the church at Cenchrea was the church to which Phoebe belonged.

Paul also called Phoebe his "benefactor" (προστάτις, Rom 16:2), who has rendered assistance not only to him, but also to many others. This designation "implies that Phoebe was possessed of some social position, wealth and independence."[32] She evidently "put her status, resources, and time at the services of traveling Christians, like Paul, who needed help and support."[33] The trip to carry the letter to Rome from Corinth, the city of the letter's origin, would be quite long and expensive. Phoebe may have had some business that she needed to conduct in Rome, and it necessitated her traveling there to do so. If that was the case, she likely also carried the letter to Rome because she was headed that way.

The Impact of Phoebe as a Letter-Carrier on Biblical Theology

If this conclusion regarding Phoebe in Romans 16:1–2 is correct, *viz.*, that she is a courier, then some rethinking obviously needs to take place regarding the prominent place these verses play in a biblical theology, particularly with the role of women in ministry. Not surprisingly, some NT scholars, for instance, like Michael Bird and Scot McKnight, have used the role of Phoebe as a letter-carrier and the responsibilities that came with that job to support egalitarian perspectives.[34] For example, Bird poses the question, "Now, if Paul was so opposed to women teaching men anytime and anywhere, why on earth would he send a woman like

[32] Cranfield, *Romans*, 2: 783.

[33] Moo, *Romans*, 916.

[34] See Michael Bird's comments at
http://www.cbeinternational.org/?q=content/2011-06-16-fretting-over-phoebe-arise-e-newsletter. Accessed: 9/16/2013.
McKnight simply cites Bird's blogpost in his article
http://www.patheos.com/blogs/jesuscreed/2011/12/09/fretting-over-phoebe-mike-bird.
Accessed: 9/16/2013.

Phoebe to deliver this vitally important letter and to be his personal representative in Rome?"[35] He later says, "I'm careful to make the point that this is not the be all and end all of debates about women in ministry. . . . But I point out that taken at face value, Paul evidently had no problem with women having some kind of speaking and teaching role in the churches."[36]

Complementarians, however, readily acknowledge that Paul permitted women to have some kind of speaking or teaching roles in the churches. They gladly encourage women to teach other women and children (cf. Titus 2:3–5). Moreover, they also recognize the fact that women prophesied in the early church (cf. 1 Cor 11:5; though in this text Paul pointed to an abuse in the practice).

Egalitarians object to the view of 1 Timothy 2:12 which arguably says that Paul restricted women from teaching men Christian doctrine and from exercising any kind of governing authority over men in the church. They typically claim that such an interpretation is ambiguous at best, and that Paul's words are actually limited in their scope to the events in Ephesus. Complementarians usually maintain that the plain reading of the text is clear and that its scope extends beyond the events at Ephesus. The latter group views this verse as prescriptive and normative;[37] the former group does not.

The primary difficulty with using Phoebe's role and responsibilities as a letter-carrier to support the egalitarian perspective seems to be one of scope. One makes a huge jump from Phoebe's role as a courier and its associated responsibilities of clarifying and explaining some of Romans' content (if need be) to the conclusion that women are thus now permitted to teach men in churches, which deduction seems to contradict Paul's words in 1 Tim 2:12. A considerable difference in context is apparent between that of church worship (1 Tim 2:8–15) and delivering mail (as Phoebe did). Three Greek words in 1 Timothy 2:8 have bearing on this issue, and it is to those words to which we now turn our attention.

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Typically because verse 12 is seen as grounded in creation, mentioned in 1 Tim 2:13.

The words "in every place" (ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ) in 1 Timothy 2:8 bring into play this issue of scope when considering the restrictions Paul placed on women in 1 Timothy 2:12. Some questions follow, as Mounce has asked in summary fashion: "Is παντὶ τόπῳ, 'every place,' in Ephesus or more generally in the world? Does it refer to only public worship or also to conduct in the outside world?"[38] One's answers to these questions also affect conclusions reached in 1 Timothy 2:8–15 concerning (i) a woman's submission (v. 11); (ii) where a woman may or may not teach (v. 12a); and (iii) the men over whom she may not exercise governing authority.[39]

Arguably, the phrase ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ means "in every place of worship," i.e., in every place that Christian congregations are gathered for worship, not just the church at Ephesus. The latter conclusion is reached primarily on contextual grounds. In the purpose statement for the letter of 1 Timothy, Paul told his young associate that in the event he was delayed in visiting Ephesus he was writing so that he might know how people should behave in "the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth."[40] This description that Paul gave of the church seems to extend beyond just the churches in Ephesus. Moreover, the context of chapters two and three also indicates a more universal than specific interpretation. Paul's instructions regarding prayer, men praying without anger, women exhibiting modesty and doing godly works, the appeal to creation in 2:13, and the insistence on overseers and deacons to be without reproach all support a universal application;[41] i.e., "in every place" refers to everywhere that Christian congregations are gathered for worship, rather than just strictly at Ephesus.

Did Phoebe perform her duties as a letter-carrier in the context of church worship? I say no. She is no doubt a very important person, but her delivery, and perhaps explanation, of the contents of Romans seems to be quite different from the context of local church worship, and again, the authority she conveys is not her own, but that of the apostle Paul.

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[38] William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC 46 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 107.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Translation mine.

[41] As Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 107, et al., have noted.

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Listen to Him: The Exhortation of Matthew 17:5 in the Context of the Transfiguration Narrative

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Dedication

Dr. Alan Tomlinson has taught me more about the New Testament than any other person, and the comparison is not close. I have never heard him discussing a passage of the New Testament without fresh and decisive insight, either by revealing its deeper logic and connection to the wider context or by placing it against the background of Greco-Roman history and culture. Usually, he does both at once, taking our perception of the text from black and white to living color. His many students would concur, I trust, sometimes with nostalgia for old (now useless) sermons and days of blissfully misplaced certainty. Thus, it is with great enthusiasm and unease that I offer this essay in his honor, knowing how much he deserves the praise and how far short I may have fallen. And that is, after all, an added problem: I might be have gone wrong in this very article—wrong in a way that only Alan could see—and he would have no heart to tell me; but if so, one may reckon this fact as another token of his greatness, not just as a biblical scholar, but also as a Christian and a friend. They do not get any better.

Introduction

In the Transfiguration scene, the Father states a fact about Jesus and gives a specific command. The fact is that Jesus is the Father's beloved Son, with whom he is well pleased (v. 5). The command is to listen to Jesus. But this event invites certain questions as to its larger purpose. Why does it happen at all, and what—if anything in particular—must the disciples hear when Jesus speaks? Of course, there is no logical rule in

force here, calling for just one answer. Perhaps the Transfiguration hits several related targets. Nevertheless, it may be instructive for us to consider the other possibility, as an experimental step. Could this event have been called for, in essence, by recent events in Matthew's gospel? Does it happen 'on cue,' so to speak, as if to meet a need—or answer a particular question—raised implicitly by what we observe in chapters 1-16? We shall argue that it does. That is, Peter, James, and John are allowed to see what they do as a corrective gesture, the necessity of the latter being established by preceding chapters of Matthew's gospel.

To make our case, therefore, three steps will be necessary. First, we must underscore the fact that Matthew's gospel makes an apologetic case, supporting Peter's confession, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."[1] This part of our task will not be difficult, of course, because it is uncontroversial. We know that Matthew's gospel serves an evidential purpose, whatever else it does. Nevertheless, the argument given here will be stronger if we have surveyed this material as a prelude to chapter 16. Secondly, we shall consider the contents of chapter 16 which accentuate a theoretical problem found elsewhere in Matthew's gospel, though in muted form. This problem concerns the plausibility of Peter's high Christology, seen in the light of all facts revealed thus far by Jesus himself, whether in word or deed. Finally, we shall examine both the Transfiguration itself and its immediate aftermath (17:9-27).

Matthew's Case for Christ

From the first verse of his gospel, Matthew advances the claim that Jesus is "the Messiah, the son of David" (v. 1). He proceeds to do so by telling the story of Jesus in ways that display the latter's qualifications as such.[2] Accordingly, in 1:1-17, we observe that Jesus is qualified to be the Messiah (or at least not eliminated on this ground) based on his genealogy. He is, whatever else, a son of David the king. Then in 1:18-25, Matthew presents the circumstances of Jesus's birth as fittingly

[1] All citations of Scripture in this essay are taken from the English Standard Version.

[2] So W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, Vol. 1, ICC, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), p. 157.

Messianic.[3] He is conceived virginally by the Holy Spirit (v. 18). His father Joseph is guided by an angel in a dream, during which Joseph is told to name his son 'Jesus,' given this name's soteriological nuance (v. 21).[4] These events will also fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, as Jesus is "God with (his people)" in an escalated sense (v. 23).

The same marshaling of evidence continues in chapters 2 through 4, as Matthew adds further credentials. Jesus is born in Bethlehem, as the Messiah should be, based on Micah 5:2. Even the adversaries Jesus—the chief priests and scribes—confess that the Messiah would have to be born in Bethlehem, as Jesus was (vv. 4-6). Furthermore, the experiences of the Magi underscore the supernatural aspect of Jesus' birth. They appear in Bethlehem because of an unusual star, and this star (in mysterious ways) guides them straight to newborn King (vv. 2, 9).[5] The remainder of chapter 2 finds Jesus being angelically protected from Herod's rage, as one of them warns Joseph and Mary to flee to Egypt, until the old king dies (vv. 13-15). Before that event occurs, however, Herod is able to kill a great number of young boys—seen as potential threats—based on the timing of the Magi's earliest sightings of the star. This slaughter of innocents fulfills both the dark and light elements of Jeremiah 31. There is weeping in Ramah because of Herod's ruthless act; yet the same deed signals the dawn of a new covenant, centered on the person and work of this child (vv. 16-19).

John the Baptist appears in chapter 3, as required, given the content of Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 4:5-6. To qualify as the Messiah, Jesus must have his presence signaled by just such a prophet. At the close of chapter 3, the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus following his baptism, and the Father speaks from heaven, confirming what Matthew's gospel has suggested thus far. "This is My beloved Son," the Father says, "in

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[3] So, e.g., Grant Osborne, *Matthew*, ECNT, Vol. 1, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), p. 61; Eduard Schweitzer, *The Good News According to Matthew*, Translated by David Green, (Atlanta: Knox, 1975), p. 21.

[4] While it is a popular name of that time, *Yeshua* (= Jesus) acquires precise significance as a name for this child as the one through whom "Yahweh saves."

[5] Some attempt has been made to construe this guidance as an instance of poetic license (cf. discussion in Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, pp. 246-247), but its concrete historicity is intended by Matthew, though he does not specify the precise form that this guidance took (so, then, R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), p. 69).

whom I am well-pleased" (vv. 16-17)—words that we shall encounter once more in 17:5.[6] Even so, Matthew's Christological case proceeds. Chapter 4 shows us that Jesus can pass the wilderness test (4:1-11), unlike the rebellious first "son" (Israel) who was called out of Egypt (2:15; cf. Hosea 11:1-2).[7] Jesus settles in Capernaum, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, which enlightens these regions (vv. 15-16) and marks Jesus as the extraordinary figure of Isaiah 9:6-7. He is the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace who shall reign forever on David's throne.[8] The same technique—which finds Matthew citing an OT passage briefly while expecting the reader to recall its wider context—is present in 2:18. Matthew quotes only Jeremiah 31:15, in that context, but he trusts the reader to remember Jeremiah's subsequent prophecy of a new covenant, just a few verses later (31:31-34).

In chapters 5-7, Jesus teaches with authority, as the Messiah must do, and so boldly that the crowds are "amazed at his teaching" (7:28-29). He has authority to teach in his own right, as a king issuing decrees, and this implicit claim is authenticated by two subsequent chapters that show us his ability to heal grave illnesses and command the forces of nature, at times and in ways that only God could do.[9] By the time we reach chapter 10, therefore, Matthew expects us to have concluded that Jesus must be the Messiah. No one could claim this record of word and deed without being the Christ. But in chapter 9, and with increasing emphasis as Jesus approaches the cross, we see another theme emerge, one dimly present in earlier texts (cf. the rejection-verses in 8:10-12; 18-22; and 33-34), but now almost inescapable: dark forces

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[6] So Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, p. 339.

[7] Cf. Daniel Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), p. 51; R. H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 53.

[8] Cf. John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), p. 174: "It is not likely to be lost on Matthew that his citation from Isaiah has in its context the messianic text Is. 9:6-7, which makes such a good connection with his own infancy account in 1:18-25."

[9] So, e.g., R. T. France, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, TNTC, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), p. 150; Craig Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 258-259.

will oppose Jesus and his followers, sometimes in violent form. The parables of the kingdom presuppose and account for this kind of adversity (chapter 13), and we see ties between glory and suffering in chapters 14 and 15. In such contexts, the kingdom suffers opposition; nevertheless, Jesus validates his Messianic status by doing spectacular miracles.

From Doubt to Faith and Back Again

In chapters 1-14, therefore, Matthew's case for Christ is strong. He has given the reader a basis to conclude that Jesus really is the Messianic Son of God. Nevertheless, Jesus remains an object of doubt more than trust, and this problem escalates in chapter 16, which then sets the stage for the Transfiguration. In vv. 1-4, Jesus faces a demand from the Pharisees and Sadducees to show them a "sign from heaven," although he has recently and miraculously fed groups of five and four thousand (chapters 14 and 15, respectively).[10] Given their skill in reading the weather, Jesus marvels at their willful blindness regarding his signs and their significance, which would be clear in any case, quite apart from this analogy.[11] Yet in vv. 5-12, the disciples also go wrong in a similar way, suspecting that Jesus may be incapable of providing bread for their small group. Thus, they interpret his warning, "beware of the leaven of Pharisees and Sadducees," in literal terms.[12] For such reasons, one

[10] On the culpability of their refusal to believe, cf., e.g., Margaret Hannan, *The Nature and Demands of the Sovereign Rule of God in the Gospel of Matthew*, (London: T & T Clark), pp. 135-136.

[11] On the text-critical matter of the words beginning, 'When it is evening, you say. . . ', cf. Jeffrey Gibbs, *Matthew 11:2-20:34*, (St. Louis: Concordia, 2010), p. 797 and D. A. Carson, "Matthew," *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 8, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), pp. 360-361; contrasted with Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8-20: A Commentary*, translated by James Crouch, Hermeneia, Vol. 2, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), p. 347, who favors the shorter reading. In either case, Jesus accuses the Pharisees of self-inflicted blindness regarding the significance of his previous miracles.

[12] Keener (1999) and France (1985) attribute this failure to sinful preoccupation with physical need, which is a natural aspect of this exchange. Nevertheless, the warning of v. 6, "Beware," etc., suggests a common sin linking vv. 1-4 and 5-12: the disciples have drifted into a pattern of unbelief that compares too closely

approaches vv. 13-20 pessimistically. One expects continued error regarding the identity of Jesus and his own frustrated responses to it. No one has shown a durable grasp of who Jesus is. All convictions regarding his nature are, it seems, defeasible by moderate forms of contrary evidence. However, on a clear note of contrast, v. 16 reports a triumph of divine power.[13] No one has understood; then Peter answers, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." What has changed to make his response possible?

In vv. 17-19, Jesus accounts for Peter's confession in supernatural terms. "Flesh and blood" did not reveal such facts to Peter (the pronoun is singular), but the "Father who is in heaven" (v. 17).[14] The same idea has appeared previously in 11:25-27 and 13:11, both of which emphasize the revealing power of the God, overcoming natural human blindness concerning the person and work of his Messianic Son.[15] This power will strengthen the church, as supernaturally fortified, even when it is assaulted by the forces of Hades (v. 18). Thus, in vv. 19, Jesus can announce that whatever the disciples bind and loose on earth will take effect, because these transactions are supernaturally underwritten in heaven (v. 19).[16] Nevertheless, this passage concludes on a mysterious

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with the Pharisees and Sadducees, whose agenda is not to be filled but to have their skepticism overcome by freshly supplied miracles.

[13] France, *Matthew*, (1985), and Donald Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, WBC 33b, (Dallas: Word, 1995), p. 469, balance the miraculous/revelatory cause of Peter's confession with a sense of gradual recognition as to the Lord's identity; nevertheless, the contrast between vv. 5-12 and v. 16 should not be missed: an act of divine revelation has made all the difference.

[14] So, then, James Penner, "Revelation and Discipleship in Matthew's Transfiguration Account," *Bibilotheca Sacra* 152 (April-June 1995), p. 202; Ian S. Kemp, "The Blessing, Power and Authority of the Church: A Study in Matthew 16:17-19," *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 40:2 (2016), p. 131.

[15] On v. 17 as reminiscent of 11:25-27, cf. John Nolland, *Matthew*, p. 666.

[16] Some difficulty surrounds Matthew's use of the future perfect passive verbs ('will have been tied up,' 'will have been untied') in this verse, specifically as to whether it requires the translation, "shall have been bound," so that a divine 'already' precedes and grounds what the disciples have yet to bind and loose. For our purposes, we need only observe what Matthew would not, in any case, permit: viz., the notion that God follows the lead of Peter and others. So, e.g., Osborne, *Matthew*, p. 629; and Carson, "Matthew," pp. 370-374, whose treatment of this issue is especially useful. France, *Matthew*, p. 627, sees more

note, especially in light of vv. 18-19. That is, notwithstanding Peter's high confession, Jesus tells his disciples to conceal his true identity (v. 20). He forbids evangelism at this point, which is not intuitive. Why *not* tell everyone who he really is?

The answer to our question follows in vv. 21-23, and it provides the central context of the command, "listen to him," which is forthcoming. We now learn that the disciples have accepted only half of the story regarding the person and work of Christ. To be sure, the villains of Matthew's gospel would have continued their game, opposing Jesus at periodic intervals. He would have enemies, and so would his disciples. Matthew's gospel has prepared us for rising hostility as it proceeds. Jesus has even alluded to the violent end of his own life (9:15; 10:38; and 12:40). Thus, the news of v. 21 could not have been a complete shock to his disciples.[17] However, v. 21 still disturbs them, because it enforces the certainty of their master's death and describes the latter in added detail. Jesus be killed, and worse yet: with the "elders and chief priests and scribes" leading the way. He will not escape from death, nor from such a death; and it is this grim portrait that offends Peter. He is ready to call Jesus the Christ and Son of God, as he has been blessed to do. What he cannot abide, however, is the concept of his master's defeat and death, its unrelenting necessity.

