Editorial

With this issue, the *Journal of Grace Theology* enters its fourth year of publication. The previous six issues contained forty-one articles, numerous book reviews, and approximately 684 pages. The original *Journal* produced about half as many pages in their four year run in the mid-1960s. I continue to hear encouraging comments about the *Journal* and look forward to many more volumes in the future.

Introductory editorial comments in these sorts of publications tend concern the health of the journal. In the case of the *JGT*, there is always a need for additional subscriptions to support the printing and mailing expenses. If you have subscribed in the past and allowed the subscription to lapse, I would appreciate your renewal. A few generous people have given gifts to the GGF to help with the production of the *Journal*; these are always appreciated.

With respect to content, I have attempted to be more proactive as an editor, going beyond a generic encouragement for articles and book reviews. The result of effort is a fine collection of articles for this issue and several promised articles for the Fall 2017 issue (due in November). The present issue puts the *JGT* back on schedule after falling behind last year.

I want to encourage pastors to consider sharing what they are doing in their teaching and pulpit ministry. Each issue of the *JGT* has included a few shorter articles on a particular text or a theological observation. For many, writing a short book review from the perspective of a pastor or teacher in a local church is an important contribution and is always appreciated by others in the ministry.

In keeping with the original mandate for this publication, this issue of *JGT* contains a variety of articles on biblical, theological, and pastoral themes. Dale DeWitt continues his series on salvation in the Old Testament with an article on the Psalms. He observes "Exodus salvation verbs and their nouns appear in the Psalms about 240 times" and "at least fifteen Psalms have recognizable allusions to the Exodus." By sampling some of this data, DeWitt concludes "Following the language of the old Exodus and Davidic covenant, Psalms reveals the coming salvation of Israel, the nations, and individual persons within both—the final revelation of God's own righteousness and forgiveness of sins through the promised Savior-King."

Pastor Joe Johnson contributes a study on Hebrews 12:18-24. In these intriguing verses near the end of Hebrews, the "author argues for his audience to loosen their grasp of the necessity of the temple and realize they have come to a new,

better place." Although this message originally was intended for Jewish Christians who struggled with how Temple ritual relates to their new lives in Christ, there are pastoral implications for Christians who look for security in something other than the finished work of Jesus on the Cross.

Kyle Vegh offers a short study on the character of Thomas on the Gospel of John. Most Christians think of this apostle as "doubting Thomas," but Thomas is far more than a model of doubt or an example of hardheadedness. As Vegh points out, the words of Thomas in John 20:28 are the "highest praises of Jesus" in John.

There are two articles on worship in this issue of the *Journal*. First, longtime worship professor at Grace Bible College Kayleen Bobbitt offers a "Pauline Definition of Worship" focusing on Romans 12:1-2 and several examples from Paul's letters to conclude worship is "a daily stance of self-surrender to God and self-giving service to others through incarnational living for Christ." Mark Sooy's article on worship as a sub-theme in Romans also picks up on Romans 12, suggesting worship "intertwines with the realities of our daily lives." Sooy

Scott Shaw examines the idea of Sabbath as a practice in the contemporary church. Although most Evangelical Christians do not practice a literal Sabbath, Shaw suggests there are some principles in the Sabbath commands which may be useful for worship and spiritual discipline today.

Dawn Rodgers-DeFouw offers some insights into pastoral counselling. Surveying several approaches to counselling, she suggests "an eclectic theory of counselling" which focuses on relationships. She concludes the "pastoral counselor who recognizes the intrinsic value of the client in God's eyes will be in a good position to establish a therapeutic alliance based on love and compassion for the client as one of God's children."

Finally, the book reviews in this issue include several recent publications on Paul and his letters. Hopefully these reviews will help busy pastors and teachers to know what is being said about Paul in contemporary scholarship. Once again, thank you for your support of the *Journal*, I look forward to our future discussions in the *Journal of Grace Theology*.

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SALVATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:

The Psalms

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The thesis of this and two earlier articles in this *Journal*[1] is that Old Testament salvation centers in Israel's Exodus from Egypt. The Exodus salvation verbs and their nouns appear in the Psalms about 240 times in aggregate; their frequency drew Luther to the Psalms. A related theme is the quantity of messianic thoughts which also appear in Psalms.[2] This mediator-salvation combination furnished Luther with a treasury of salvation concepts as he struggled with sin and guilt before God. This article examines these concepts in the Psalms and seeks to determine how the Exodus salvation tradition and its language developed in this book.