Two ideas are thus suggested by this exchange between Jesus and Peter, following his statement in v. 21, and they constitute the essential backdrop of the Transfiguration. First, as Matthew has noted previously, Peter could not have said what he does in v. 16 by "flesh and blood" alone. Even the bright side of Matthew's case for Christ—the authoritative teaching combined with miracles—does not speak for itself, compelling belief on strictly natural grounds. Rather, if Peter now sees that Jesus is the Christ and Son of God, he must do so by means of

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behind the tenses involved, so that they should be taken with full sequential import. At a minimum, the sense is of "coordinated action" (cf. Nolland, *Matthew*, p. 681).

[17] Cf. Paul Tanner, "The Cost of Discipleship: Losing One's Life for Jesus' Sake," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 56.1 (2013), p 45: "His rejection, on the other hand, was more understandable in that there had been plenty of occasions in which Jesus had been in confrontation with the religious leadership of the nation. So the announcement of their rejection of him would not have been so surprising."

special revelation. But secondly, the exchange seen in vv. 21-23 highlights the deepest challenge faced by the disciples. Having confessed Jesus as Christ and Son of God, will they stand convinced as he approaches Jerusalem? Will they take his passion predictions at face value, as plain statements of what must take place?

Once again, Matthew's gospel offers little hope regarding our last question, especially given Peter's rebuke in 16:22. The disciples are in clear danger of resisting Jesus all the more, and this hazard would account for the events described in 17:1-8. Peter himself has fallen from previous heights of Caesarea Philippi, and thus a greater form of revelation may now be necessary, whatever its final effect. The Transfiguration may well serve a corrective purpose, accentuating the real identity of Jesus and insisting on acceptance of his teaching, however unwelcome the latter may be. Jesus has the right and power to tell them what must and will occur in Jerusalem, because his authority surpasses even Moses and Elijah.

The Transfiguration

Consider, then, the events of 17:1-8. Our scene begins with visible changes happening to Jesus, all of them suggestive of deity. His face shines like the sun, and his garments become white as light (17:2). Either simultaneously or subsequently, Moses and Elijah appear (v. 3), and Matthew describes the two prophets as conversing with Jesus, though he does not specify the topic of their remarks (cf. Luke 9:31, where the subject is his "exodus"). In any case, the appearance of these two prophets has two plausible objectives, given what Matthew's gospel has shown thus far, with the one depending on the other. First, the intent of the Transfiguration is to emphasize the essential difference between Jesus and these Old Testament figures, notwithstanding their acknowledged greatness. Moses is the prophet *par excellence* who sets the pattern for one who is to come (Deuteronomy 18:18). Elijah is a prophetic herald, filling shoes later worn by John the Baptist (Malachi 4:5-6). Both of them experience the extraordinary presence and power of God on mountains (Exodus 19-20; 1 Kings 18-19). Nevertheless, this scene portrays them as flatly inferior to Jesus, given the latter's visible glorification and description by the Father as "My beloved Son" (v. 5). Moses and Elijah are heroes indeed, but they are not Sons of God, as per

the spotlight on Jesus. Secondly, by raising the status of Jesus far above these other prophets, the Transfiguration also casts his authority in a unique light; and this authority will be crucial in addressing the disciples' doubts in the wake of his passion predictions.[18]

So then, Jesus assures his disciples that he will suffer and die, and they resist him all the while. But the Transfiguration puts a foot down, as it were, insisting that they accept the unacceptable. Jesus does more than speak for God, as Moses and Elijah could do: he speaks *as* God, matching his supreme authority with his supreme nature. Thus, Jesus should not be challenged when he predicts his own suffering and death. The disciples must "listen to him" on this point, as well as any other, whatever their own desires. In fact, some trace of doubt may have contributed to Peter's offer to construct "three tents" on the mountain for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah (v. 4).[19] That is, if Jesus will die in Jerusalem, he might barely escape by staying away and remaining where he now is. Certainly it would make sense for Peter to think along such lines, if he has taken the statement of 16:21 as being true 'other things being equal' or 'until further notice.'[20] Even if he simply blurts out this suggestion, however, the Transfiguration would have the same, larger purpose: it confronts the doubts of Peter, James, and John with the unique authority of Jesus; and the same doubts surface in the next two scenes of Matthew's gospel.

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[18] So, then, Armand Puig J. Tarrech, "The Glory on the Mountain: The Episode of the Transfiguration of Jesus," *New Testament Studies*, 58 (2012), p. 169, who reaches similar conclusions regarding 17:5 and its implied context: "The command to listen to Jesus takes on a profound dimension when it is set against the failure to listen and the rebuke Peter had addressed to the Master. It is especially to Jesus that one must listen, even before Moses and Elijah."

[19] Peter may have offered to build temporary stone shelters, as opposed to tents ('tent' need not be technical here; so Tarrech, "The Glory on the Mountain," p. 169.). His motive would be the same in any case, to be explained in due course.

[20] Thus we are allowing Peter's offer to have been more strategic, perhaps, than most commentators on this passage do, while allowing it to be sufficiently 'tone deaf' to deserve Mark and Luke's reference to Peter as not knowing what he was saying (Mark 9:6; Luke 9:33). Cf. Nolland, *Matthew*, p. 703; France, *Matthew*, p. 649; Carson, "Matthew," p. 385-386, who express greater doubts as to Peter's objectives here.

Events Following the Transfiguration

In 17:9, Jesus and his disciples begin their descent; and as they do so, Jesus requires silence as to what they have seen "until the Son of Man is raised from the dead." But instead of noting the good news behind his command—viz., that he will defeat death at last—the disciples concentrate on his death. That is, if Jesus will surely rise from the dead, then he will surely die; and how could this calamity strike, if John the Baptist preached as "Elijah," preparing the Lord's way (Is 40:3-5)?[21] This concern informs their question, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?," and it may also point to an even greater worry, albeit a subtle one. If doubts remain concerning John the Baptist, doubts must arise concerning Jesus himself. As the one goes, so goes the other. Therefore, Jesus answers this question in two stages. First, he confirms that John is 'Elijah,' but then he corrects the disciples' view of what it means for John to have prepared the Messiah's way. They believe that a prepared way leaves no place for the Messiah's suffering and death. Jesus responds by construing John's suffering and death foreshadowing his own. Suffering and death are simply what happens when the kingdom confronts the world. For our purposes, however, it is enough to note that this dialogue turns on the same problem raised immediately before the Transfiguration in 16:21-28. Can the Messiah really suffer and die?

The same concern informs the failure described in 17:14-20. Some of the disciples did not witness the Transfiguration, but stayed among the people. Thus, in the structure of Matthew's gospel, their most recent theory of Jesus would be shaped by images of his suffering and death. Jesus would lose evidently, having been rejected as Israel's Messiah; and this fact, once accepted, would explain the disciples' doubts in vv. 14-20. A man presents his son to Jesus, referring to former's symptoms as indicative of lunacy or insanity (vv. 14-15). He also laments that the other disciples could not heal the boy (v. 16), even though they have done far more at other times (cf. 10:8: ". . . heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons"). What would account for their inability to do this relatively simple thing? In v. 20, Jesus answers: their failure stems from a lack of faith, which has now shrunk to a size

[21] So, then, Carson, "Matthew," p. 389; Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, p. 499.

not even as large as a mustard seed.[22] At one point, they had sufficient trust in Jesus, and now they do not. Perhaps his passion predictions occasioned their rising doubts. Certainly these statements are, from the perspective of the Twelve, the most unwelcome that Jesus has made, and we could have expected such ideas to upend his followers. But if so, the command, "listen to him," is even more likely to have the passion predictions in view.

A third passion prediction occurs in 17:22-23, and it supplies more detail. Jesus will suffer and die because someone will hand him over to the authorities, as his use of παραδίδωμι in v. 22 (παραδίδοσθαι εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων) implies. But again, if men can lay hands on Jesus in this violent sense, perhaps he is not the Messiah. How could the transfigured person of 17:2-3 be overcome by mere mortals? Something has to 'give'; and the question fielded by Peter in v. 24 only makes the problem worse. Does Jesus pay the Temple Tax? Peter confirms that he does; but in saying "Yes," Peter's doubts may have resurfaced. If Jesus pays his taxes—if he pays his dues, so to speak—perhaps he is just a man, subject to human authority, scandalous betrayal, and horrific death. But two events follow in this context, and they would have the same effect as the Transfiguration. First, when Peter enters a house occupied by Jesus, the latter speaks first, depending on knowledge that only the Son of God could have. He already knows what the collectors asked Peter and what his response was.[23] Then, having secured Peter's agreement that special people (like a king's sons) are not required to pay taxes (vv. 25-26), Jesus arranges to pay the Temple Tax in a way that only the Son of God could,

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[22] Jesus might also be contrasting the faith that they have now with a different kind to be manifested in the future (so James W. Scott, "The Misunderstood Mustard Seed: Matt 17:20b; Luke 17:6," *Trinity Journal*, 36, (2015), pp. 25-48), though an actual crisis of faith may be more congruent with the immediate context of this passage. On the reference to a mustard seed, cf. Nolland, *Matthew*, p. 716: "the 'little faith' conceded to the disciples is at this point so small that it makes faith as small as a mustard seed very grand by comparison."

[23] Thus, the knowledge suggested here is probably more than what "a good prophet" would have (*pace* Keener, *Matthew*, p. 444) or what might have been drawn from overhearing the conversation (cf. Carson, "Matthew," pp. 394-395; France, *Matthew*, p. 668, who leave the matter open). This time is precisely right for a reminder of who Jesus really is, starting with his ability to know what an ordinary man could not know.

i.e., by means of a miracle. Peter will find a coin in the mouth of the first fish that he catches, and it will be sufficient for the two of them. As with the Transfiguration, these smaller displays of divine power answer doubts raised by the vulnerability of Jesus—his subjectivity, if one will—to suffering and death.

Conclusion

The argument presented above advances the theory that when the Father insists, "listen to (Jesus)," the latter's suffering and death are principally in view. They are shocking facts about him, and they will continue to be a concern in, for example, the letters of Paul (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:18f.). As Matthew has emphasized, it is hard enough to understand Jesus, without the static created by these terrible realities. More than "flesh and blood" is required, even in ordinary circumstances. But the Transfiguration confronts the larger mystery of the passion, answering it with maximally displayed authority. The disciples must listen to Jesus in all that he says, even when his teaching opposes the doctrines of Israel's teachers and the selfish motives of human agency. Still more, they must listen to him in the face of doubt created by his predictions of betrayal, suffering, and death. Peter has resisted this news, and the other disciples have failed as well. We also know that they will collapse entirely before the Third Day comes. Only then will they have accepted what, in this setting, they long to deny: when the Lord says that he must suffer and die for their sake and ours, we must listen to him.

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Sacrifice, Monotheism and Christology

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Dedication

I dedicate this article to my friend and colleague, Dr. F. Alan Tomlinson, in honor of his faithful and fruitful service at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary since 1995.

Introduction

In recent years a few scholars have proposed that the worship element reserved for YHWH in Second Temple Judaism was sacrifice alone, to the exclusion of other cultic activities.[1] One Christological implication of such a view is that, since the NT never portrays Jesus as a recipient of sacrifice,[2] one cannot say that the NT describes Jesus as divine in the same sense as the God of Israel and that NT Christology reflects a notable development or difference from the Judaism of its time. Lionel North was the first to espouse this approach, which was then echoed by James McGrath and James Dunn.[3] In the following, I will summarize the position of North and evaluate it. While my interaction with North will

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[1] J. Lionel North, "Jesus and Worship, God and Sacrifice," in L. Stuckenbruck and W. North, eds., *Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism* (JSNTS 263; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 186-202. North's view is shared by J. McGrath, *The Only True God* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), chapter 2, and by J. Dunn, *Did the Frist Christians Worship Jesus?* (London: SPCK, 2010), 52-56.

[2] This specific point made by North ("Jesus and Worship," 198-200), however, has to be qualified in light of Rev 14:4 and 20:6. See my discussion of these two verses below.

[3] See n. 1 above. McGrath, *John's Apologetic Christology* (SNTSMS 111; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 24-25, distinguishes "worship" in a general sense from sacrifice. However, he does not develop the discussion further.

mainly appear in the evaluation section, some brief comments will be incorporated into the summary section as well.

Summary of Lionel North's View

In his contribution to *Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism* (2004), Lionel North argues that only sacrifice, and not other worship activities, was reserved for the God of Israel in early Judaism, that sacrifice was never offered to Jesus according to the NT, and thus that the worship offered to Jesus in the NT does not establish his divinity.[4]

North's essay consists of six sections. Following the first section (pp. 186-87), which functions as an introduction to his essay, the second section examines the occurrence of proskynesis (worship/prostration/obeisance) in the NT (pp. 187-89). North notes passages like Matt 18:26 and Rev 3:9, where the posture of proskynesis serves to show homage to human beings.[5] North also looks at NT passages where proskynesis is offered to Jesus (Matt 2:2, 8, 11; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9, 17; Mark 5:6; 15:19; Luke 24:52; John 9:38; Heb 1:6) and claims that in all these passages the prostration before Jesus expresses "the profoundest respect and ... no more."[6] Without demonstrating much exegetical effort in dealing with these NT passages—to my surprise—North quickly determines that there is no evidence in the NT that "requires us to conclude that Jesus is regarded as divine because he is worshipped."[7]

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[4] North, "Jesus and Worship," 186-202. North's essay is in a way a response to L. W. Hurtado. On page 202, n.32, North notes, "In *One God, One Lord* ... L. W. Hurtado provides an excellent introduction and contribution to the debate [on the worship of Jesus], but does not a full-blown 'binitarianism' stumble at the fence of *sacrifice only to God*?"

[5] North, "Jesus and Worship," 188.

[6] Ibid., 188-189.

[7] North, "Jesus and Worship," p. 189. North uses only a single paragraph in discussing the listed NT passages (188-189). In that paragraph, there is only one footnote (189, n. 7), which refers to North's later discussion concerning the Iconoclast Controversy in the Eastern Church (194-195). As a result, North's treatment of the pertinent NT texts appears to be almost a list of his projected conclusions without any substantial argument or interpretive work. North fails to note, for instance, that (1) the disciples' act of proskynesis before Jesus in

Here, North appears to throw the baby out with the bath water. The fact that the προσκυν- word group was used broadly and, at times, in the context of offering homage to human beings (e.g., Matt 18:26 and Rev 3:9, both of which North himself notes) does not necessitate that the various acts of bowing down before Jesus in the NT fall collectively short of a response to divinity. Without making further efforts to discern when the acts of proskynesis before Jesus have significance for his divinity and when not, North appears to give a blanket judgment, thus dismissing entirely the value of proskynesis offered to Jesus in discussing the divinity of Jesus. In view of the fact that interpretation of NT data is foundational for North's conclusion, it is astonishing that this section does not reflect much exegetical rigor in dealing with pertinent NT passages.

In section 3 (189-193) and section 4 (193-195), North discusses Rabbinic texts and the Iconoclast Controversy in the 8th – 9th centuries, respectively. These two sections include interesting discussions. Nevertheless, both sections lack direct temporal relevance to the discussion of early Christian worship of Jesus in the first-century setting and will thus not receive much attention in the following. North, however, turns briefly to some pertinent data in the LXX toward the end of section 3, noting that "the semantic spectrum of προσκυν- [in the LXX] is broad."[8] Toward the end of section 4, North summarizes these two sections, commenting that the act of proskynesis "suggests a variety of physical postures adopted for any one of several reasons and directed to any number of possible recipients. It connotes homage, respect,

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Matt 14:33 is given as a response to Jesus' unique authority to calm the waters of the sea, i.e., the authority seen as a divine prerogative in the OT and Second Temple Judaism (see Job 26:12; Ps 65:7; 89:9-10; 107:29; Jonah 1:15; Sirach 43:23); (2) the demoniac's bowing before Jesus in Mark 5:6 is linked with the interchange between "the Lord" (referring to Israel's God in this context) and "Jesus" in the concluding verses of the same pericope (vv. 19-20); [and] (3) the angels' prostration before the "Firstborn" in Heb 1:6 is in connection to v. 3, which describes him as "the exact representation of [God's] nature" and to v. 8, which appropriates the "God" language of Ps 45:6 to Jesus. The common error North commits in these three examples is that he does not seriously consider the immediate literary context in which the action of proskynesis occurs.

[8] Ibid., 193.

honour, reverence. It can be offered to God or human beings or even the inanimate."[9]

The fifth and penultimate section (196-198) finally introduces the issue of "sacrifice," the core topic of North's essay. By overviewing some select OT, Philonic, NT and early Christian passages, North proposes that "sacrifice is appropriate only to God"[10] and that "the most significant part of one's approach to God was sacrifice."[11] North notes particularly from 2 Kgs 5:15-19 that while Naaman declares he will not sacrifice to any gods but YHWH (v. 17), he still appears to seek YHWH's understanding concerning his bowing before a pagan deity, namely, his prostration in the temple of Rimmon for assisting the Syrian king (v. 18). North notes that Elisha responds to Naaman, "Go in peace" (v. 19), thus implying YHWH's approval for Naaman's action of proskynesis toward a pagan god.[12] North claims, "The difference between 'worship' [by which he seems to mean proskynesis, in particular] and sacrifice could hardly be more clearly made."[13]

A few things need to be mentioned briefly regarding North's reading of 2 Kgs 5:15-19, which plays a substantial role in his case: (1) Naaman appears to do the act of proskynesis in the temple of Rimmon in order to achieve his required civil and professional role as an adjunct of the Syrian king, especially in the context of assisting his aged king (v. 18). That is, the act of bowing down in this case does not signify a meaningful religious devotion. Relatedly, the reason why the distinction between proskynesis and sacrifice is made very clearly in this particular passage is that Naaman's act of prostration does not essentially contain a cultic connotation, not that these two actions have two easily distinguishable referents. (2) The fact that Naaman sought YHWH's understanding about his bowing in the temple of a pagan deity implies that proskynesis itself needs to be taken more seriously than what North suggests. Prostration itself, at least in some contexts, could signify the divinity of the recipient of such action. That is probably the reason why Naaman appears to clarify that his proskynesis is something to be understood in a civil and professional context. (3) Elisha's response to

[9] Ibid., 195.
[10] Ibid., 197.
[11] Ibid., 198.
[12] Ibid., 197.
[13] Ibid.

Naaman's request does not necessarily mean a full endorsement of this Syrian's prostration in a pagan temple. It is possible to read Elisha's "Go in peace" as an expression of the prophet's approval. However, it seems equally possible to view it as a verbal irony or as an indication of Elisha's indifference.[14] In any case, the prophet's response to Naaman's request seems to be too brief to establish a firm position about this matter.[15] When these three points are considered collectively, it is doubtful whether one can put forward a case for a clear distinction between worship (proskynesis) and sacrifice from this passage.

As North himself states, the overall thrust of Sections 1-5 (186-198) is to argue that "there is evidence in the religious environment of the New Testament that προσκύνησις of the deity is only complete when it includes or is followed by sacrifice to the deity."[16] In that sense, the first five sections of this essay prepare the sixth and culminating section (198-202), where North argues that "sacrifice in any sense is never said in the New Testament and the first centuries to be offered to Christ"[17] and, therefore, "we cannot infer that the references to the 'worship' of Christ imply that he was thought to be divine."[18] North specifies that according to the NT, there is no mention of sacrifice literally offered to Christ. He then goes on to note that whereas there are references to (metaphoric) sacrifices dedicated to God in a number of NT passages (Rom 12:1; Phil 2:17; 4:18; Hebrews 13:15-16; 1 Peter 2:5), there is no NT occasion where such a sacrifice is offered to Christ. The sacrifice in the NT "is offered through Christ, not to Christ."[19] Christ "is the one *through* whom the believer comes to God and shares God's life, not God himself."[20] North

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[14] For different interpretations of 2 Kgs 5:18-19, see Stuart Lasine, "'Go in peace' or 'Go to Hell'? Elisha, Naaman and the Meaning of Monotheism in 2 Kings 5," *SJOT* 25:1 (2011), 3-28 (esp. 5-6).

[15] Lasine, "'Go in peace' or 'Go to Hell'?," suggests, rightly in my view: "The way in which the narrator has told the story of Naaman and Elisha does not force readers to accept one of these possible interpretations of Elisha's reply [in v. 19]" (24).

[16] North, "Jesus and Worship," 198.

[17] Ibid., 198-199

[18] Ibid., 199.

[19] Ibid., 200.

[20] Ibid. (emphasis original). North also attempts to draw a quasi-parallel "between the veneration of Jesus but unaccompanied by sacrifice to him in

here seems to impose a dichotomist scheme, assuming that if Jesus is a mediator/agent, he cannot be fully divine himself.[21]

I have so far summarized North's position while adding some brief comments where relevant. Now I turn to the main interaction with North's approach.

Evaluation of Lionel North's View

North appears to advance the conversation on the nature of Jewish monotheism of the Second Temple era—especially in relation to the Christology of the NT—by looking at the exclusive stance that first-century Jews held concerning the recipient of sacrifice. North is correct in that sacrifice is a key worship element in first-century Judaism and that Jewish reservation of sacrifice for YHWH reflects their commitment to the uniqueness of their God. However, North's approach to early Jewish monotheism and to NT Christology appears to be problematic in the following ways.

Firstly, the Shema passage of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 itself—which first-century Jews regarded as a key representation of their monotheistic devotion to the unique God of Israel as illustrated by the Nash Papyrus[22] and Qumran Tefillin and Mezuzot[23]—appears to locate the recitation of the Shema in a familial environment and not in a sacrificial setting. If so,

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earliest Christianity ... and the veneration of Augustus but no sacrifices to him in contemporary Judaism" (200). Nevertheless, as North himself clearly admits, "There are too many differences for the similarity to be called a parallel" (200).

[21] For the concurrence of these two notions (i.e., Jesus himself as divine and Jesus as God's ultimate agent) in the NT, see, e.g., John 14:7-9 (Jesus' divine identity emphasized) in conjunction with v. 6 (Jesus' unique agency highlighted). It is noteworthy that these two parts are juxtaposed and thus immediately linked with each other in the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel. For further discussion of Jesus' unique divine agency, see L. W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), chap. 5 and sources cited there.

[22] The so-called Nash Papyrus (probably from 2c BC) integrates the two core confessions of the uniqueness of Israel's God—the Decalogue and the Shema—perhaps for instructional and/or liturgical purposes.

[23] The Qumran *tefillin* ("phylacteries") and *mezuzot* contain passages from Exodus and Deuteronomy (not least Deut 6:4-9), reflecting a literal rendering of the practice prescribed in Deut 6:8-9 and indicating a prominent place given to the affirmation of singularity of Israel's God in late Second Temple Judaism.

North's approach that focuses exclusively on sacrifice appears to be unnecessarily minimalistic. Moreover, the Shema of Deut 6:4-5 itself requires a holistic commitment and totalistic loyalty to the God of Israel[24] and not simply the cultic matters nor sacrifice.[25] Bauckham puts this understanding aptly in a negative form, "More than idolatry or sacrificial worship of other gods is excluded by the *Shema*'."[26]

Secondly, it is dubious whether one can employ sacrifice as *the* determining factor in deciding whether or not Jesus was worshipped as divine in the NT. According to the NT, earliest believers in Jesus offered animal sacrifice neither to Jesus nor to God; at least, there is no notable NT evidence for such an activity.[27] The fact that earliest believers in Jesus did not offer animal sacrifice to Israel's God, however, does not by necessity entail that they did not embrace the divinity of the biblical God.[28]

It is true, as North mentions in the last section of his essay,[29] that God is frequently portrayed as the recipient of metaphoric or spiritualized sacrifice in the NT (Rom 12:1; Phil 2:17; 4:18; Heb 13:15-16; 1 Pet 2:5)—while there is no NT evidence that animal sacrifice was dedicated to God by earliest followers of Jesus. However, such metaphoric sacrifice is offered not only to God, but also to Jesus in the

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[24] For related Second Temple Jewish texts, see the passages discussed in Erik Waaler, *The Shema and the First Commandment in First Corinthians* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 181-194 (especially 181-188).

[25] Richard Bauckham, "Devotion to Jesus Christ in Earliest Christianity: An Appraisal and Discussion of the Work of Larry Hurtado," in Chris Keith and Dieter T. Roth, eds., *Mark, Manuscript, and Monotheism: Essays in Honor of Larry W. Hurtado* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 191-192.

[26] Bauckham, "Devotion to Jesus Christ," 191.

[27] Rather, NT passages like Mark 2:1-10 and Luke 7:47-49 address the forgiveness of sins *without* any reference to the temple cultus. The temple cleansing by Jesus (Mark 11:15-19) may also suggest the invalidity of the temple cultus.

[28] L. W. Hurtado, "Early Christian Monotheism," *ExpT* 122:8 (2011), 383-386 (esp. 385). Here, Hurtado responds critically to McGrath, *The Only True God*, who argues that sacrifice was *the* criterion for the test of divinity in Second Temple Judaism.

[29] See especially North, "Jesus and Worship," 198-200.

NT. Revelation 14:4 and 20:6, in particular, show that Christ is a co-recipient (along with God) of spiritualized offering/sacrificial acts.[30]

> These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These *are* the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as *first fruits*[31] *to God and to the Lamb* (*ἀπαρχὴ τῷ θεῷ καὶ τῷ ἀρνίῳ*[32]). (Rev 14:4)[33] (emphasis added)
> Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be *priests of God and of Christ* (*ἱερεῖς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ*) and will reign with Him for a thousand years. (Rev 20:6) (emphasis added)

Both of the above passages describe the Lamb/Christ as a co-recipient of metaphoric offering/sacrifice (along with God). It is not only God but also Jesus who receives spiritualized offering and sacrificial acts according to these verses.

Moreover, since the NT portrays God not only as receiving sacrifice (e.g., Rom 12:1; Phil 2:17; 4:18; Hebrews 13:15-16; 1 Peter 2:5) but also as offering Jesus as the ultimate sacrifice (e.g., Rom 3:25; 5:8; cf. John 3:16), the dichotomy between the agent and recipient of sacrificial acts does not seem to be essentially helpful.[34] The overlap of these two roles (i.e., agent and recipient) is seen from Christ as well, not least in

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[30] McGrath, *The Only True God*, 73-74, notes these two references but underestimates their significance.

[31] Concerning the offering of the first fruits to YHWH in the OT, see Exod 23:19; 34:26; Lev 23:9-14; Num 28:26; Neh 10:35. For a metaphoric use, see Jer 2:3a, which portrays Israel as the first fruits of YHWH's harvest. When one reads Rev 14:4 against the background of these OT passages, it is clear that the Lamb is included in the unique place that belongs to Israel's God.

[32] Greek texts in this essay are taken from Novum Testamentum Graece, Nestle-Aland 27th Edition.

[33] Scriptural quotations in this essay are taken from New American Standard Bible (1995).

[34] See Dunn, "Did the First Christians," 56. Overall, Dunn supports North's position, with which I am interacting in this essay. Dunn, however, appears to be a bit more cautious than North in light of his comments here.

Rev 14:4 (see above), which describes Christ as "the Lamb" (cf. Exod 12:23; 29:38; Lev 3:7-9; 5:6)[35] and yet portrays that Lamb as a co-recipient of the offering of first fruits.

Thirdly, and closely related to the second point above, one has to question why North pays exclusive attention to a specific type of worship (i.e., sacrifice) in considering early Jewish monotheism while neglecting other cultic activities. Although an exclusivist stance on the recipient of sacrifice is an important aspect of Second Temple Judaism, other cultic activities also express meaningful monotheistic devotion to Israel's God during this period. Scruples on prayers and hymns to be offered to Israel's God alone and the so-called "refusal" traditions, for instance, are significant cultic indicators for the exclusivist nature of Second Temple Jewish monotheism.

Wicks examines prayer in non-canonical Second Temple literature and shows that prayer either by human or angelic beings is directed to the God of Israel—although angels can serve by bearing prayers and interceding for men.[36] While the legitimacy of the government of the Jerusalem temple (i.e., the sacrificial center) was questioned by Qumran communities, they still held firm monotheistic worship scruples as seen from the fact that they prayed and hymned to the God of Israel alone. For instance, while *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (4Q405 Frags. xxi-xxii, 7-14) portrays a scene of heavenly worship, there is no hint at worshipping angels there; angelic figures appear not as the recipients of worship (alongside God) but as worshippers. In this sense it is Christologically significant that the NT contains a number of passages where hymns are offered to Christ (Eph 5:19; Rev 5:8-10, vv. 13-14; 7:9-12) and other passages where prayers are directed to Christ (Acts 7:59-60; 2 Cor 12:8-10; 1 Thess 3:11-13; cf. various Pauline greetings and benedictions containing the name of Christ [e.g., Rom 1:7; 16:20b]).[37]

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[35] See also Rev 5:6 ("Lamb ... as if slain"); 5:12 ("the Lamb that was slain"); 7:14 ("the blood of the Lamb"); 12:11 ("the blood of the Lamb"); 13:8 ("the Lamb who has been slain").

[36] H. J. Wicks, *The Doctrine of God in the Jewish Apocryphal and Apocalyptic Literature* (London: Hunter & Longhurst, 1915), 122-129; Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 26-27.

[37] Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 101-108. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 100-114, also views "use of the name of Christ," "the Lord's Supper," "confession of faith

Besides, one needs to pay attention to the so-called refusal motif. In refusal traditions (see, e.g., *Apoc. Zeph.* 6.15; Tob 12.16-22; *3 En.* 16.1-5; *Ascen. Isa.* 7.18-23; 8.1-10), often a human being who receives a revelation mistakes an angelic figure for God and then begins to worship him, but the angel prohibits the wrongly directed worship as such.[38] The prohibitions of worshipping angels in these wide-spread traditions imply Jewish cultic exclusivism. The refusal motif is, in fact, found also in the NT. In Rev 19:10 and 22:8-9, in particular, an angelic figure rejects John's proskynesis and directs him to "worship God" (19:10; 22:9).[39]

North is correct that the posture of proskynesis is used in the context of simply paying homage in non-cultic settings (Matt 18:26; Rev 3:9; Gen 37:9-10 LXX; Esth 3:2 LXX). In light of such instances, one needs to be reminded that the meaning of a word (not least the προσκυν- word group) should be determined within its given contexts. Nevertheless, such non-cultic uses of the proskynesis language do not dismiss the weight of the refusal passages like Rev 19:10 and 22:8-9, which indicate that there are other worship actions restricted for the God of Israel than sacrifice, and, at least in some contexts, that is the case. Just as it is excessive to say that all proskynesis posture signifies the divinity of the recipient(s) of that prostration act, it is equally excessive to suggest that unless accompanied by a sacrifice, no proskynesis occasion in the NT implies the divinity of the recipient/co-recipient of that action (i.e.,

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in Jesus," and "prophetic pronouncements of the risen Christ" as remarkable devotional practices among earliest Christians (100).

[38] See L. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 75-102, for the discussion of refusal motif; cf. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 28-35.

[39] Somewhat similarly, Peter the Apostle refuses the same action of prostration in Acts 10:25-26, saying "I too am *just* a man" (v. 26). Here, Peter's rejection of proskynesis is not an example of refusal traditions. It is unnecessary to think Cornelius mistakenly regarded Peter to be divine in this scene. Rather, the apostle's refusal reflects his/Luke's intention to distance early Christian devotion from its contemporary pagan practices of bowing before gods and rulers, an action signifying divine honors dedicated to the recipients in that context. For further discussion of this passage, see C. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), II: 1780-1782 and sources cited there.

Jesus).[40] In fact, the Lamb is portrayed as a legitimate recipient of proskynesis offered in a corporate cultic scene in the fifth chapter of Revelation (see especially 5:8-14), the book where prostration before an angel was repeatedly prohibited in line with the refusal traditions (Rev 19:10, 22:8-9) and the worship of the beast and dragon are continuously forbidden (13:4-18; 14:9-12; 19:20-21).[41]

Further, in Add Esth 13:14, Mordecai refuses to prostrate before Haman and confesses that he will not offer the act of proskynesis to anyone except Israel's God. It is entirely unnecessary here to assume that Mordecai had been pressured to give a sacrifice to Haman! Similarly, Dan 3:1-18 implies the act of bowing in a worship setting could connote the recipient's divinity. There is no indication that sacrifice was involved or expected in this Danielic passage.

In fact, the two Philonic texts that North himself directly quotes seem to contain a similar force. These passages juxtapose other worship activities (such as prostration and prayer) with sacrifice, signifying not only sacrifice but also proskynesis/prayer as something to be reserved only for the God of Israel.

> Philo makes God say to Moses, "The people have run after lawlessness. They have fashioned a god, the work of their hands, in the form of a bull, and to this god, who is no god, they offer *worship (προσκυνοῦσι) and sacrifice*, and have forgotten all the influences to piety they have seen and heard" (*Vit. Mos.* 2.165). And again, though now seasoned with the salt of sarcasm and based on personal observation in Alexandria and Egypt, "We have known some of the image-makers offer *prayers and sacrifices* to their own creations though they would have done much better to worship (προσκυνεῖν) each of their two hands, or if they were disinclined for that because they shrank from appearing egotistical, to pay their homage to the hammers and anvils and

[40] Regarding the two verses in Revelation that portray Jesus as a co-recipient (along with God) of offering/sacrificial acts (14:4 and 20:6), see my discussion above.

[41] Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 101-104.

> pencils and pincers and the other tools by which their materials were shaped!" (Decal. 72: cf. 76-80).[42]

These texts do not separate worship (prostration)/prayer from sacrifice but rather link them with each other. What is additionally noteworthy is that in Decal. 72, in particular, προσκυνεῖν is interchangeable with prayers and sacrifices as the author mentions "prayers and sacrifices" first and then rewords them with worship (προσκυνεῖν). Προσκυνεῖν is not separate from sacrifices. Rather, those two terms overlap with each other in a meaningful way in this particular passage.

Overall, while sacrifice is *a* significant expression of exclusive commitment to Israel's God in Second Temple Judaism, there are clearly *other* important worship elements that could contain the equivalent monotheistic (and consequently Christological) significance; however, North neglects them regretfully.

Fourthly and lastly, North overlooks monotheistic rhetoric in considering the nature of Second Temple Jewish monotheism. North's essay concludes with the statement, "If divine Jesus be, we look elsewhere [i.e., other than the worship of Jesus in the NT]" (202). However, to North, that "elsewhere" is clearly not the Christological appropriation of Jewish monotheistic rhetoric in the NT. Rather, in light of his final footnote, North seems to suggest cautiously to look at Jesus' exceptional moral model and his altruistic self-sacrifice as a potential cause for his divinization: "Was the acknowledgement of the special status of Jesus inspired by Jesus' reversal of the traditional understanding of privilege and sacrifice, perceived no more in *others sacrificing to you* but in *your sacrificing yourself to God for others*?"[43]

While various worship activities noted above deserve special attention, monotheistic rhetoric employed often in linkage to the portrayal of Israel's God as the sole creator and ruler of the universe also appears to be a vital part of Second Temple Jewish monotheism.[44] In fact,

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[42] North, "Jesus and Worship," 197. Emphasis added.

[43] Ibid., n.33. Emphasis original. Cf. 202, n.32, where North hints at his doubt about the "binitarian" devotional pattern advocated in Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, chap. 5.

[44] Cf. R. Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008), 5-17.

a Jewish exclusivist stance on worship matters—including sacrifice and other cultic activities discussed above—reveals the very authenticity of their monotheistic rhetoric.[45] Cultic scruples of Second Temple Jews were a faithful reflection and a reliable indicator of their monotheistic affirmations.[46]

It needs to be noted that "monotheistic" rhetoric (e.g., the "one/only God" language) is also found in pagan contexts of the Greco-Roman era and not merely in their Jewish counterparts.[47] Monotheistic-sounding language itself, therefore, does not guarantee actual monotheistic worship practices. Most of the pagan uses of the "one/only God" language were compatible with the cultic veneration of plural deities. However, Second Temple Jews were exclusivistic in their worship commitments as discussed above, and such cultic practices of Second Temple Judaism proves that early Jewish monotheistic-sounding rhetoric indeed contains a genuine monotheistic thrust—unlike its

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[45] Although there are a few texts that seem to apply divine or quasi divine rhetoric to a figure other than Israel's God among Second Temple Jewish literature (see, e.g., an unusual description of Michael in 1QS 3:13-4:8), one must ask how representative those examples are for Jewish religiosity of that time. For the treatment of the above Qumran text, see Bauckham, "Devotion to Jesus Christ," 190. Bauckham suggests that the unique role of Michael as the "plenipotentiary" in this particular passage can be explained in the context of cosmic battle between the good *vs.* evil forces, in which Michael's military role for the good forces is naturally highlighted (190).