Salvation Verbs in the Exodus and Other Psalms

At least fifteen Psalms refer to the Exodus from Egypt (Exod 1-15); in these Psalms the seven Exodus salvation terms are used at least once per Psalm. Some are brief allusions; several are fuller with varying details. Exodus-Kings' preference for the basic spatial-narrative terms (*`alah* go up; *yatza'* go out) changes in the Psalms where social terms prevail. *Yasha`*

[1]D. DeWitt, "Salvation in the Old Testament: An Essay on Where to Begin," *Journal of Grace Theology* 2 (2015): 3-18; "Salvation in the Old Testament: The Exodus in Israel's History," *Journal of Grace Theology* 3.2 (2016): 19-33.

[2]In the nineteenth century, F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms* (3 vols; trans F. Bolton; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1955), pp. 64-78, offered a brief introductory essay on the messianic spirit of the Psalms; see also C. R. Smith, *The Bible Doctrine of Salvation* (London: Epworth, 1941) and more recently, B. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 888-896.

(save) is favored, while *natzal*, (snatch, rescue), *padah* (ransom, deliver), *qanah* (acquire, obtain), and *ga'al* (redeem) also appear. A few other terms are added in other Psalms: *palat* (save, deliver, bring to safety, escape), *malat* (save, deliver, escape), *halatz* (save, pull out, deliver), and *`azar* (help, support, come to the aid of). Verbs for the Exodus as a salvation event in Psalms suggest a stabilized and even expanding verbal tradition of the salvation event in Israel's history. Salvation appears to continue its progressive revelation in Psalms—increased use of earlier Exodus salvation terms, enlarged deliverance-rescue vocabulary, and more detail about a personal saving relationship with God.[3]

The same terms spread out in still other Psalms to cover further aspects of salvation; the terms tend to be used for national or personal *physical* escapes from danger or death and evil intentions of hostile enemies, whether individuals or groups within Israel (Saul against David, for example), or hostile foreign powers intent on conquest, similarly to *yasha`* (save, saved) in Judges. The verb *`alah* (go up) is used about twenty-two times in Psalms, the verb *yatza'* (go out) thirty-four times. This quantity of uses for and beyond Exodus allusions is similar to the variety of uses for these verbs in the Pentateuch. Unlike the Pentateuchal Exodus scenes, where it is used sparsely, *yasha`* (save) and its two nouns *yeshu`a* (fem) and *yeisha`* (masc) together far outnumber other salvation terms in the Psalms, appearing in aggregate over 115 times. This verb in its Greek equivalent became by far the most frequent salvation term in the New Testament.

Beside the two narrative verbs *`alah* (go up) and *yatza'* (go out), the remaining social salvation verbs appear in Psalms as follows. *Ga'al* (redeem) occurs eleven times in Psalms including five uses in Exodus Psalms; n*atzal* is used forty-four times in Psalms, only two of which are in Exodus Psalms; *padah* occurs in Psalms twelve times with only one use in Exodus Psalms, while *qanah* occurs only three times in the Psalms, two of which are in Exodus Psalms. These unbalanced variations discourage generalizations about usage frequency. However, it seems fair to say the frequency of the *yasha`* group involves an enlargement of salvation thoughts, and

[3]Cf. J. Barr, "An Aspect of Salvation in the Old Testament, *in Man and his Salvation* (ed. E. J.; Sharpe and J. R. Hinneli; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1973), 48-49; for Barr the Old Testament's view is non-evolutionary; the current study prefers to speak of "progressive revelation."

marks a significant step in the unfolding revelation of salvation toward its enlargement and deepening in the New Testament.[4] Without discounting the less frequent Exodus salvation verbs in the Psalms (the nouns of which are rare to non-existent), this article will concentrate mainly on the *yasha`* group, since its usage is so prolific in the book.

The Exodus and Davidic Psalms

From the general regularity of Exodus salvation allusions in the Pentateuch and Deuteronomic History (Josh-Kings), one might expect their continued appearance in the David texts of Samuel; but although appearing in 1 Samuel 1-15, Exodus allusions do not appear in the lonh Saul-David conflict series of I Samuel 16-31. An incautious conclusion might suggest the story line simply lost sight of the Exodus salvation event in the context of the dramatic scenes of Saul and David's tangles.[5] And yet David's knowledge of the Exodus salvation and his faith in Yahweh do appear in *2 Samuel*.