[46] For monotheistic affirmations in Second Temple Judaism, see, e.g., Waaler, *The Shema*, chap. 4. Of course, the religious commitment of Second Temple Jews to the biblical God must have varied. Some activities were not in line with monotheistic-monolatrous commitment. The syncretistic cultic practices at Elephantine (in Egypt), for example, illustrate an exception to Jewish worship scruples. The case of Elephantine, however, is temporally a bit too distant (early, i.e., fifth century BC) from the first century settings. More importantly, it is difficult to say that the syncretism at Elephantine represents the overall characteristics of Second Temple Jewish religiosity. See Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 144 n83, and literature cited there.

[47] See Waaler, *The Shema*, 9-14, where he discusses E. Peterson, *EIS QEOS* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1926).

pagan "parallels."[48] Jewish monotheistic worship practices validate the authenticity of their monotheistic affirmations.

Philo, for example, appears to make a clear, inseparable connection between monotheistic rhetoric (especially the emphasis on the uniqueness of Israel's God as the sole creator) and monotheistic worship in Decalogue 64-65.

> 64 *Let us, therefore, reject all such impious dishonesty, and not worship those who are our brothers by nature*, even though they may have received a purer and more immortal essence than ourselves (for all created things are brothers to one another, inasmuch as they are created; *since the Father of them all is one, the Creator of the universe*); but let us rather, with our mind and reason, and with all our strength, gird ourselves up vigorously and energetically to the service of that Being who is uncreated and everlasting, and the maker of the universe, never shrinking or turning aside from it, nor yielding to a desire of pleasing the multitude, by which even those who might be saved are often destroyed.
> 65 Let us, therefore, fix deeply in ourselves this first commandment as the most sacred of all commandments, to think that *there is but one God*, the most highest, and *to honor him alone*; and let not the polytheistical doctrine ever even touch the ears of any man who is accustomed to seek for the truth, with purity and sincerity of heart.[49] (emphasis added)

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[48] One also needs to remember that pagans thought Jews to be distinctive pertaining to their exclusive devotion to YHWH (Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.3-5) and sometimes regarded Jews to be "atheistic" (Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 432 and the footnote there). Earliest Christians appear to have inherited the cultic scruples of Second Temple Judaism—although they attributed a unique place to Christ and in that sense differed from their contemporary Jews. See, e.g., 1 Cor 10:14-22, where Paul urges his gentile converts not to participate in pagan cultic activities (cf. Mark 12:32). See also Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.*, chap. 6.

[49] Taken from C. D. Yonge, *The Works of Philo Judaeus, the Contemporary of Josephus* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854-1855).

It is clear that, in the above passage, rejection of idolatry is connected inseparably to the notion that there is only one Creator, and the affirmation "there is but one God" is linked organically to the act of "honor[ing] him alone."

In a similar manner, Nehemiah 9:6 connects the emphases on God's creatorship/sovereignty with a monolatrous concern: "You alone are the LORD. You have made the heavens, The heaven of heavens with all their host, The earth and all that is on it, The seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them[.] And the heavenly host bows down before You" (Neh 9:6). The interconnectivity between monotheistic rhetoric and monotheistic worship as such is actually testified in many other passages (see, e.g., Add Esth 13:9-14; *Jub.* 12:2-5; Josephus, *A. J.* 1.155-56; *2 En.* 66.4-5[J]; *Sib. Or.* 3.8- 45 [esp. 3.20-35]; Deut 5.7ff./Exod 20.3ff.; also, Isa 40-55; Wis 13-15) and thus seems to be something inherent (and not coincidental) to Second Temple Judaism.[50]

In light of the above, NT portrayals of Jesus as the creator of heaven and earth (e.g., Heb 1:10-12, quoting Ps 102:25-27 LXX) and as the cosmic ruler (e.g., Mark 12:36 and 14:62, quoting Ps 110:1)[51] are remarkable and have no small implications for the deity of Jesus. In addition, the divine rhetoric applied to Jesus in the NT, especially through the appropriation of the OT YHWH language to Jesus (e.g., "call[ing] on the name of the Lord" in Rom 10:13[52]; "lov[ing] the Lord" in

[50] Rainbow observes that more than half of the 200 monotheistic early Jewish/Christian passages he surveyed function either in creedal/confessional formulae or in prayer language (Paul Rainbow, "Monotheism and Christology in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6," (D.Phil. thesis; Oxford University, 1987), 50-51. Such an observation, too, implies a correlation between monotheistic rhetoric and monotheistic cultic practice. For a related example, see the prayer of 4Q504 5.9, which contains a clear monotheistic affirmation: "For Thou alone art a living God and there is none beside Thee" (Translation taken from Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* [New York: Penguin Books, 1997]).

[51] This example illustrates clearly a Christological exegesis of the OT exercised by a NT author.

[52] See C. K. Rowe, "Romans 10:13: What Is the Name of the Lord?," *HBT* 22 (2000), 135-173.

1 Cor 16:22 (cf. Deut 6:5)[53]; the "way of the Lord" in Mark 1:3 [cf. Isa 40:3][54]), provides further weight to such Christological implications.[55]

Concluding Remarks

I have summarized North's position and responded to it above, noting several problems in his proposal and providing corresponding criticisms. Through interacting with North, I have shown that exclusive commitment to Israel's unique God is seen from both rhetoric and cultic practices of Second Temple Judaism and that NT portrayals of Jesus appear to be genuinely remarkable, especially when they are appreciated against the background of the monotheistic scruples of Second Temple Jews.

North is quite emphatic about his observation that the NT never describes Jesus as a recipient of sacrifice. I have already refuted that conjecture in view of Rev 14:4 and 20:6, which portray Christ as a co-recipient (along with God) of offering/sacrificial acts. The fact that the NT does not very frequently picture Jesus as a recipient of metaphoric sacrifice seems to be related, at least in part, to his unique and climactic priestly/sacrificial ministry for "Israel"/the world. Here, North's own point concerning Hebrews is, ironically in my view, helpful: "The high priest who offered the sacrifice of himself to God (Heb. 7.27; 9.26; 10.12), both body (10.5, 10) and blood (9.12, 14; 10.19, 29; 12.24; 13.12, 20) could not be its recipient."[56] A central NT emphasis that "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor 15:3) has likely restrained its authors from providing frequent portrayals of him as the recipient of the (metaphoric) sacrifices[57] while they portrayed the divinity of Christ amply, using various rhetorical and cultic terms and images, as discussed above.

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[53] Bauckham, "Devotion to Jesus Christ," 192.

[54] R. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus and Mark* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck: 1997).

[55] See also my discussion of three NT passages in n. 7 above. For further NT evidence, refer to the discussions in Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*; C. Tilling, *Paul's Divine Christology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015).

[56] North, "Jesus and Worship," 200. More broadly, see Hebrews 4:14-10:18 as a whole.

[57] The centrality of the atoning death of Jesus Christ in Paul's writings is clearly represented by the exclusive formulae like 1 Cor 2:2 and Gal 6:14 as well as the key statements, for example, in Rom 3:25, 8:3 and 2 Cor 5:21. The crucial

Unless one is inclined to adopt a minimalistic understanding of Second Temple Jewish Monotheism that underestimates the significance of various cultic elements (except sacrifice) and monotheistic rhetoric, s/he will likely find abundant indicators for the divinity of Jesus Christ from the NT, in particular, when it is appreciated against the background of Second Temple Jewish monotheism.

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importance of the passion of Christ in the NT Gospels is aptly noted by Martin Kähler, who states that Gospels are "passion narratives with extended introductions" (*The So-called Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964], 80 n11).

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Shalom and Khessed: The Character and Scope of Divine Creation, Redemption, and Faithfulness

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Dedication

More than a quarter century ago, there he was, with a satisfied expression on his face, stationed as usual in front of the copier on the second floor of the James Petigru Boyce Library at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Reams and reams of printed material came out of that machine trying to but failing to satisfy what has so far turned out to be one of the great insatiable appetites for biblical learning planet earth has ever seen. Records were set for interlibrary loan traffic in those days. It was Alan Tomlinson. I met him and I clung to him, prompted him with a few questions about this or that passage in the New Testament to set him off and then just settled in to steal and steal and steal from him. How did I make it as a young pastor facing a pulpit week after week? By all that stealing, that's how.

Congratulations Alan, on a life invested well—a life in service to the word of almighty God. I work in the Christian tradition, not in the archeological spelunking of Biblical backgrounds. But oh how I need help from those deep divers into the ancient world in which the only true God became incarnate in the second person of his triune being and spoke to us through the eternal Son. But Dr. T. told me that my work was also necessary. The work of stepping back from the Bible, not to abandon it, but to try to hear more of it at once, helped not just with your own brain,

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but with help from many hearts and minds across time and geography through biblical, historical, and systematic theology. So in this little contribution to this celebration of my longtime friend, I attempt to do just that, knowing that the testing of it requires help from the deep divers like Alan Tomlinson, whose presence I feel every time I open the New Testament, and to whom I owe an unpayable debt every time I step behind a pulpit and try to faithfully expound it.

Introduction

In this paper I shall sketch the outline of a hypothesis about the teaching of the whole Bible concerning God's purposes in creation and redemption. In that sense what follows is an exercise in biblical theology an early stage of development. My aim is to encourage further exploration of my hypothesis in order to test its viability. I shall explore two key components of this hypothesis using two well-known Old Testament words; *shalom* and *khessed.* I shall then identify what I believe to be a major hindrance to faithful discernment of and teaching about *shalom* as I use the term, namely a proper and urgent but also exaggerated and distortive quest to repudiate the prosperity gospel. I shall then contend that a more faithful recovery of the doctrines of creation and redemption offers a better way forward than one wrongheadedly dominated by the need to reject the prosperity gospel.

A History of Mutual Accusation

The Bible records a recurring argument between the only true God and his people. The argument can be precipitated by either protagonist and tends to involve the hurling of an accusation by one side against the other. The chronicling of this back and forth encompasses the entire canon of Holy Scripture and surfaces with special and concentrated force in the Psalms. Sometimes the initial accusation is that the other party has failed to remember. Thus God's people accuse their creator:

> How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? Psalm 13:1.

> Awake! Why are you sleeping, O Lord?
> Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever!
> Why do you hide your face?
> Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?
> Psalm 44:23-26.

> O God, why do you cast us off forever?
> Why does your anger smoke against the sheep of your pasture?
> Remember your congregation, which you have purchased of old,
> which you have redeemed to be the tribe of your heritage!
> Remember Zion, where you have dwelt. Psalm 74:1-2.

Individually and collectively, the possibility of divine forgetting stirs terror in God's people—the terror appropriate to the threat of divine abandonment, or even of a permanent divine forsaking:

> Cast me not off; forsake me not,
> O God of my salvation! Psalm 27:9.

> I will keep your statutes;
> do not utterly forsake me! Psalm 119:8.

The people of God speak as those who have a claim on God's *khessed*, his steadfast or loyal love. An essential component of this expected divine *khessed* is fundamentally negative—it counts upon God not forgetting, not abandoning, and not forsaking his people. In Psalm 44, the psalmist, on behalf of God's people, after recounting Yahweh's deeds of might on behalf of their ancestors, complains:

> But you have rejected us and disgraced us
> and have not gone out with our armies.
> You have made us turn back from the foe,
> And those who hate us have gotten spoil.
> You have made us like sheep for slaughter
> and have scattered us among the nations. Psalm 44: 9-11.

But on what basis does the Psalmist expect something different from Yahweh? On what basis do the people of God appeal for different treatment? The climax of Psalm 44:

> Awake! Why are you sleeping, O Lord?
> Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever!
> Why do you hide your face?
> Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?
> For our soul is bowed down to the dust;
> our belly clings to the ground.
> Rise up; come to our help!
> Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love (*khessed*)!
> Psalm 44: 23-26.

Appeal to Yahweh's *khessed* touches the heart of the covenant relationship between God and his people and advances a claim based upon God's own reputation. Not to some abstract *khessed* is appeal made, but to "your steadfast love." Yahweh himself promised "I will bless you and make your name great . . .I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse" (Genesis 12:2-3). Yahweh himself established the covenant, repeatedly re-affirmed it, and promised repeatedly to remember it: "I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and I will remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham" (Leviticus 26:42). That the Psalmists hurl in Yahweh's face not *their* own, but *Yahweh's* own words, accounts for the confidence, the boldness, "the cheek" with which they do so.

The dynamic of such complaint and appeal feeds upon a covenant-fixated and divine reputation-directed challenge—"Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name; deliver us, and atone for our sins, for your name's sake" (Psalm 79: 9). "O God, why do you cast us off forever? . . .How long O God, is the foe to scoff? Is the enemy to revile you name forever?" (Psalms 74: 1,10). The divine *khessed* Israel expected is rooted in the divine promise and so implicates the divine character and thus the reputation of Yahweh. Yahweh's glory, his worthiness for praise, depends not upon an alien norm but an internal one, his righteousness, his integrity. Israel challenges Yahweh to live up to the standard Yahweh has set for himself. And that standard includes

his promise to remember his covenant and the *khessed* dimension of that covenant.

Pulling Yahweh's Chain

Yahweh hears the groans and cries of his children and responds to their pleas for help. As such the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob witnessed to in Holy Scripture is responsive, but not usually reactive. He more typically sets agendas than has them set for him. But certain subjects, certain complaints advanced by God's people, do seem to trigger a more immediate and a stronger divine response. The charges of forgetting, abandoning, and forsaking do not sit well with him. He does not let such accusations stand.

Yahweh denies the charges. Contrary to his people's complaints and fears, he has indeed remembered his covenant promises, including *khessed*. "I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel . . . and I have remembered my covenant" (Exodus 6:5). God's people themselves have repeatedly acknowledged Yahweh's *khessed* covenant-keeping. "The Lord has made known his salvation . . . He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel" (Psalms 98:2-3). "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. . . . It is he who remembered us in our low estate, for his steadfast love endures forever" (Psalms 136:1, 23).

So the Bible chronicles God's direct defense of himself against the charge of forgetting and also the long history of God's people's own acknowledgment of this covenant faithfulness. It also records God's turning of the accusation back upon his people. He is the rememberer—they the forgetters. "Can a virgin forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number" (Jeremiah 2:32). "Therefore, thus says the Lord God: Because you have forgotten me and cast me behind your back, you yourself must bear the consequences of your lewdness and whoring" (Ezekiel 23:35). What God's people may reflexively attribute to God's forgetting and forsaking actually arises on account of their own unfaithfulness. "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel . . Because they have forsaken me and have made offerings to other gods . . . my wrath will be kindled against this place, and it will not be quenched" (1 Kings 22:17). Juxtaposed with such unfaithfulness and forgetting stands Yahweh's unmatched remembering—"Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should

have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget., yet I will not forget you" (Isaiah 49:15).

Khessed and Shalom

At their best, Israel acknowledges, counts on, and takes comfort in Yahweh's *khessed*-shaped covenant-keeping. "For the Lord will not forsake his people, for his name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for himself" (1 Samuel 12:22).

But what is the content of that expected *khessed* component of the divine faithfulness? How does Yahweh act towards his people when he makes good on the promise of *khessed?* What expectations are properly stirred up by the Lord's promised *khessed*? Rather than forget, abandon, and forsake, he will keep and bless. But what are the material indices of such *khessed* blessing?

The church across the centuries has consistently looked both backward and forward in her attempts to answer this question. Backward because the fall into sin involved a fall from that human flourishing for which human beings were created. As such, the church has sought to gain glimpses of full or at least fuller enjoyment of the divine *khessed* by looking back to the garden of Eden (delight) prior to the fall into sin and expulsion from that garden of delight.

The glance forward has seems justified because the promised eternal home toward which the redeemer is moving his children and this world is meant to and does produce proleptic first fruits along the way through this valley of the shadow of death. Though imperfect and impermanent, such glimpses and tastes and first fruits do truly serve both as harbingers of the world to come and guides to faithful and victorious living this side of the eschaton.

For example, Jesus' miracles of healing, while not ushering in universal and permanent deliverance from sickness just now, nevertheless do entail a foretaste of that land where crying and pain and death are no more. And those same miracles, together with Jesus' own identification of himself with every act of kindness toward "the least of these," legitimize the battle against sickness in the meantime.

Neither Eden nor the new heaven and the new earth are doomed. Rather, *this* world is paradoxically both doomed and full of hope. This world in its rebellion against its creator, redeemer, and Lord together

with all the consequences of its rebellion—all of this is doomed. Sin, death, and the devil shall not stand. To live as though this were not so is to live according to a lie.

Yet this same world is the object of divine redemption, not only the immaterial souls of the saved, but the entire creation awaits redemption (Romans 8:19-22). All proper talk of the pilgrim status and the resident alien status of the people of God in this world must reckon not only with the "doomed" dimension but also with the promised redemption and its present implications. Faithful reasoning about these dimensions will take seriously not only the destruction and replacement language in Holy Scripture, but also the language of redemption and renewal meant to illumine the relationship between yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

It is this second dimension, the promised redemption of the entire creation, that invites examination of Eden and of the new heaven and new earth as windows into the actual content of the divine khessed. Given the faithfulness of the triune God to himself, we expect comparative continuity, not discontinuity between the three major distinguishable epochs of divine dealing with his people; namely, (1) Eden prior to the fall, (2) the new heaven and the new earth, and (3) the time between these times in which we all live. Surely the character of the divine *khessed* offers a promising window into any such cross-epochal continuity.

Eden and *Shalom*

My contention is that discernment of the character of the divine *khessed* must explore dimensions of reversal, renewal, and restoration. The divine *khessed* acts to reverse in some measure the consequences of the fall and to restore in some measure the "very goodness" of Eden prior to that fall. Final redemption shall entail more than a restoration of Eden, but not less.

This pre-fall Edenic "very goodness" I am calling "shalom." Nowhere in Scripture does this word fully comprehend the definitional scope or the semantic range I am according it. Nevertheless, this word seems especially fitted to comprehend something of the depth and richness of the created order which evoked from the creator himself the exclamatory assessment of "very good."

The word "shalom" is variously translated "peace," "harmony," and "prosperity." As such, its semantic range seems especially suited to illumine major components of the character of Edenic paradise. Negatively Eden was a place without enmity, violence, hate or scarcity. It was a place without want, poverty, sickness or suffering of any kind. Positively, Eden was a place of harmony, where all things served their proper role both functionally, relationally, and aesthetically. Eden was a flourishing place, a loving place, and a beautiful place. And it was a place, not of material scarcity, but of abundance; not of sickness, but of health.

In these ways, the word *shalom* commends itself for the use to which I want to put it. But in order to construe the word in way capable of capturing what we see in Eden with even more depth, it helps to conceptualize a three-dimensioned relational *shalom*. The pre-fall Eden could evoke the exclamatory "very good" from the creator because three relationships flourished in proper harmony according to Yahweh's creative purposes: (1) the relationship between human beings and their creator; (2) the relationship between human beings (Adam and Eve) with each other before their creator. And, the perhaps more controversial third relationship, which I am arguing is no less constitutive of the divine *shalom* or the divine *khessed* than the first two in each of the three epochs I have identified; (3) the relationship between human beings with each other before their creator *in the place (the home)* into which the creator settled them.

Vital to the hypothesis I want to explore is recognition that the triune God reveals himself from the beginning as a homemaker. Yes, the created universe bears witness to the creator's mighty power, but not in some abstract manner in which the power displayed serves only as a demonstration that the creator is able to accomplish whatever he pleases. Rather, all that God made should be acknowledged as itself good and, once human beings are added to the mix, very good. Not intrinsically or inherently good. But good and then very good in the three-dimensioned relationships within which it flourished prior to the fall. The creator made a home for us human beings and then put us into it.

That this place, this home, including both the universe itself and, in a special way, Eden, the garden of delight, belongs essentially to the creator's purposes is indicated in various striking ways. First, that the home for human beings had to be prepared first in order to receive them. The Bible bears witnessed to a God who never intended to have, does not

have, and shall never have, a people without a proper place to dwell with each other and with the creator. No exclamatory divine "good" or "very good" could have sounded without the flourishing of all three relationships, including the third one involving place or home. Demonstration that this is so seems easy within confines of the Old Testament. But what about the New Testament so replete with seemingly place-disinterested and even place-hostile passages? More on this later. Second, the personal and meticulous manner in which the creation, design, and ordering of the home for human beings was made bears witness to the non-human dimensions of creation as more than a temporary stage on which or background against which some ostensibly more properly "spiritual" history might play out. Such personal and meticulous care in creation culminating in the divine "very good" accords more with an artistic and architectonic crafting of an essential component of the divine purposes in creation.

Oh yes, the non-human dimensions of create constitute lower orders of creation for sure—"you are worth more than many sparrows" (Luke 12:7). But gradations in ordering or value do not indicate *mere* instrumentality, non-essentiality, or impermanent status. In short, every dimension of the created order attaching to Eden and the universe for which Eden provided the center, however encompassing of real orderings and gradations of value, remains in the crosshairs of the creator's redemptive work. That is why "the whole creation" rightly "waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God" and, thus, "to be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Romans 8:19-22).

Thirdly, the consequences of the fall encompass all three dimensions of *shalom*, including the "home" dimension. Thus, not only is the relationship between the creator and human beings, and between human beings themselves disrupted and distorted, the ground itself is cursed and expulsion from the paradisiacal home ensues. Now thrust into the land of Nod, east of Eden, human beings find themselves ejected from the home divinely fitted to their flourishing. But, good news! In the time between the times, and the time between the "places," the divine *khessed* promised by God and expected by his people, acts to restore, albeit partially and impermanently for the time being, all three dimensions of *shalom*, including the "home" dimension.

Khessed, Redemption, and the Prosperity Gospel

Khessed love promises make of Abraham a great nation and to settle them "into the land" he will show them (Genesis 12:1), a land "flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:8). There, "if you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them, then I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit" (Leviticus 26: 3-4). There, in their new divinely provided home, "the Lord God will make you abundantly prosperous in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your womb and in the fruit of your cattle and in the fruit of your ground" (Deuteronomy 30:9).

Such divine blessings between expulsion from Eden and the arrival of that city not made with human hands involve partial and impermanent reversals of the fall and harbingers of the coming redemption of all things. So do the feeding and healing miracles of Jesus and his promise in the long last discourse of John's gospel that he is going to "prepare a place" for his followers (John 14:1-3). Every serious reader of Holy Scripture knows how easy it is to find passage after passage in which the blessing of God is physical, material—bound up with physical wellbeing and material prosperity, all the physical and material components that belong to happy settlement into a well-protected and flourishing home.

And yet, do not many of us evangelicals draw back a bit from such passages? I think we do and I believe a major source of such wariness is fairly easy to identify. It is the troubling and tragic specter of the prosperity gospel. Troubling because we know that the Bible does not equate the index of divine favor in this life with the rise and fall of physical and material wellbeing. Indeed, as Jesus warned on his way to the cross, "in [this] world you will have tribulation" (John 16:33). Indeed, as for Jesus Christ our Lord, so also for us, obedience often leads to the opposite of physical health and material wealth. At more than one level, including the physical and material level, Dietrich Bonhoeffer heard the call to discipleship aright—"When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."[2] I call the prosperity gospel tragic because, all too often, where it flourishes, the suffering of faithful disciples is multiplied by

[2] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan, 1959), 99.

estrangement and even repudiation by fellow believers who trace all their "trouble" to a failure of their own faith.

At the most fundamental level, evangelical repudiation of the prosperity gospel is both right and needed. Yet the prosperity gospel continues to strengthen and spread, not among liberals who long ago abandoned submission to a divinely inspired, inerrant, and authoritative Bible, but among those who do. How can this be? The lure of the prosperity gospel is very strong. We who oppose it come armed with truckloads of suffering, sacrifice, and persecution passages. But they who embrace the prosperity gospel come bearing loads of Bible passages of their own—passages such as the ones I have referenced already in my wide-scoped sketch of the relationship between creation, *shalom*, khessed, and redemption.

Heresy and Prosperity

That sketch fits with the ancient mind of the church in its affirmation of creation, incarnation, and redemption against an array of some the most pernicious and enduring heretical teachings the church has faced—teachings that pit creation against redemption, that privilege non-physical, non-material dimensions of reality against ostensibly "spiritual" realities, dualistic teachings that go so far as to repudiate the creator himself. From Marcion to Mani to a bewildering array of Gnosticisms, the church has felt compelled, on the basis of the testimony of Holy Scripture to affirm again and again the full scope full scope of the divine "good" and "very good" in both creation and redemption. The passages cherished by prosperity preachers are precisely those the church has cited in own its defense against an array of creation-wary and creation-hostile heresies.

I wonder if current evangelical repudiation of the prosperity gospel has unwittingly both ceded too many chunks of the Bible to our opponents and unwittingly lapsed into Gnostic and/or Marcionite patters of Biblical exposition—either "spiritualizing" what ought not to be or keeping quiet about blatantly "health and wealth" language we encounter on the pages of Scripture. Surely we can do better. When the Roman Catholic church made more of Mary than the Bible does, too many of us who recognized this and rejected it, began to treat Mary as a bit toxic, relegating her to the annual Christmas pageant. Cutting out

cancerous heretical tumors while leaving healthy orthodox teaching tissue intact has always proved difficult, but surely it comes with the territory for would-be faithful ministers of the word of God.

The prosperity gospel presents us with just such a challenge. The strongest and most effective exposure of the prosperity gospel as unbiblical will not settle for self-congratulatory, echo chamber-like repetition of the suffering/sacrifice/persecution passages between ourselves. It must take away the passages upon which the prosperity preachers depend. When we do so, it will require avoidance of all Gnostic and dualistic squeamishness about the divine creation and redemption of the physical world, replete with deliverances from bondage, conquests and settlements, incarnation, healings and feedings and feastings, and a promised Messianic banquet in a new heaven and new earth without crying or pain. It will learn better how to theologize about the connection between our prayers touching all things physical and material and sermons where we "go spiritual" and tend to treat such matters as second-class citizens in the scope of divine redemption. It will learn theologize better not only about the bearing up and waiting, but also about glimpses, foretastes, and first fruits.

Let Suffering Be Bad

As a first prompter to what a more robust response to the prosperity might look like, we might reflect a bit on the origin, character, and future of suffering. Should not suffering's origin in the fall as punishment pit us against it and not for it? Prosperity preachers say so and surely we must join them. It's not the three dimensioned shalom that is doomed but rather suffering, also in three dimensions, that is doomed. Yes, God makes sin, death, hell, the grave, and suffering serve his redemptive purposes. Indeed, through suffering alone is redemption secured. The Lord enables his children to bear up differently under suffering and persecution than those without hope. Thanks be to God!

But that bearing up finds its power not in some glamorization of suffering or conversion of suffering from a bad thing to a good thing. Such bearing up arises from the sure hope that the suffering is temporary and ultimately doomed. "I reckon that the sufferings this life are not work comparing to the glory that is to be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). Paul made sure the Corinthians could not interpret his inner strength in

the face of the deterioration of his "outer tent" as either Stoic nonchalance or Neoplatonic anticipation of release of the spirit from the tomb of the body. "For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed . . ." (2 Corinthians 5:4).

We must accept the challenge to make the prosperity gospel passages our own. In doing so we must not leave behind, but we must also must move beyond the shaking of the suffering passages mainly in our own and others' faces, toward more Biblically positive celebration of the entire scope of the *shalom* for which we were made and which ongoing divine acts of *khessed* bring to us, albeit, for now, partially and temporarily, as true first fruits and harbingers of what is to come.

Maker of Heaven and Earth

The threat of the prosperity gospel as rival to the true gospel is real and must be met with the most effective weapon at our disposal—the word of God. But a deeper threat emerges when, in our horror and recoil against the perniciousness and global spread of this "other" gospel, we lapse unawares into variously Gnostic, Marcionite, Neoplatonic, and Manichaean squeamishness with regard to creation itself. It is not for nothing that the first article of the oldest post-canonical Christian creed confesses "God the father almighty, maker of heaven and earth." It is not too much to say that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's favorite way of demonstrating his deity was precisely introducing himself as the creator and then displaying his mastery over all that he has made.

Psalm 29 marks just one of the many instances in which the divine glory is acknowledged and celebrated as it is refracted through the magnificence of what Yahweh has made and the use he continues to make of it. How ought worshipers "Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength?" How might they "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name" and so "worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness?" Apparently by pondering and being properly enthralled by the Lord as the Lord of creation who "is lord over the waters . . . over many waters," whose voice "breaks the cedars of Lebanon" and makes Lebanon itself "skip like a calf." His voice "flashes forth flames of fire" and "shakes the wilderness of Kadesh." and "makes the deer give birth."

This is how the Lord insists on being know and glorified, as the one who "sits enthroned over the flood" as "king forever." But why? Why the axiomatic embeddedness of the glory of the Lord, his worthiness for praise, with his act of creation and his continued delight in and mastery over *all* that he has made? So that us humans might recognized, acknowledge, and worship the creator for his great power and only to then learn that the physical creation is not the heart of the matter but that actually it is merely the stage on which God sees to the truly "spiritual" matters related to the individual soul such as the forgiveness of sins? No. When Jesus asked rhetorically "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'your sins are forgiven.' Or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk?'" he was not subordinating the one act to the other, but displaying two equally divine and holy powers and preoccupations (Mark 2:9).

The fall and its consequences have neither negated nor undone nor forestalled the original divine commitment of the creator to homemaking. The creator's redeeming purposes have the whole of what was made and the original plans for the whole in its crosshairs. Thus Psalm 29 reaches its crescendo: "May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with *shalom*!"

Much more is at stake in the clash with the prosperity gospel than exposure of Joel Osteen and his ken as false teachers. If we settle for a technically correct but too narrow critique of this false teaching, we may unwittingly concede full affirmation and enjoyment of the heart of the gospel itself, which aims at much more than the saving of immaterial souls. Unwitting Gnostic and Marcionite opposition to the prosperity gospel illegitimately shrinks and truncates the scope of divine redemption. In so doing it shrinks the scope of the abundant life Jesus Christ came to give through a false shrinking of God's own concerns. It unwittingly imagines a God settling post-fall for a salvaging of a mere slice of what he made and abandoning his original plans in creation. Such shrunken views of God's interests and plans cannot be reconciled with the one who now has all power in heaven an on earth, through whom and for whom all things were made and who makes all things new (Matthew 28: 18; Colossians 1:15-20; Revelation 21:5). Surely we can and must find ways to oppose the prosperity gospel that leave the Lord of this universe, the creator and redeemer of all, properly acknowledged, worshiped and enjoyed.

***A People to Be Loved: Why Homosexuality is Not Just an Issue.* By Preston Sprinkle. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015. 224 pp., $16.99. Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-0310519652.**

Preston Sprinkle (PhD, University of Aberdeen) has entered the discussion of Christianity's relationship with the topic of homosexuality with a popular level (yet scholastically researched) volume.

The book is ten chapters in length, with an interlude which divides its contents between defining terms and applying what has been learned. There is an afterword and one appendix.

There is much to commend in Sprinkle's treatment of the issue which faces churches, pastors and lay people alike, which is how to biblically understand homosexuality and whether God in His Word strictly prohibits homosexuality in any form or whether it is acceptable when homosexuals pursue monogamous committed relationships (i.e. so called "Gay Marriage").

Sprinkle was dedicated to researching every aspect of this topic, from the biblical data, to the Greco-Roman cultural norms, and on to the modern-day understanding of homosexuality and all of the ancillary matters which are raised when this topic is addressed. Since he is not attempting to address this matter mainly to the secular world, but rather to the church, Sprinkle rightly appeals to Scripture as being God's Word and therefore authoritative, rather than opting for a lengthy apologetic for such a case.

The main thrust of the book is to address the topic biblically while at the same time call non-affirming Christians (a term used to describe Christians who see homosexuality as sin in any case) to see homosexuals as people and not an issue. This should be commended, since the church has struggled to know how to deal with these issues. I appreciate Sprinkle's unequivocal stance concerning Romans 1:26-27, stating, "Paul doesn't say that a certain type of same-sex relations were taboo in his Greco-Roman environment and therefore they are wrong. He says, or seems to assume, that what is wrong with same-sex relations transcends culture. Violating God-given gender boundaries is universal and absolute. They go against the way God created males and females and intended them to relate to each other sexually" (93). Also, the reminder that all have sinned and are in need of God's grace is appreciated. In this, Sprinkle is consistent throughout the volume.

Sprinkle's PhD is in New Testament and one should appreciate his statement that translations are not made in a vacuum; the way Greek is translated has consequences. Sprinkle carefully executes studies of μαλακοὶ and ἀρσενοκοῖται using not only prevalent Greek literature, but also refers to the likely use of these words by Paul stemming from their use in the Septuagint.

Sprinkle's use of an interlude to bring focus back and help summarize the issues in which he has invited the reader to study is also welcome. He draws it back to viewing the reader's own sin as wretched before a Holy God. He also reminds Christians of how to approach the issue of homosexuality with grace, truth, and love.

Although much is to be commended about Sprinkle's volume, I also have some critiques. As stated earlier, Sprinkle seeks to address this to Christians who need to see the persons involved in homosexuality and not just homosexuality as an issue. He attempts to do this in a winsome and relevant manner, but this sometimes comes off as crass. For instance, he illustrates the lack of biblical knowledge some Christians have regarding homosexuality through an experience he has on a plane, where a man has a hard time defending his reasons for knowing that the Bible is clear on the issue, but is unable to defend it with chapter and verse (15-16). While this can be an effective way to make your point, I am afraid some who could already be struggling to see the need to grapple with such issues, might be quick to put the book down due to what seems like an insult to their intelligence from the start. There are also times when Sprinkle uses slang, which brings an imbalance to the scholarly aspect of his case.

In my opinion, Sprinkle lacks caution, in cases when, in explaining the love of Jesus for sinners, he says that some of the most beautiful, wise, loving and moral people he knows are "gay." If one is living a homosexual lifestyle, it leaves the biblically-minded reader wondering in what way they are wise, loving, and moral (78). Sprinkle also speaks of the "everyman's view" of Christians in a poll with the responses being that 91% of people find Christians to be anti-homosexual, etc. While it can be understood that perception is indeed reality for some, this does not change the fact that there are Bible believing, Bible preaching churches that would be pigeonholed as anti-homosexual regardless of whether they were loving toward homosexuals or not, because they rightly see homosexuality as a sin (79-80).

Sprinkle reports statistics concerning the increased suicide of professing homosexuals as caused by lack of acceptance (82). In using these statistics, surely Sprinkle is aware that the way one is treated could be a contributing factor, but that there are other, unknown aspects as well. This would leave the results of such statistics lacking a fuller understanding of motives for such suicides. In saying this, I am not advocating the mistreatment of anyone, but this rhetoric often places the sole blame of suicide upon a lack of acceptance. Such acceptance, also seems to fall short of the desire of the LGBT community, who have made clear not only a plea for acceptance, but a demand for celebration. If Christians, loving and accepting as they should be, still call homosexuality sin (as they ought), they will likely still be blamed, in part, for this high suicide rate and will still be characterized as unloving.

Sprinkle also states LGBT people leave the church looking for a community which accepts them as humans (82). If such a church is being biblically faithful and seeking to call *all* sinners to repent and believe and live out their Christian life according to the Scriptures, it would seem that these LGBT people are leaving the churches not only to find acceptance, but agreement with their view that homosexuality is not sinful. There needs to be a clearer statement on how we are to treat people who struggle and want to fight sin versus those who want acceptance in living a lifestyle (though Sprinkle does not like this term) that Scripture strictly forbids. It could be that stating things as generally as Sprinkle does creates this issue, since each case would demand its own set of details to determine why an individual left a particular church. Indeed, this may be my major issue with the practical side of Sprinkle's work. Each case of any sinner who enters a church demands that we, as the church, not only welcome people, but also do the hard work of learning about them and evangelizing or discipling them. Sinners should not be defined by their greatest besetting sin alone. How do we seek to minister to those who recognize their sinfulness and desire to flee? How do we minister to those who do not see their sin as truly sinful and want to be a part of the church?

As well worked out as the first part of this volume is, with its exegesis and historical-cultural research, and as much as I agree with the intent of seeing homosexuals as people and not an issue, what seems to be lacking, is a more robust, biblically-balanced approach. In such an approach, Christians indeed ought to see homosexuals as a people to be

loved. Yet, Christians should confront all sin and genuinely come along side of those who are fighting against temptation.