David cited the Exodus salvation of Israel twice in his prayer of 2 Samuel 7 after he was promised an eternal king and kingdom (2 Sam 7:12-14, 20-24). This striking and beautiful prayer is a thanksgiving to Yahweh for the Exodus salvation which appears twice in the latter three verses. The thought includes a confession of Yahweh reminiscent of Israel's faith in Exodus 14:30-15:18 and Deuteronomy 26:1-12. 2 Samuel 7:20-24 reads:

> How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is none like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears. And who is like your people Israel—the one nation on earth that God went out to *redeem* as a people for himself and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before your people

[4]Though F. Delitzsch's three-volume work on the Psalms (see note 1 above) is approaching one-hundred and sixty years of age, his essay, "Theological Preliminary Considerations" in 1: 64-78, is still a valuable overview of the limited revelation of salvation in the Psalms and the most important ways in which the Psalms belong to the process of progressing Old Testament revelation. Delitzsch took note appropriately of the typological nature of the Old Testament revelation of salvation.

[5]The absence of any mention of the Exodus event in 1 Samuel 16-31 may derive from the sources of 1 Samuel's David stories, especially the narrative now usually called after L. Rost's study, "The History of David's Rise." For discussion see P. K. McCarter, *The Anchor Bible: 1 Samuel* (Garden City N.Y.: Doubleday, 1980), 14-30.

> whom you *redeemed* from Egypt. You have established your people Israel as your very own forever, and you, O LORD, have become their God.

This praise-confession includes astonishing recalls of parallel Pentateuch passages: (a) Yahweh's *embrace and rescue of Israel*; (b) a confession which the current Israel, including *David himself*, *had heard with their own ears about Yahweh and his saving acts* (2 Sam 7:22); (c) the abiding currency of authoritative oral traditions still alive in at least certain Israelite clans; (d) the singularity of *Israel's* relation with Yahweh as his very own forever (7:24); (e); the confession of *signs and wonders* in the Exodus era (7:23); and (f) the extension of Yahweh's saving acts in *driving out the Canaanite nations* before Israel.[6]

2. More than fourteen Psalms, among which at least one is ascribed specifically to David (Ps 68:7-10), include allusions to the Exodus salvation as a *cosmic event*—accompanied by earthquake and storm for example (68:7-10), with mentions of Sinai and settlement in the land. Other Psalms in this group, some un-ascribed, and several ascribed to the Davidic musician, Asaph, contain lyric songs of the Exodus salvation also set in the context of miraculous cosmic events and powers (74:12-15; 135:5-12), and sometimes referring to the watery pair[7]—Red Sea and Jordan River (114:1-8). Another example of the Exodus salvation described as an overwhelming cosmic event is the Asaphic Psalm 77:14-20:

> You are the God who performs miracles;
> you display your power among the peoples.
> With your mighty arm you redeemed your people,
> the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.
> The waters saw you, O God, the waters saw you and writhed;
> the very depths were convulsed.
> The clouds poured down water, the skies resounded with thunder;

[6]F. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 91-111; also *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1998), p. 44. This terminology is Cross' but is based on comparison with certain epic themes related to similar concepts in Canaanite cosmic-mythical literature recovered from clay tablets recovered at Ugarit in Syria. The biblical epic of Israel, however, is historical.

[7]Cross, *Hebrew Epic*, pp. 115, 119; 138, 140 also Cross, *From Epic to Canon*, 44. This terminology is Cross' but based on comparison with epic themes related to similar concepts in Canaanite cosmic myths.

your arrows flashed back and forth.
Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind,
your lightening lit up the world;
the earth trembled and quaked.
Your path led through the sea, your way through the mighty waters,
though your footprints were not seen.
You led your people like a flock
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

3. Several Exodus salvation Psalms are ascribed to Asaph, David's prophetic chief musician. In this secondary sense they are Davidic in thought and spirit.[8] The following two examples will illustrate. The first sees Israel in its departure from Egypt and arrival in Canaan as a transplanted *cosmic vine*. The second is more prosaic, describing Israel in Egypt as a captive, oppressed stranger and misfit (80:8-11).

You brought a vine out of Egypt;
you drove out the nations and planted it.
You cleared the ground for it,
and it took root and filled the land.
The mountains were covered with its shade,
the mighty cedars with its branches.
It sent out its boughs to the Sea,
its shoots as far as the River.