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***The Psychobiology of Transsexualism and Transgenderism: A New View Based on Scientific Evidence.* By Thomas E. Bevan. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, an Imprint of ABC-CLIO, 2015. 257 pp., $60.00. Hardcover. ISBN: 978-1-4408-3126-3.**

Many supporters of homosexual rights claim homosexuality is a trait much like hair, eye, or skin color. In *The Psychobiology of Transsexualism and Transgenderism*, Thomas E. Bevan makes the same claim regarding Transsexualism / Transgenderism [TSTG]: Transsexualism is an inborn trait which is immutable. Bevan is a former professor of biopsychology at Georgia Tech and holds a PhD from Princeton in physiological psychology. Himself a male-to-female transsexual, Bevan has also authored *The Transsexual Scientist* (2013) under his female name "Dana J. Bevan." Though he is a transsexual, Bevan still claims to be sexually oriented to women and dedicates his book "to the love of my life, my darling wife." In *The Psychobiology of Transsexualism and Transgenderism*, Bevan claims TSTG is biological in nature based on both genetic and epigenetic causes.

Bevan sees all human behavior as strictly biological in origin. He clams all human choices are merely a mirage of human freedom because we are driven by subconscious forces. Bevan asserts "there is no such thing as a conscious choice. Cognitive neuroscience evidence indicates that humans are only conscious of choices well after they are made by subconscious mechanisms" (10). In other words, humans are merely highly complex biochemical machines which have learned to self-reflect. At a worldview level, Bevan is actually arguing for a very harsh form of biological determinism.

Consistent with Bevan's biological determinism is his rejection of the idea of a soul. Bevan says, "There is no scientific evidence that there are ethereal spirits [read "a soul"] that communicate with us through our brains to create behavior" (185). Likewise, religious experience is a phenomenon of biochemical processes, as Bevan says, "We must assume that the perception of spiritual experience is mediated by subconscious mechanism(s) in the nervous system rather than through extracorporeal spirits" (186). Essentially, Bevan is making the secular charge that the idea of a soul is akin to a "ghost in the machine" and should be rejected.

Bevan also makes an astounding epistemological claim: "The continuous visual world we see is an illusion" (182). He goes on to say memory recall and motor skills are illusions based on unconscious mechanisms. He circles back to his hard determinism and says, "Like the illusions described here [memory recall, etc], conscious choice is also an illusion" (182).

Chapter Five–"Genetic Causal Factor in Transsexualism and Transgenderism"–summarizes Bevan's claims regarding the relationship between genetics and TSTG. In a sweeping survey of several studies, Bevan uses research based on genetics and homosexuality to springboard into discussions of genetic factors related to TSTG. He concludes by saying there are "DNA genetic markers for TSTG that confirm this DNA genetic causal factor" (96). Bevan's use of the term "causal" is imprecise. A more careful reading of the data reveals there are some variables in certain populations which correlate with a higher incidence of TSTG. But correlation does not equal causation. No genetic marker has yet been found which yields a high predictive power for TSTG. In other words, genetics may provide a contributing factor, but genetic causation of TSTG has not been proven.

Bevan places great emphasis on epigenetic mechanisms in chapter six–"Epigenetic Causal Factor in Transsexualism and Transgenderism." Epigenetics is a burgeoning science and refers to structures governing which genes in one's DNA will be "active" or express a trait. Epigenetic structures can be thought of as switches and knobs which turns things "on or off" or "up and down." Bevan favors the idea that maternal stress during gestation may be involved in epigenetic mechanisms which lead to TSTG. Bevan concludes, "Although initial research evidence of an epigenetic causal factor for TSTG is limited, it

suggests future research will be fruitful" (115). However, we are only now learning the manner in which individual choice (which, of course, Bevan rejects as a category) affects epigenetics. In other words, participation in TSTG behavior may possibly have an effect on one's epigenetics, a theory Bevan does not explore in depth.

Bevan details the extreme measures to which people go to achieve sex-reassignment in Chapter 13–"Transition Procedures and Outcomes." Most transsexuals begin the process of changing their gender by hormone therapy and then progress to more extreme measures such as body modification and genital plastic surgery. Two observations can be made from this chapter. First, the extreme measures required to achieve the desired goal of being another sex strongly argue in favor of learning to embrace one's birth-sex. Second, that people are willing to go to such extreme measures demonstrates the level of brokenness associated with TSTG.

The most extensive study on the long-term effects of sex-reassignment surgery was published in 2011 by a team of researchers from the Karolinska Institute in Sweden. This long-term study followed the lives of 324 individuals who had sex-assignment surgery between 1973 and 2003. While Bevan mentions this study in passing, he does not detail the magnitude of mental health issues associated with transgender surgery. What the 2011 study demonstrated was that people who had sex reassignment surgery have considerably higher risks for mortality, suicidal behavior, and psychiatric morbidity than the general population.[1] Bevan blames the higher rate of suicide on cultural rejection of TSTG people and seems unwilling to admit that the TSTG behavior itself may be related to the less favorable outcomes.

If Bevan's worldview is true, one is hard pressed to know why he expects his book to be taken seriously. If reality is merely an "illusion," then why should I take anything he says to be substantive? If human senses are as unreliable as he suggests, perhaps Bevan himself is merely under the illusion that he really has the subjective experience of gender dysphoria. Furthermore, if the idea of conscious choice is an "illusion,"

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[1] Cecilia Dhejne, et al, "Long-Term Follow-Up of Transsexual Persons Undergoing Sex Reassignment Surgery: Cohort Study in Sweden," *PLoS One* 6.2 (2011): http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3043071/.The authors are favorable to TSTG people.

then why should anyone be held morally accountable for any action? Bevan's worldview is biological determinism, but the science he cites only shows that some genetic or epigenetic factors may contribute to TSTG, a point which is generally granted. What Christians do reject is that we are excused from moral accountability because a particular temptation may have a biological component.

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The Enduring Authority of the Christian Scriptures. Edited by D. A. Carson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016, 1240 pp., Hardcover, $65.00. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6576-2.

The value of The Enduring Authority of the Christian Scriptures is that it provides a broad range of domain-specific lenses for thinking about the complexities and veracity of the Old and New Testament Scriptures. D. A. Carson edits essays by noted scholars like Charles E. Hill, John D. Woodbridge, Craig L. Blomberg, Douglas J. Moo and Kevin VanHoozer. Carson provides the Introduction and addresses Frequently Asked Questions (specific to each chapter) at the end of the book, between which essays are arranged according to topics related to Historical (10 essays), Biblical and Theological (14 essays), Philosophical and Epistemological (6 essays), and Comparative Religions (4 essays). Daniel M. Doriani offers the concluding chapter under the heading Thinking Holistically. Due to space limitations, here one essay from each of the four sections of the book will be discussed.

Charles E. Hill analyzes the concept of 'Scripture' in the Patristic period (43-88). To those proposing that the idea of a canon of texts did not begin to develop until the latter part of the second century, yet remained in flux even by the time Athanasius' 39th Festal Letter in 367, Hill observes that Clement of Rome, Irenaeus and Ignatius describe apostolic Scripture as uniquely authoritative and authentic. The authoritative character of Scripture was expressed in the third and fourth

century lists of Origin, Eusebius and Athanasius, each noting the 27 works now understood as the New Testament.

But is the authoritative role of Scripture in the patristic period limited to lists—open to criticism because of questionable statements these fathers made in other places? No, Hill argues. He identifies the use of *diplai* (pl.), wedge or arrow shaped (>) characters written in papyri (for Matt 3:16 in Irenaeus' *AH* [P.Oxy. 3.4.05, from book 3] and P.Mich. xviii.764, a second century Christian text citing 1 Cor 3:13) as well as many places in the New Testament books of Codices Vaticanus and Alexandrinus, to mark citations of what is clearly Scripture (69). Why these *sigla* only for citations of Scripture and not pagan authors (e.g., Aratus in Acts 17:28 and Enoch Jude 14-15)? "Christians have a conception of Scripture as a distinct set of sacred texts" (69).

In recent years, Bart D. Ehrman's popular skepticism about the texts of the New Testament has compelled many scholars to address the integrity of the Scriptures. Peter William's essay, "Ehrman's Equivocation and the Inerrancy of the Original Text" (389-406) encourages those holding to inerrancy to improve both the means and the manner of how they communicate their position. First, Williams suggest that inerrantists employ more precise terminology. Rather than speaking of the inerrancy of the Bible (which may be understood by the listener as referring to the physical copy of Genesis-Revelation available in any number of translations at a local bookstore), they should discuss the inerrancy of the Scriptures—opening a window for the listener to engage the historic nature of the word of God. Rather than speaking of the inerrancy of original manuscripts (which skeptics like Ehrman demand be produced to warrant Christian belief), they would speak of the inerrancy of the scriptural author's words—providing opportunity to note how those words have been re-produced in manuscripts that are the basis of modern translations of the Bible. Finally, rather than arguing for an inerrant material text, advocates of inerrancy should clarify that it is the immaterial words written on the autographical surfaces (papyri, parchment, stone, etc.) or spoken by the apostles that they believe to be without error. "It is to the text of a work, not the document, that inerrancy applies" (400), writes Williams. He observes this thesis in the post-Reformation era writings of Matthew Henry and B. B. Warfield, and questions whether during his days in evangelicalism Ehrman ever understood the claims of historical inerrancy. Ehrman's critique(s) of

inerrancy seem rooted in misunderstanding, Williams avers, a fact that should "goad inerrantists to check that their own formulations have been as clear as they can be" (406).

But what about Ehrman's claim that the pre-4th century scribes not only made typical copyist mistakes but also adjusted the words as they wished? Williams addresses Ehrman's claim in the second section of his essay, headed "The Burden of Proof: Do We Have the Word or Not?" He questions Ehrman's claim that, as an historian he is justified in skepticism until an inerrant original manuscript is produced. Historians investigating the New Testament text cannot stand long on such epistemologically shaky ground, magnifying the comparatively few conspicuous word changes in known manuscripts while minimizing the broad stability of the wording across preserved material forms (papyri, parchment, and paper; scrolls and codices; stone and pottery), languages (Greek, Latin, Syrian and Coptic), geographical regions surrounding the Mediterranean, and script types (majuscule and minuscule), argues Williams. "The presumption that we have the authorial wording until evidence arises to the contrary seems a more reasonable position than to refuse to believe that we have the authorial wording until an impossibly high level of proof be obtained that we do" (401-02).

Among the Philosophical and Epistemological Topics, Paul Helm addresses "The Idea of Inerrancy" (899-919). He argues that inerrancy is inextricably related to a hermeneutical methodology sensitive to the lexical, grammatical, literary and authorial features of a text. That is, a text can be said to be inerrant if the message the author intends via the words and literary conventions they employ is constantly true over time. Thus a document with misspelled words or ambiguous generic features is not necessarily errant. To say that spelling errors in a manuscript or inconsistency (as opposed to a logical contradiction) in reported scenes of a narrative necessarily qualifies a document as errant is to commit the fallacy of division.

Helm then applies his conceptual framework of inerrancy to the Bible. He maintains that—since God is the author of Scripture—it is necessarily inerrant. But Helm does not propose an unsophisticated, leap-of-faith view. "Scripture does not just happen, by a fluke, to be inerrant, but is so by the properties of God, its primary author, and his intention. It might be thought that this by itself seals it off against falsification. But this would be a mistake" (917). Helm argues that God's

faithfulness to speak truth is expressed in Scripture through human authors who chose to convey their intended meanings through various lexical, grammatical and generic features. Thus, for Scripture to be errant, whether understood as a series of speech acts or propositions, Scripture must be shown to explicitly contradict itself. Here Helm echoes Peter Williams' essay noted already: since it is the case that (a) when Scripture is interpreted holistically, with respect to the syntactical and generic features of the author and their day, no explicit self-contradictions are identified, then (b) the burden of proof for an errant Scripture rests upon those maintaining that position.

Helm's contention for necessary inerrancy of Scripture echoes in Te-Li Lau's "Knowing the Bible is the Word of God Despite Completing Claims" (989-1012), the lead article in the final section, Comparative Religions Topics. Lau notes that though sacred texts of Christians, Mormons, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists all self-attest to complete truthfulness, the Bible distinguishes itself because it also "makes other claims that can be verified, makes prophetic predictions that have been fulfilled, presents credible accounts of eye-witness testimony, etc." (995). Besides the vast quantity and quality of historical New Testament manuscripts, in comparison with these religions, the fact that the Bible presents a coherent narrative taking place across time, cultures and authorial pens (as opposed to an isolated ideology), substantiates self-attestation of inerrancy.

Daniel M. Doriani's "Take, Read" (1119-1154) fulfills the final section of *Enduring Authority*, Thinking Holistically. He suggests that those who recognize the complete truthfulness of the Bible continue to live beneath its authority, reading it for life. "The essential point for our study is this: it is possible for putatively submissive teachers to think they have the Bible's message under control and so to seal their ears. They are unwilling to read with true openness for they are too committed to their own opinions" (1142). Love, honesty, mercy and patience characterize those who ascribe to the authority of Scripture as a truthful mirror of the soul (1154).

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***Recapturing the Voice of God: Shaping Sermons Like Scripture.* By Steven W. Smith. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2015. 240 pp. $24.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-1-4336-8250-6.**

Steven W. Smith, current Vice President for Student Services and Communications at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has challenged the primary notion of what people consider expository preaching. According to Smith, expository, or text-driven, preaching "is not a style but a theologically driven philosophy of preaching whose purpose is to get as close to the text as possible" (1). Sermons are simply a "re-presentation of what God has already presented" (3). In order to accomplish this, Smith argues that preachers should pay attention to the genre.

Chapter one highlights the deficiency of the typical "one size fits all" structure of a sermon. The structure of the text shapes the structure of the sermon (8). The task of the preacher is to "re-present what God has said" and the end of preaching is "to sound like God's Word" (10). This leads to his point in chapter two, namely that the secret to great preaching is simply staying at the text until its meaning is clear (17), because it is the pastor's responsibility to explain the Scripture to the congregation (22–25).

In chapter three Smith helpfully guides the reader through the basics of genre and forces the preacher to understand the influence of genre. He argues that genre is both situational and moving. Smith convincingly argues that if the preacher views the genre as arbitrary, the communication of the text will be flat. The preacher must remember that the exegetical work is done by "mining the life that is already embedded in the text" (32), thereby relinquishing the temptation of presenting the sermon as either flat or static.

Chapters four through seven comprise Smith's attempt to help the preacher recapture God's voice in narratives. In chapter four he begins with Old Testament narrative and remarks that narratives are parts of a larger whole and are affected by its surrounding context. To neglect this is to detach these stories from their "original purpose or authorial intent" (40). Stories have structure and, therefore, discovering its structure produces the structure of a sermon outline (41). Chapter five encompasses the Law, perhaps the most neglected of the genres to be preached. Smith reminds the reader that the Law leads people to Christ

(67) and describes God's nature (67–68). He also rightly provides the reminder to look to both the micro and macro-exposition of the Law in order to aid in sermon outline (74–75).

Chapter six changes to the New Testament narratives. The preacher must remember the narrative as a whole (91) and allow the structure of it to shape the outline. Smith reminds the reader that each Gospel is its own, has a unique purpose, and its own unique structure. Therefore, the sermon outlines for each respective Gospel will not appear the same (81–86). In chapter seven Smith seeks to answer what the structure of a parable is since they are "inductive stories that develop toward a main point" (105). He argues they should be structured based on their own structure and not content (106). Because parables are culturally distant (110) they must be translated for the modern audience (111–112) or they lose their force.

Chapters eight through ten discuss how to recapture God's voice in poetry. In chapter eight Smith lays out his guide on how to preach the Psalms, and he argues that the preacher must let them stand alone before making connections elsewhere in the Scripture or the New Testament (124). He notes that psalms contain poetic features such as parallelism, movement, and imagery (125–131). To preach a psalm Smith allows for two approaches. First, the analytical approach can be employed when preaching shorter psalms but, second, a topical approach can likewise be used when preaching the larger psalms (137).

The Wisdom Literature is the focus for chapter nine, and Smith encourages the preacher to view them as travel guides (146). He tackles each book from the Wisdom Literature corpus in its own section. Job is narrative poetry and synthetic parallelism is often used (148). Proverbs allows the preacher to "preach across a wide spectrum of topics" (148) since its structure is topical and collective. Ecclesiastes is focused on the futility of life and provides a collection of sayings and thoughts as to its structure (150–151). The Song of Solomon has a distinct narrative flow and is possibly chiastic in nature (153).

Chapter ten focuses on prophecy. Smith notes the importance of remembering the prophets each have a unique historical setting, one which typically is found "unpacking cultural issues...and judgment" (166). To structure a sermon from the prophets requires utilizing the strophes contained therein, staying aware of varying genres within

prophecy, or perhaps even considering preaching one sermon on one minor prophet (173–174).

Chapters eleven and twelve focus upon both the Epistles and Revelation, respectively. In chapter eleven Smith remarks that the "Epistles are the bread and butter of most evangelical, pastoral preaching" (180). They also have macro and micro-structures (182), and serve as occasional letters that address a specific issue (185). To read the macrostructure and move it to the micro-structure is important because it safeguards "ourselves from reading meaning into words and sentences and disregarding the context of the book" (191). Chapter twelve concludes with Revelation and, as Smith notes, it contains both a unique genre and structure. The structure will vary depending upon the ensuing narrative scene (200) and genre (202–203).

Smith's work is helpful in that it provides the solution to a problem most preachers will encounter, sermon structure. When the preacher allows the structure of the biblical text to inform sermon structure, he is then alleviated the temptation to superimpose the "one size fits all" method. Also beneficial is his sermon outlines at the end of each chapter. Furthermore, Smith's chapter on both the Law and the Parables are extremely helpful. He carefully guides the reader through the technicalities of these difficult genres and shows that they are not as difficult to preach as one might think.

A few points of critique are in order. First, Smith states the first question of the Bible is God's inquiry as to where Adam and Eve are (1). This is not so, for it is the serpent's question to Eve, "Did God really say…" Second, the accompanying diagrams that begin each chapter are helpful, but following these as a guide would lead to prophecy as chapter nine and Wisdom Literature as chapter ten, but it is swapped in the book. Consistency would be helpful here.

Overall, *Recapturing the Voice of God* is a worthy read. Steven Smith has aided the preacher with practical application of how to preach the genres and preach them well. This would be a welcome addition to any pastor's library.