And in Psalm 81:5-7, 10:

[God] established the New Moon as a statute for Joseph
when he went out against Egypt,
where we heard a language we did not understand.
He says, 'I removed (*sur*, clear away, get rid of) the burden from their shoulders;
their hands were *set free* (*'abar*, get rid of, do away with)
from the basket.
In your distress you called and I *rescued* (*natzal*, save. rescue) you,

[8]Asa himself (2 Chron 29:30) and a goodly number of his descendants (1 Chron 25:1-2) are said to have possessed the gift of prophecy as temple singers. This partly explains how these Asaphic Psalms reached canonical status. Cf. also 2 Chronicles 20:14-23. But their unity with David also contributed to their authority. The Chronicler believed several people surrounding David had the gift of prophecy.

I answered you out of a thundercloud;
I tested you at the waters of Meribah . . . .
I am the LORD your God,
who brought you up out of (*`alah*, go up) Egypt.[9]

Some Psalms mentioning the Exodus salvation are un-ascribed. Some are from a later time and thus beyond the Davidic realm, though Davidic thinking and language pervades most Psalms.

4. In his praise psalm of 2 Samuel 22:2b-7, the first stanza is devoted to what David calls his "salvation (22:1-4)." He does not explicitly refer to the Exodus, but three times uses forms of *yasha`*. Here David describes his own "salvation" from "violent men" and "enemies"—the dominant context of the verb in the Psalms. This does not yield the same substance and content as the New Testament's salvation; still, it is part of a network of common links and vocabulary around the idea of deliverance from physical death. The New Testament's emphasis is on salvation from *spiritual* death in this life and the final defeat of physical death at resurrection. "Going up" (*`alah*) may likewise be understood to suggest rising from a worse to better situation, the worse including slavery and other suffering, unnatural or pre-mature death, and new life, ultimately issuing in resurrection in the New Testament, although the Hebrew word does not refer to resurrection.

David also describes *his own experience of the Exodus "salvation"* with some of the same language used for cosmic powers as the Exodus salvation Psalms. 2 Samuel 22:7-14 reads:

In my distress I called to the LORD;
I called out to my God.
From his temple he heard my voice;
my cry came to his ears.
The earth trembled and quaked,
the foundations of the heavens shook;
they trembled because he was angry.
Smoke rose from his nostrils;

[9]Use of *`alah* in the last phrase, with direct allusion to Egypt, suggests the three preceding verbs used for the Exodus here are further allusions to the salvation ideas of release and removal. If so the text shows how poetical versions of such an event can evoke new verbalizations. Without *`alah* in the last clause, the suggested Exodus salvation vocabulary would be less clear. Redemption from slavery is a forceful image of salvation in the New Testament as well.

consuming fire came from his mouth,
burning coals blazed out of it.
He parted the heavens and came down;
dark clouds were under his feet.
He mounted the cherubim and flew;
he soared on the wings of the wind.
He made darkness his canopy around him—
the dark rain clouds of the sky
. Out of the brightness of his presence
bolts of lightning blazed forth.
The LORD thundered from heaven;
the voice of the Most High resounded.

This does not mean he is here describing the Exodus salvation per se. It does mean he was aware of Exodus' cosmic language and used it for his own personal deliverance which he attributes entirely to Yahweh as though it is the same kind of event as the Exodus—the Exodus salvation within him personally. These pointers suggest David was aware of the Exodus salvation from an early time in his life. Of this oral tradition he says, significantly (in his prayer after the covenant promises of 2 Samuel 7) about the God of the Exodus and Israel, "as we have heard with our own ears." Passing the Exodus salvation story from generation to generation is also the subject of Psalm 78:2-4.

I will open my mouth in parables,
I will utter things hidden from of old—
things we have heard and known,
things our fathers have told us.
We will not hide them from our children;
we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the
LORD,
his power, and the wonders he has done.

Reference to the wonders recalls the Exodus Psalms' allusions to miracles at the time of the Exodus—the plagues, the giving of the law, and food in the desert. Later in the Psalm more lines on the Exodus (78:42-52) and reception of the law are added (78:10, 56) effectively keeping the same Exodus-then-Law sequence as in the old narratives. Saving faith in the Old Testament is faith in God's promises, and in the Exodus event of grace and

its oral traditions.

5. How did the premier Psalmist's relationship with God originate? The Samuel narrative has several clues, and while they tell us something basic, the story really has no specific, detailed explanation of its origin. Three elements in the story point David as a believing Israelite before the action begins. (a) The LORD was looking at David's *heart*, not on his outward appearance (1 Sam16:7); David's *heart* was already prepared for God's choice of him to be king—a note indicating a prior relationship with Yahweh and consistent with the details of the prayer of 2 Samuel 7:22-24: the oral Exodus salvation tradition reached his family and was believed and embraced. (b) The future king was chosen by a prior divine *election* among Jesse's eight sons. Yahweh forcefully brought David into a functioning relationship with himself by the power of his (Yahweh's) choice. (c) At his anointing with oil by Samuel, "the *Spirit* of the LORD came upon David in power (1 Sam 16:13). These three elements suggest David's prior acceptance of the old salvation story for himself, as the oral tradition reached the goal of its proclamation at a time before any further divinely determined events actually occurred.

The Larger Sense of Salvation in the Psalms

All seven Exodus salvation verbs or related nouns are used at least once each for the Exodus salvation in the Exodus Psalms. This means the Psalmists continue the salvation language of the Pentateuch, both in Psalms specifically ascribed to David and in those ascribed to Asaph. However, the spirit of David and Asaph also pervades the non-ascribed Psalms since they breathe the same spirit of the Yahweh faith as the others. Because the Exodus salvation verbs in Psalms are used of both Israel and individual psalmists themselves, the implication is the same as the use of the verbs in the Pentateuch and Deuteronomic History (Josh-Kings)—it was Israel as a *nation inclusive of its individuals* that was "saved" in the Exodus salvation, not some individuals as opposed to other individuals; all Israel believed God and Moses (Exod 14:30-31).

The Verb yasha` in the Psalms

Since some salvation terms occur only once in the Exodus Psalms, the best general picture of salvation in the book will be gained by examining

the main ideas associated with *yasha`* through the whole book, i. e., beyond the Exodus Psalms themselves. Although the *yasha`* word-group in the Psalms as a whole far outpaces in frequency the other Exodus salvation terms, in the Exodus psalms alone *ga'al* (redeem) is slightly more frequent than *yasha`*. What then are the main interests attached to the *yasha`* group in Psalms generally, and does what it refers to undergo changes or expansions?

1. Of the roughly ninety uses of words using or related to the Hebrew root *yasha`* in Psalms, about forty-four or roughly half refer to *physical deliverance*, either past, present, or pending as matters of prayer; this is the dominant but not exclusive use of *yasha`* words in Psalms.[10]

2. Less frequently the root is used in prayers for the deliverance of certain persons and groups in Israel *from debilitating problems* of life. For example, psalmists pray for "salvation" from neighbors' lies (12:1-2), from poverty (14:7), from fear of malicious persons (28:9), from trouble in general (34:6), from depression or a broken heart (34:18), from hunger and thirst in the desert (78:22), from exile (in post-exilic Psalms, like 106:47), and for return of lost national territories (108:6). This usage modifies the *yasha`* group toward what might be called the "salvation" of persons from *disturbed social contexts* and even from *certain internal psychological or spiritual states or crises.*

3. Some Psalms speak of God saving *the righteous*, often in answer to prayers. Psalm 7, for example, is ascribed to David who pleads with God in 7:8, "Judge me O, LORD, according to my righteousness, according to my integrity . . . . My shield is God Most High, who saves (*yasha`*) the upright in heart." One of the longer pieces of poetry with such thoughts about the salvation of the righteous is David's psalm in 2 Samuel 22:21-25:

> The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness;
> According to the cleanness of my hand he has rewarded me.
> For I have kept the ways of the LORD;
> I have not done evil by turning from my God.

[10]Studies of salvation in the Old Testament note the dominance of the physical safety idea in the Psalms; cf. for example, C. R. Smith, *The Bible Doctrine of Salvation* (London: Epworth, 1941), 20, but Smith seems cautious about acknowledging the dominance of this sense; cf. also for a more forthright assessment, G. Fohrer, "*sozo*," *TDNT* 7:965-978.

All his laws are before me;
I have not turned away from his decrees.
I have been blameless before him
And have kept myself from sin.
The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness,
according to my cleanness in his sight.