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***Chance and the Sovereignty of God: A God-Centered Approach to Probability and Random Events.* By Vern Sheridan Poythress. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014. 357 pp. Paperback, $25.00. ISBN: 978-1-4335-3695-3.**

"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD" (Prov 16:33 ESV).

How ought we understand unpredictable events in light of the biblical testimony about God's relationship to creation? This question underlies Dr. Vern Poythress' recent book, *Chance and the Sovereignty of God: A God-Centered Approach to Probability and Random Events.*

Dr. Poythress is a well-known New Testament scholar, having served for the past 40 years at Westminster Theological Seminary, where he is currently Professor of New Testament Interpretation and Editor of the *Westminster Theological Journal.* Perhaps less well known is the fact that, prior to his graduate work in biblical studies, Dr. Poythress earned a Ph.D. in mathematics from Harvard University and taught mathematics at the collegiate level. And from early in his life Dr. Poythress has been interested in the relationship between theology and science and mathematics: his Th.M. thesis was titled "An Approach to Evangelical Philosophy of Science" (1974) and one of his early published essays was a chapter titled "A Biblical View of Mathematics" in a compendium of essays applying the Van Tillian framework (1976). Over the most recent decade Dr. Poythress has made common cause, in different ways, with both Van Til and Abraham Kuyper by producing an impressive corpus that seeks to demonstrate the Trinitarian foundations of language, logic, philosophy, mathematics, science, and sociology. *Chance and the Sovereignty of God* expands this corpus by developing a "God-centered approach to probability and random events" (5).

The book is divided into four parts. In Part I ("The Sovereignty of God") Poythress lays the conceptual foundation for the book. He begins with the presuppositionalist affirmation "that God is the ultimate source for knowledge" (19) and concludes that on account of God's instruction to us in the Bible, we can find answers to questions about the meaning of "so-called 'chance' events" (20). He goes on to demonstrate from Scripture the meticulous sovereignty of God, including God's control of unpredictable events, disasters and suffering, human choice, and even

small random events. Poythress then progresses to consider the meaning of chance in light of God's sovereignty, arguing persuasively that the popular understanding of chance as *luck* is precluded by a proper view of God's transcendence and imminence. Our understanding of chance must instead be based on the idea of chance as *unpredictability*. Specifically, we must recognize that what we experience as chance events "are unpredictable and inexplicable for human beings, but not for God" (96), who is present and in control of all events, working them together for good.

Having established a biblical understanding of chance, Poythress proceeds in Part II to argue for "God as the Foundation for Chance." He begins by establishing that "God in his wisdom has given us the whole tapestry of regularities and unpredictabilities and their connections with one another. This tapestry, along with many other features we see in creation, reflects his wisdom and his character" (101). But these regularities and unpredictabilities not only reflect God, they are grounded in him: "The wonderful interlocking between the general and the particular has its ultimate foundation, its ultimate archetype or original pattern, in God himself" (107). God is thus the foundation for chance: he created the world so as to reflect the unity and diversity in the Trinity (108) and he created and governs the world by speech that finds its basis in intra-Trinitarian communication (107, cf. 58).

In Part III ("Probability") Poythress undertakes the task of defining probability and describing how it is estimated. Those acquainted with probability theory are aware of the many complexities that attend such a definition. But Poythress handles these complexities deftly by offering a creative synthesis that effectively reduces to three essential and complementary perspectives, mirroring John Frame's tri-perspectival approach to ethics. Equally skillful is the subsequent exposition of fundamental concepts of probability and estimation; all readers should be able to grasp the fundamentals with reasonable effort, regardless of previous exposure.

The final section, Part IV ("Probability and Mathematics"), is the most technical, as Poythress furthers his discussion of the concept and computation of numerical probability. Here his discussion consistently begins by establishing intuition before moving to computation, which greatly aids comprehension. Again, a reader need not have previous exposure to apprehend the material; Poythress provides an excellent

introduction. Nonetheless, those who despair of mathematics can be forgiven for skipping ahead to the concluding chapter.

Two facets of the book, woven throughout and elaborated in appendices, complement Poythress' principal project described thus far. While principally concerned to develop a God-centered view of chance, Poythress also endeavors to engage alternative views (particularly the views of chance implicit in the natural and social sciences) and to explicate the practical implications of the doctrine he develops. Both contribute meaningfully to the work. The former aids in clarifying his project by comparison and contrast; the latter aids in establishing its relevance.

Because of its subject matter, *Chance and the Sovereignty of God* is liable to be misunderstood by various audiences that bring their own expectations to the book. Two suggestions may help readers fully appreciate the work on its own terms. First, it is important to read with the nature of Poythress' principal project in constantly view. His project is fundamentally one of practical theology in the Kuyperian tradition, seeking to extend Jesus' lordship to every sphere of life. The book is not intended to be an exhaustive defense of meticulous providence, a self-contained introduction to statistics or a comprehensive philosophy of probability or mathematics. As he has made clear elsewhere, Poythress does not imagine he is speaking a final, definitive word; rather, he desires to lay a foundation on which others can build. Second, it is helpful to understand the book in the larger context of his corpus on the Trinitarian foundations of human knowledge. Elsewhere Poythress uses a familial analogy to explain the relationship between his "God-centered approach" books; it follows from this analogy that a single book can be understood in isolation, but is best understood in its broader context. Awareness of the arguments developed elsewhere in the corpus will both clarify and add persuasive force to the argument developed in this particular book.

Chance and the Sovereignty of God is a valuable addition to Poythress' corpus. In it he presents a well-reasoned, biblically-grounded understanding of the nature and measurement of unpredictable events and he plausibly grounds both in the Trinity. Generalist readers as well as mathematicians and theologians will find much to stimulate their thinking about the nature of chance and the foundations of probability.

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***Jesus or Nothing*. By Dan DeWitt. Wheaton: Crossway, 2014. 144 pp. $10.99, Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-1433540462.**

With Colossians as his compass, Dan DeWitt (Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Cedarville University) guides his readers through the "human epic" of finding meaning and purpose in life (13–17). While skeptics may seek these answers in "the Nothing" (nihilism), for DeWitt, ultimate truth can be found in "the gospel alone" (100).

In nuce, the thesis of DeWitt's book is that the gospel of Jesus "addresses the basic questions common to humanity" (31). DeWitt finds Paul's letter to the Colossians particularly helpful because of its "secular context." According to DeWitt, there are two antithetical, competing worldviews from which humanity must choose: Jesus or Nothing (17, 27, 31, 127). For DeWitt, there is no *via media* (27). The Nothing is of the nihilistic ilk espoused by Sartre, Nietzsche, and Foucault, and whose *telos* is hopelessness and despair (116–22). DeWitt contrasts these two worldviews—following G. K. Chesterton's, Dorothy Sayers's, and Augustine's lead—in terms of the ball (world) or the cross, creed (Christianity) or chaos, and the City of Man or the City of God (19, 21, 109–10). DeWitt argues that in man's unending scientific/philosophical quest to find a "theory of everything" (TOE), only the gospel of Jesus sufficiently satisfies (35–41). DeWitt states his purposes in writing are to "encourage believers in their love for the gospel, challenge skeptics in their rejection of it, and assist Christian parents and leaders as they contend for the faith" (17). DeWitt's goal "is not to offer finely tuned apologetic arguments . . . but instead to ask the reader to envision what the world would look like if the gospel were actually true" (17).

Structurally, DeWitt offers an introduction, seven chapters, conclusion, discussion guide (i.e., questions for study groups), and endnotes. In his introduction, DeWitt elucidates the problem of nihilism and its drastic effects upon the contemporary church. DeWitt weaves a tale of two stories/cities in chapter 1, and unveils the methodology used throughout the rest of his book. In his own words: "I want to use the book of Colossians to contrast a gospel vision of the world with an atheistic one" (31). Chapter 2 portrays the gospel from Colossians as the answer to Stephen Hawking's quandary regarding a "complete theory" that would ultimately explain everything and be understandable to everyone (35). In chapter 3, DeWitt warns against hermeneutical/philosophical

blind spots, as well as the assumptions that often underlie skeptical arguments against the gospel. Chapters 4–5 deal with the guilt-based culture of the West, as well as human mortality. In an attempt to make sense of life/death, atheists have often proffered hedonism and humanism as alternatives to the gospel (82–83, 117). However, only the gospel gives meaning to life for DeWitt (84). Dewitt portrays the gospel as a compelling witness and the one true story for humanity's incessant quest for truth and meaning in chapters 6–7. DeWitt shows how the portrayal of Demas's apparent apostasy (2 Tim 4:9–11) applies to the contemporary attraction to nihilism (104–05). DeWitt clarifies how John Lennon's imagining of a hopeful world without God is really an illusion, and suggests that "*the gospel is the anti-Nothing*" (106, 112, emphasis original). In his conclusion, DeWitt compels his readers to weigh the evidence set forth in his book regarding the "wagers" of Blaise Pascal and Lennon—thus, inviting his readers to make an informed choice (116–22).

In terms of strengths, DeWitt's project is a winsomely accessible work that is easily read in a single sitting or perfect for youth groups and young adult classes. DeWitt's succinct format with detailed discussion guide makes for an engaging, nine-week study (9, 131–36). Second, DeWitt's passion for the lost and desire to honestly engage his surrounding culture for Christ is laudable. Third, DeWitt blazes a trail for others to follow in melding academic scholarship with a white-hot zeal for Christ and his church. DeWitt challenges both skeptics and Christians alike to honestly assess their hermeneutic and praxis. In other words, DeWitt challenges everyone to be consistent in the story they believe and tell—whether it is the story of Jesus or Nothing (112–13, 116–22).

No book is perfect, however, and *Jesus or Nothing* has its share of weaknesses. First, DeWitt's slim volume does not go quite far enough in acknowledging the validity of the skeptics' arguments against nominal "Christianity." DeWitt should have probably made a better attempt to meet skeptics where they are (e.g., Paul's approach in Acts 17:22–31) in letting his own tradition be critiqued where critique is warranted. In other words, perhaps walking his readers through Colossians may not have been the best place for DeWitt to begin, especially for those readers who deny the authority of God's Word. However, with a title like *Jesus or Nothing*, atheists would not seem the most likely candidates to buy this book. Second, despite DeWitt's work being well-written, it does have a

few typographical errors that detract from DeWitt's argumentation (e.g., 83, 109, 136). Third, what are the roles of the Father and the Spirit in DeWitt's project? Despite their co-equality with Jesus, there is a paucity of references to either of these other Persons within the Trinity. Only one reference to the Father and only two references to the Holy Spirit were found in DeWitt's book (39–40). Adding a brief paragraph in the introduction outlining DeWitt's presuppositions regarding the Trinity would have improved this work.

In sum, DeWitt makes an important contribution in addressing the seeming exodus of young adults from the church. DeWitt's fictional character, "Zach," represents many young adults who may have been raised in church, but have abandoned Christianity for sundry reasons (122). While skeptics may argue that DeWitt has presented a false dichotomy between two extremes—Jesus or nihilism—DeWitt does a fine job in exposing the presuppositions undergirding the New Atheist movement (20–25). DeWitt also issues a clarion call to consistency in worldview and hermeneutic toward both "cities"—the City of Man *and* the City of God (104, 116–22). Despite the minor quibbles mentioned above, *Jesus or Nothing* should be widely read as it fills an important lacuna (especially in thinking through youth and young adult ministries) as the church seeks to reconcile the lost (from within and without) to God through Christ (Col 1:20).

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***Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy*. By R. Albert Mohler, Jr., Peter Enns, Michael F. Bird, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, and John R. Franke, ed. J. Merrick and Stephen M. Garrett. Counterpoints: Theology and Bible series, ed. Stanley N. Gundry. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013. 328 pp. Paperback, $19.99. ISBN-13: 978-0310331360.**

I almost invariably enjoy and appreciate multiviews books, and *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy* is no exception. Of course, in such a collection of views, the reader is likely to agree more with some contributors than others, and to disagree with other contributors. In this volume, all the contributors are broadly evangelical, although some would be considered as post conservative progressive evangelicals. Affirmation of the Chicago Statement on Inerrancy is required to be a member of the Evangelical Theological Society, and thus is often used as a measuring rod for being an evangelical. By that standard, the contributors appear somewhat one-sided, in that only one of the contributors endorsed the Chicago Statement on Inerrancy in an unqualified way – Dr. Albert Mohler, President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Most of the other contributors also affirmed the Chicago Statement, but did so in a qualified or nuanced way, noting problems they had with the Statement.

The contributors clearly have five different views, but they are not the traditional perspectives on inerrancy. Mohler defends the classical doctrine of inerrancy as defined in the Chicago Statement. Mohler presents a cogent argument from the Bible addressing what Scripture claims about itself. He asserts that the church must be presented with an authoritative Scripture, and that evangelicalism cannot survive without a clear affirmation of plenary verbal inspiration and the inerrancy of Scripture. However, all the other contributors express the worry that those who affirm the Chicago Statement believe not only in the inerrancy of Scripture but also the inerrancy of their interpretation, and that the Chicago Statement does not allow for an adequate interpretation of different genre of Scripture.

Kevin Vanhoozer also broadly affirms inerrancy, but voices a number of worries about the Chicago Statement, including that it appears to presuppose a foundationalist theory of knowledge, the correspondence theory of truth, and the referential theory of meaning.

In this reader's opinion, these three beliefs are not bad things, but Vanhoozer's point is that wooden application of them in interpretation may not adequately account for various forms of genre in Scripture. Vanhoozer prefers what he describes as a "well-versed" definition of inerrancy that is more sensitive to the genre and rhetoric of Scripture. In this view, "the authors speak the truth in all things they affirm (when they make affirmations), and will eventually be seen to have spoken truly (when the right readers read rightly)" (pp. 213-14). Vanhoozer is not worried about minor verbal differences, and asserts that proper interpretation will resolve or harmonize any apparent contradictions.

Michael Bird affirms the truthfulness of Scripture, but asserts that the doctrine of inerrancy is not important in an international setting. An Australian, Bird complains repeatedly that the International Council of Biblical Inerrancy which approved the Chicago Statement was primarily made up of Americans. Bird is right that more international participants would have enhanced the "International" Council, however, it is also fair to point out that most church councils in church history did not involve anyone from North or South America or, for that matter, Australia. Bird understands the Chicago Statement to be primarily a "bounded set" by which American evangelicalism may be evaluated. Bird asserts that the "international" or "global evangelical churches" prefer to describe Scripture with the word "infallible" rather than "inerrant."

John Franke identifies himself as a post conservative progressive evangelical with a post foundationalist view of truth. Franke calls instead for a fallibilist, polyphonic, and pluralist view of Scripture. The view of inspiration he describes, however, sounds difficult to distinguish from the Barthian Neo-Orthodox view of Scripture, in which the actual words of Scripture are not true, but are a witness to the truth. Franke speaks of the words of Scripture not being "divinitized," but having a creaturely character. He asserts that Scripture is truth with a small "t," that it offers a series of faithful witnesses to the Truth (Christ), and that "the Word of God is always an *act* which God performs or an *event* in which God has spoken" (p. 270).

Peter Enns rejects the Chicago Statement altogether, citing a series of purported counterexamples of parallel texts which appear to be contradictory. He proposes instead an "incarnational" view of inspiration. His view of Scripture does not really fit within an evangelical framework. Enns is not a member of the Evangelical Theological Society

since his views are incompatible with inerrancy, and complaints from evangelicals about his book *Incarnation and Inspiration* led to Enns' dismissal from Westminster Theological Seminary. Reading Enns' article in this book reveals why his views are seen as problematic by many evangelicals.

The editors wisely and helpfully asked the contributors to describe their position not only on inerrancy conceptually, but to illustrate their view with reference to three key Scripture texts that are potentially problematic for inerrancy – the conquest of the city of Jericho in Joshua 6 (challenged by some archeological evidence), the apparent discrepancies in details between the two accounts of Saul's conversion in Acts 9 and 22, and the apparent conflict between the genocide ordered by God in Deuteronomy 20 and Jesus' principle of love in Matthew 5. These three case studies provided excellent examples for each contributor to flesh out his perspective on inerrancy in actually interpreting a text.

In a world that appears to be post conservative, post evangelical, and post Christian, a new generation of evangelicals appear to embrace looser definitions of biblical inspiration and authority than the classical definition of inerrancy. The articles and scholarly interactions in *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy* provides a rich resource for thinking more carefully through one's view on this crucial doctrine. In this reader's opinion, Al Mohler defended the classical view of inerrancy effectively, but his voice is outnumbered by opposing voices in this work. Despite this lack of balance, the work is a valuable contribution. Highly recommended.

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***The Text of Galatians and Its History*. By Stephen C. Carlson. WUNT II/385. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015. xiv + 308 pp. $128.00, Paperback. ISBN 978-3-16-153323-5.**

This is Stephen Carlson's slightly revised 2012 dissertation completed at Duke University on New Testament text criticism methodology, using the text of Galatians as a test case. Essentially, Carlson posits for a new approach in New Testament text criticism (NT TC), proposing a hybrid model of stemmatics and eclecticism, while accounting for contamination, a step Lachmann's stemmatics was unable to overcome due to the cross fertilization of the massive NT evidence. Carlson accomplishes his goal by borrowing a method known as "cladistics," a technique first used by computational biologists for classifying organisms according to their historical pedigree using algorithms and applying the principle of "parsimony" (Occam's razor). Of course, Carlson's background in computer engineering places him in a unique position for this type of research.

With the *Editio Critica Maior* still in progress employing Gerd Mink's Coherence Based Genealogical Method (CBGM), one wonders if the field needs still another TC methodology? Carlson is of the opinion that our current TC models are all different in their approach of presenting a history of the text. Furthermore, Carlson believes the field needs a model that can actually infer a history of the text rather than impose one *a priori* that largely goes undiscussed, yet broadly shared. Carlson admits that the CBGM and its suggestion of the *initial text* rather than the *original* is probably the most rigorous yet, as far as allowing for both contamination and internal evidence based on textual coherence. According to Carlson, while it remains true that Mink attempts to provide a solution for some of the circular reasoning of contemporary eclecticism and has pushed the field beyond the Hortian eclectic model of text-types, CBGM's textual flow diagrams are too abstract and do not conform to the textual state of any lost exemplar. Consequently, they are not useful for the customer who is interested in reconstructing the history of the text.