No verb of salvation occurs here; but only a few lines later in the same Psalm he says,

. . . to the pure you show yourself pure,
but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd.
You save the humble, but your eyes are on the haughty
to bring them low.

The verb *yasha`* (save) is used after *natzal* (save, rescue, snatch) in 22:1 as a heading for the Psalm. These righteousness claims may on their face sound like "justification by works." But this reading overlooks the context of a psalmist already in a saving relationship with God by his faith in the God of the promises and the Exodus, a relationship he is already in with God (2 Sam 22:21b, though physical). Thus the "righteousness" invoked is like that of the New Testament Christian whose salvation by grace like the Exodus in the Old Testament expects good works as outcomes (Eph 2:9-10). A "salvation by the works of the law" thus cannot be drawn from such claims to righteousness except by cutting righteousness claims loose from the actual salvation event of the Exodus and the stream of memory, proclamation and faith flowing from it into a family like David's and into David himself.

4. Several Psalms use the term "salvation" in prayers for a future, messianic age restoration of Israel and the expansion of Israel's salvation to the nations. Included are Psalms 53:6; 67:2; 80:3-4, 7-8, 14-19; 89:26; 96:2-3, 10-13; 106:4; 118:19-25. Presumably, Israel's future salvation includes everything the prophets see in the future: restoration of Zion's fortunes (53:6; 80:3): making God's ways known to the nations (67:2-3); the LORD's return to Israel after the exile (80:14-19); proclamation of God's glory to the nations (96:2-3); ruling the world in righteousness (96:13); and Israel's projected success (118:25). Numerous parallels to these thoughts of salvation could be cited from both the earlier northern prophets and the earlier

and later prophets of Judah and the exile.

Sin, Righteousness and Forgiveness in the Psalms

Do any Psalm passages explicitly say salvation is from sin? At least six Psalms go further and associate salvation with the presence of righteousness or relief from sin in parallel with a term for salvation. The simplest text is Psalm 130:7-8:

> O Israel, put your hope in the LORD,
> for with the LORD is unfailing love
> and with him is full redemption.
> He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins

In these lines, (1) the Exodus vocabulary tradition appears in the salvation verb *padah* (ransom, redeem). (2) Instead of historical deliverance from Egypt or other physical oppressors and enemies, *redemption is from sin*. (3) This thought must have been enhanced by psalmists' consideration of the law's details, especially the prohibition on idols and other gods, the breach of which appears repeatedly in Psalms. (4) As often in Psalm, redemption is national as the thought of Israel's future restoration suggests. (5) Like the old Exodus, this redemption is an act of direct divine intervention but with release from sin as its objective.

Closely related to Psalm 130:7-8 are short texts in two other Psalms—98:2-3 and 40:9-10 which parallel *possession of God's righteousness* with salvation.

> Sing to the LORD a new song,
> for he has done marvelous things;
> his right hand and his holy arm
> have worked salvation for him.
> The LORD has made his salvation known
> and revealed his righteousness to the nations;
> He has remembered his love
> and his faithfulness to the house of Israel;
> all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God

Important details appear. (1) This is a song of praise for a completed ethnic expansion of salvation. (2) Salvation is represented by a form of *ya-*

sha`. (3) The nations have received salvation, suggesting fulfillment of the projected international blessings promised to Abraham (Gen 12:3b). The Psalm views this revelation from the standpoint of its accomplishment; the passage is at the border of a larger concept of salvation as a revelation of God's own righteousness tantamount to *salvation from sin*.[11] (4) Included in this Psalm is an unusual parallelism which speaks of a *revelation of God's righteousness*, in which salvation is from sin, and yet only implied by its opposite—righteousness. This development is paralleled in Isaiah 40-66, not as fulfilled and in operation, but prophesied to be meditated by a suffering and victorious Servant Messiah (Isa 52:7-53). This feature of Isaiah is also an enlargement of the Psalms of vicarious suffering which belong to the mediation of salvation.[12] Salvation from sin is emerging.

The other Psalm mentioned above is 40:9-10.

> I proclaim righteousness in the great assembly;
> I do not seal my lips, as you know, O LORD.
> I do not hide your righteousness in my heart;
> I speak of your faithfulness and salvation.
> I do not conceal your love and your truth from the great assembly.