Also, Carlson's investigation takes up the concerns voiced by Epp and Ehrman more than twenty years ago now and, with these in tow, Carlson attempts to push the field ahead. In light of now defining NT TC in terms of a two-step process involving textual production and

transmission, this dissertation takes its point of departure from the work of a French text critic Dom Froger, who found a way to escape the circular reasoning between the reconstruction of a text and the reconstruction of the history of the text. Froger did this by proposing two stages: The first stage determines the shape and linkage pattern of the stemma, but not its orientation (particular starting point). The second stage orients the stemma based on internal evidence. In sum then, Carlson accounts for the claims made by Epp and Ehrman, utilizes Froger's approach to stemmatics, and seeks to advance the discussion by proposing a stemmatic-eclectic methodology. Where Carlson precisely makes his contribution in the NT TC field is by making a way for contamination to be factored into his computer-implemented algorithm. At the end of chapter four, Carlson's research produces a critical text of Galatians, which is suited for both customers in the TC enterprise, those interested in an authorial text and those interested in this historically-transmitted text.

In chapter one, Carlson identifies the gap, namely that the field needs a model that infers a history of the text. To establish the necessity of his research and the potential for its effectiveness, Carlson illustrates a possible textual transmission scenario that helps the reader to visualize, not to mention exploit some of the complexities surrounding ancient book publication and textual transmission. From here, Carlson evaluates the current models, choosing stemmatics (which represents the history of the text in the form of a stemma), yet supplementing it in a separate stage through the route of eclecticism (which produces a serviceable authorial text). Using this hybrid model that captures the attention of both customers, Carlson proposes to control the vexing problem of contamination at both stages.

In chapter two, Carlson describes the first stage of his methodology, namely how he uses *cladistics* to produce an unoriented stemma, representing the relative genealogical relationships of the witnesses, yet without identifying the base of the stemma. Carlson's own computer program (6548 lines of code) is feasible for step one because no subjective judgments need to be made as to the priority or direction of textual changes. Using a simplified version of cladistics done by hand with four witnesses over 34 variation units, Carlson effectively demonstrates on a small scale how his computer implemented algorithm, after running for about two weeks, was able to determine the best

unoriented stemma from his major collation project of 92 textual witnesses over 1,624 variation units.

In chapter three, Carlson explains step two of his methodology by orienting the stemma from his cladistics procedure. He first identifies the location on the large, unoriented stemma that is provisionally the most important targeted area for constructing his critical text of Galatians. Once this location is determined, Carlson examines 36 textual variants along the course of the inner branches, using internal evidence as the means towards orientation. Here, Carlson draws upon the work of Stephen Levinsohn and functional, descriptive linguistics with particular consideration on the Greek article, word order, and conjunctions. The finished product is an oriented stemma of Galatians, resulting in two basic divisions in the history of the text: the Western branch and P46-B group and the Eastern Branch with 01 and 33 as its supporters.

In chapter four, Carlson identifies and examines 13 variation units where the earliest witnesses are evenly split and not as clear in their distribution between the two divisions. If chapter three was the *recensio* stage, chapter four is the *examinatio* stage, where the potential for primitive error may require conjecture, again based on internal evidence. After this step is complete, Carlson includes his critical text of Galatians.

In chapter five, Carlson traces the history of the text, concentrating on the internal questions regarding the Western branch and the rise of the Byzantine text within the Eastern branch. With the internal questions pertaining to the origins of the various readings and what they might infer about the readers/copiers of the text, Carlson is particularly curious about potential theological conclusions based on over 120 textual changes within these two branches. (Some may recognize that Carlson's conclusion hearkens back to Parker's 1997 conclusion regarding scribal behavior, namely that the scribes were copying "living texts" which reflected their environment.)

In chapter six, Carlson concludes his study. He traces the history of the text by concentrating on the external questions related to how the manuscripts originated and their relationships with one another. He gives special attention to comparing and contrasting Carlson's findings against those of Zuntz and Hort. Finally, while Carlson's critical text of Galatians differs from the Nestle-Aland critical text in twelve places, there are three places that might be considered historically and theologically significant (for instance, the vexing issue at Gal. 2:12). This

conclusion further suggests that there may be room for improvement in some other writings of Paul, not to mention the rest of the NT.

After reading this monograph, two weaknesses are worth noting. First, Carlson never comments (not even in a footnote!) as to how his understanding of Gal 2:12 involving Paul and Peter at Antioch would be affected if Galatians is dated prior to the Jerusalem Council. This omission takes away from Carlson's conclusion in chapter six regarding this historically-substantial variant. Second, Carlson's illustrative textual transmission scenario, while challenging the assumptions of the different approaches to NT TC, may be guilty of an oversight. Drawing off the work of E. Randolph Richards, not once does Carlson consider how expensive these manuscripts may be, a detail that Richards does not fail to highlight.

These somewhat minor quibbles are not meant to take away from Carlson's research. His thesis is clear from the beginning and he stays on track. His pictures and tables are helpful, especially providing relief when the reader is bogged down in the added metalanguage of cladistics. Carlson's simplified example of cladistics done by hand in chapter two provides some hope for the reader, who does not have a background in computer programming. In this reviewer's opinion, Carlson pushes the reader, especially in chapter one, to examine one's assumptions when establishing the text of the NT. Lastly, regardless of whether cladistics grabs the attention of the field, the notion of using pragmatic linguistics for making decisions based on internal evidence may be an interesting development in the field of NT TC. Time will tell.

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***Awakening the Evangelical Mind*: *An Intellectual History of the Neo-Evangelical Movement*. By Owen D. Strachan. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015. 240 pp., $24.99. Hardback. ISBN-13: 978-0310520795.**

Owen D. Strachan's splendid book emphasizes significant intellectual developments in the conservative Christian movement. Focusing on the early part of a 40-year period (1940-1980), he explores the impact of Park Street Church's Harold Ockenga, the "Cambridge evangelical" scholars in the Boston area, and the mid-century intellectual surge at this time.

Based on research for his doctoral dissertation at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Strachan sketches the book's aims. He will utilize those sources that identify and explain this intellectual growth within the evangelical movement in the post-war period. In so doing, he uncovers key bibliographic materials, collections of relevant papers and letters, and pertinent discussions that shed light on this subject

He highlights the vastly understudied and underappreciated impact of these scholar-leaders, their accomplishments, and associated institutions. This involves a close look at some of the key personalities that developed a thoughtful approach to meet secular challenges to the Christian faith.

Primary attention of the volume begins with a consideration of Harold J. Ockenga. After graduation from Taylor University, Ockenga did his theological training at Westminster Theological Seminary. Here, a long and formative relationship was begun with J. Gresham Machen, president, competent New Testament scholar, and consequent mentor.

Ockenga was, for a very short time, assistant pastor at First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh under Clarence Macartney. Soon after, he was appointed pastor of Point Breeze Presbyterian Church, east of the downtown area. While in the city, Ockenga took graduate classes at the University of Pittsburgh, resulting in both an M.A. and Ph.D. in philosophy. A call to be pastor of Boston's historic Park Street Church would noticeably change his life-direction and ministry.

At Park Street, he would distinguish himself by first-rate expository preaching, by building and then expanding a strong missions outreach, strengthening Christian education, and enlarging other programs. Of special interest in this connection, Ockenga convened

three scholars' conferences (1944, 1945, & 1947) to discuss and practice robust theological scholarship. With Terrelle Crum, he formed an evening Bible school and Christian training center in Boston. Strachan observes that, as pastor of prestigious Park Street Church, Ockenga was well-situated to be a leader of a revitalized intellectual movement.

With Charles E. Fuller, he was later instrumental in forming Fuller Theological Seminary in California, and took on the role of its first president for several years, however *in absentia,* Upon his retirement from Park Street Church, Ockenga was appointed president of Gordon College, and also the merged Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (1970-1979).

During the mid-century decades, a number of evangelical scholars would obtain their advanced degrees from universities in the greater Boston area. At Harvard, the list of names include Gleason L. Archer, Harold O. J. Brown, Edward J. Camell, Terrelle B. Crum, Elizabeth Dole, James Leo Garrett, John H. Gerstner, Owen Gingerich, Burton Goddard, J. Harold Greenlee, Paul K. Jewett, Kenneth S. Kantzer, Harold B. Kuhn, George E. Ladd, Harold Lindsell, Paul L. Maier, Roger Nicole, William Childs Robinson, Samuel Schultz, Timothy L. Smith, Merrill C. Tenney, Bruce K. Waltke, and Nicholas Wolterstorff.

Boston University conferred advance degrees on Edward J. Carnell, Carl F. H. Henry, and Warren C. Young. Among the scholars at nearby Brandeis University were John B. Graybill, Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., John N. Oswalt, and Edwin M. Yamauchi.

Many of these young graduate students attended Park Street Church and benefited from the outstanding expository preaching and other opportunities. Ockenga took a personal interest in them, their academic projects, and career interests. The interactions among them, Strachan explains, would include strategizing for the future, discussing projects to publish, classes to teach, and subjects to master.

The connection between Ockenga and these conservative scholars, Strachan indicates, was informal and advisory. They commonly encouraged one another, Strachan notes, both in terms of supporting their convictions and in finishing the demanding tasks they had embarked on. Over time, they would participate in a remarkable course of writing, teaching, and institution-building.

One of these scholars who would profit positively from this situation was Edward J. Carnell. Carnell had studied at Wheaton under

the instruction of Gordon H. Clark. Like Ockenga, he did his theological work at Westminster Theological Seminary. He followed that with a move to Boston where he earned both a Th.D. in theology at Harvard and a Ph.D. in philosophy at Boston University. After gaining some teaching experience at Gordon College, he was selected by Ockenga to join the faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary in its second year of operation.

His numerous scholarly productions established him as one of the brilliant Christian apologists and analysts of the 20th century. Especially important are his titles *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics* and *Christian Commitment*. Pledged to full scriptural authority, Camell typified the very exceptional, intellectual talents of these conservative graduate students who spent time in Boston.

Another important figure targeted in Strachan's treatment is Carl F. H. Henry. When a young newspaper editor of the *Smithtown Star* on Long Island, Henry was converted to Christ. He earned his undergraduate degree at Wheaton, then stayed on to obtain an M.A. Next, he earned the Th.D. at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, and remained there to join their faculty for a time. He then received a Ph.D. in philosophy at Boston University where he developed a friendship with Carnell. Much later on, he did additional study at Cambridge University and Edinburgh University.

Eventually, both Henry and Camell would be invited to join the faculty of the newly-founded Fuller Seminary on the West Coast. Here, Henry taught courses in ethics and theology. While in California, he arranged a series of highly successful annual Easter sunrise services in the Rose Bowl and served as chairman of the organizing committee.

In 1956, Henry was appointed as the founding editor of *Christianity Today*, a magazine designed to articulate historic Christianity and its current relevance. He would hold this cutting-edge position for 12 years. The articles for *Christianity Today*—by intended editorial policy--provided material aimed at both clergy and thoughtful lay persons. The magazine competently dealt with a broad range of subjects (doctrinal, historical, apologetics, current moral issues, etc.), but in non-technical language. The quality of contributed content and breadth of credentialed writers were simply phenomenal, until editorial policy changes in the early 1980's.

After leaving *Christianity Today*, he became a visiting professor at Eastern Baptist Seminary in Philadelphia (1969-1973). Later, World

Vision appointed Henry as Lecturer-at-Large (1974-1986). He would also teach for awhile at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in suburban Chicago.

In all, Henry authored or edited some 35 or more books. Among these, special mention should be made of his Riley Memorial Lecture on *The Drift of Western Thought*, his definitive *Christian Personal Ethics*, and his monumental 6-volume *God, Revelation, and Authority*. Key, too, was his editorship of a number of symposium volumes (1957-1978) by collaborating scholars on major theological themes.

While Henry's vision of a new, academically top-rated Christian university never materialized, he did form the Institute for Advanced Christian Studies. This organization functioned for 35 years (1967-2002). It coordinated the efforts of a group of leading scholars many of whom held positions with noted secular universities. They sponsored numerous research projects, conducted scholarly conferences, and produced a series of top-notch volumes on key topics for a variety of academic disciplines.

Henry was recognized as a leading spokesman for and major contributor to vibrant, dynamic evangelical thought. This points to the pivotal function he played in encouraging extensive cooperative, scholarly efforts among a wide variety of conservative specialists across denominational lines. As one biographer suggested, Henry knew everyone, traveled everyplace, spoke everywhere, and wrote about almost everything theological. His own personal output in terms of books, articles, and reviews was staggering.

Some closing comments may be useful. First, in this reviewer's personal opinion, Ockenga's suggestion of the label "neo-evangelical" for this new emphasis was unfortunate. For one thing, it called for too sharp a contrast with previous periods—the biblically-oriented, doctrinally-focused, and missions-minded activity of believers in the 1920's and 1930's; the earlier evangelical experience in England, Scotland, and Wales; the Reformation itself; and even the movement's very roots in New Testament expression. Strachan reminds us, nevertheless, that Ockenga's leadership role in the intellectual surge of this period was extensive, even enormous.

Secondly, Strachan's excellent research on this period prompts us to think about the future of the evangelical movement. Today, of course, 21st-century issues raise a number of challenging questions

about the immediate future of evangelical intellectual viability. Will the exploding costs of higher education, for example, discourage more students from selecting first-rate learning options at notable locations like the greater Boston area?

On the local congregational level, will seeker-sensitive meddling in worship practices replace or water-down the strong impact that expository preaching (exemplified by Ockenga) makes on biblical literacy? Recognizing a tendency for institutions to sometimes drift toward heresy, Strachan himself asks, "Can Christian colleges and universities not only tender outstanding instruction and establish themselves as centers of influence but also remain distinctively Christian?"

Next, we fully concur in Strachan's assessment that Ockenga and these Boston-based scholars did indeed stage a compelling increase in intellectual and theologically robust thought-life rooted in biblically conservative truth. These conservative Christians, Strachan recognizes, had reentered the arena of academic disputation and were serious about scholarship, the life of the mind and the promotion of biblical faith. They "published widely, established and contributed to academic societies and journals ... encouraged one another in scholarship ... dared to think, strategize, fundraise, and tirelessly promote the idea of a new intellectual program." Together with parallel achievements in the Chicago/Wheaton region, metropolitan Philadelphia and elsewhere, these developments in the Boston area described by Strachan were significant in advancing the intellectual underpinning of the evangelical movement during this time. Finally, we are grateful to Strachan for his contribution of this very readable and interesting account. We rejoice, along with Strachan, in the enrichment of mind that Ockenga and the Boston-trained scholars provided, in the power of the gospel they clearly supported, and in their advancement of the cause of Christ.

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***Don't Fire Your Church Members: The Case for Congregationalism*. By Jonathan Leeman. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016. 200 pp. $24.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-1-4336-8623-8.**

The western Christian in the 21st century may be startled by the differences between his perception of an ideal church, and the biblical standard for an ideal church. On the topic of polity in particular, this shock is utilized to make a biblical defense of a strong viewpoint that the ultimate authority in the Church (under Jesus Christ as supreme head) lies with the local congregation. Leeman speaks directly to a church elder on the balance of authority held by the elders and by the whole congregation, borrowing examples from the actual model set by Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.

Leeman's defense intersperses oft-obscured truth and quirky stories to augment his basic argument. First, various governmental systems are defined and categorized. Establishing biblically why churches should care about polity, he then examines through Adam, Abraham, Israel, and Christ the task for which God's appointed are charged. Extending this charge through Peter to the church, the charge is broadly separated into three tenets of responsible watchcare over God's kingdom: "who," "what," and "how." The author then presents a New Testament foundation upon which the church (but not her elders as isolates) oversees the "who" and "what," while the elders are tasked with "how" by equipping the believers, managing minutiae, and setting the pace for the church.

The author is refreshingly non-partisan in his language, favoring words and definitions that take no clear sides in terms of denomination or polity fine points, while keeping the congregationalist view intact. This neutrality, along with precise explanations and a passionate conversational tone, opens the gates for clear expression of the congregational view presented. He urges unapologetically a need for the church to take responsibility for clearly defining lines of church discipline, membership guidelines, meeting together, member care, elder roles, and major decisions. Thorny and ambiguous issues also find their place within the larger text and system, so that the reader need not fear to address points on which the Bible lacks normative force or clarity.

Not sidestepping the need to *exclude* competing idealogies in order to define what to *include*, the author systematically highlights errors and misinterpretations of various denominations; but then turns table on the conceptions held by evangelical or reformed churches to show that all need grace and correction in fulfilling God's master plan for His church. The author himself extends this grace through the writing by working from the point of "what is" to "what should be" with a clear, incremental goal in view, taking aback the reader where necessary. Throughout the book, dialogue raises points that make the Christian, and particularly the pastor/elder/deacon, consider his own views critically, ultimately prostrating them before the word of God in order to assist the church leader to develop steps to empower the assembled believers.

As rightly as Leeman charges the Christian to account for his beliefs on church polity, he leaves a distracting structural gap in the text. Brief anticipatory statements refer with unsettling frequency to upcoming topics of discussion (e.g. "...as we will consider in chapter 4," (53)) perhaps dozens of times in the early pages of the volume. Retrospective summary statements are less, but still somewhat excessively, numerous in the twilight pages. In his limited space, the author leaves unaddressed many of the counter-arguments that could be raised about congregational views, so that the overall presentation becomes one-sided, despite efforts to the contrary. The closest direct address to the competing view of elder-rule comes as a scriptural dare where, having examined biblical precedent for authority exercised at the level of the whole church, the author writes: "My challenge for anyone holding to some form of elder rule would be to find a set of texts demonstrating elder rule comparable to these." (109).

Furthermore, some of the issues which he claims to seek to address, such as the possibility of multi-site churches and denominational or associational connections between churches, get barely a passing notice and few clear words from the author. Admittedly, "denomination" is not among the main points or purposes of this discourse, and sufficient literature abounds on the topic without need of elaboration here, but the discourse leaves more questions than answers when it comes to integrating congregational churches into like-minded denominations. As to multi-site churches, a few paragraphs in the section defining government structures consider the possibility, but

besides a brief statement that they inherently do not uphold congregationalism, nothing clear is spoken for or against the concept.

Although best handled in context of the Bible, some competing views, and good hermeneutical principles, *Don't Fire Your Church Members* is a remarkable and theologically sound resource for the pastor or church planter to start the explorative journey to discover how God has intended and deputized the functions of His church. In bold strokes, Jonathan Leeman has filled the gaping niche in providing biblical exposition of congregational church polity. May congregations at large realize the biblical weight of these issues and take steps to define and further execute their roles in the Almighty's kingdom!

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