This Psalm is ascribed to David; hence the Psalm sees the new sense of salvation as the proclamation of God's righteousness. Thus, in some way not altogether clear, the presence of God's own righteousness as salvation from sin was already known if not actually available in the Old Testament. At least one Psalm clearly relates *forgiveness or removal of sins* to the larger pattern of sin, righteousness and salvation—the incomparable Psalm 51, David's confession of his sin. The central lines are verses 12-14.

> Restore to me the joy of your salvation
> and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.
> Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
> and sinners will turn back to you.
> Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me,
> and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

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[11]Smith, *Bible Doctrine of Salvation*, returns over and over to the concept of righteousness as the farthest development of the salvation idea in the Old Testament since it here begins to be the repeated partner of "salvation" in parallel lines of Hebrew poetry, but not in full development until Isaiah 40-66.

[12]Similarly Smith, *Ibid.* 57-62.

This passage, along with its larger context in the Psalm, correlates several concepts. (1) Forms of *yasha`* are used in lines 1 and 5 above, and *natzal* once for "save me" in line 5. (2) David, recognizing that being saved from bloodguilt meant being kept from violent sin, is able to sing of God's righteousness ("your righteousness," lines 5-6 above). (3) God's righteousness is communicated to him as salvation from bloodguilt, and in the larger sense of the Old Testament, sets him in a judicially right relationship with God, presumably straightens both his attitudes and conduct Godward, and in consequence enables him to teach others God's ways. But the text does not explain how this actually happens—how and under what conditions. Finally, then, the matter is left unresolved and remains a plea to God or request David believes will be rewarded or answered, i.e., the ultimate resolution lies in the future (51:18-19). And yet, almost immediately after the Exodus and Sinai covenant the subject of forgiveness of the sins of an already "saved" and "in-covenant" people occurs (Exod 32:30-32). So some form or aspect of forgiveness was available.

This leads to two more Psalm passages on forgiveness of sins—Psalms 103:1-4 and 32:1-5.

> Praise the LORD, O my soul;
> all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
> Praise the LORD, O my soul,
> and forget not all his benefits.
> He forgives all my sins
> and heals all my diseases;
> he redeems my life from the pit
> and crowns me with love and compassion (103:1-4)

It is not obvious or clear that by "pit" he means Sheol or the grave; *shakhat* can mean an animal trap as well as the pit of death.[13] The text includes (1) "forgiveness" of sins, (2) use of the Exodus tradition's *ga'al* (redeem [into possession or family]) in parallel with forgiveness (*salakh*), and (3) the gift recognized as an expression of God's love and compassion. Psalm 32 has a passage covering the same ground:

[13]W. L. Holladay, *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1971), 367.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you
and did not cover up my iniquity.
I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD—
and you forgave the guilt of my sin (32:5). internally

While nothing is said in this Davidic psalm about receiving God's righteousness, there is a clear sense of absolution on David's part, since this is the consequence of his confession. Still, it must always be kept in mind that while from David's perspective he did receive "forgiveness (*kasha*, cover)," this is still not the full New Testament salvation which was only operational after Jesus' completion of the promised atonement as in Hebrews 9:15; 11:40 and Romans 3:25.[14]

Forgiveness Terms in Psalms

At least six terms sometimes translated "*forgiveness*" are used in Psalms, including some Psalms cited above, but they do not appear to establish a fully undergirded or resolved forgiveness; their meanings fall short of clarity about the extent of a completed forgiveness. The New Testament's view of an incomplete Old Testament salvation was perhaps encouraged by these terms in the Hebrew Bible. The verb *salakh* (Psa 103:3, "forgives") means "ready to forgive," "forgiving." Psalm 130:4 says "with you there is forgiveness"; but this is followed by thoughts of waiting and hope, concluding with "He himself will redeem (*padah*) Israel from all their sins (130:8)."

Three other uses of *salakh* occur in prayers about "forgiveness" which also imply waiting for fulfillment or resolution. The verb *nasa'* means "take away, lift off," and may express forgiveness, although the usual sense is lifting. Psalm 85:2 used *salakh* in parallel to "covered," and Psalm 99:5 says God is a forgiving God who nonetheless punished Israel (99:8). The verb *kaphar* means "appease," "make amends," or "ransom," "atone," or "cover" as in Psalms 65:4 and 65:3: (to God): "you atoned for our transgressions (cf 78:38; 79:9)," although these texts would be satisfied by

[14]E. Kasemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Trans. G. W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1980), 98. It may seem strange not to recognize the full New Testament sense here when the forgiveness language *seems* so clear and straightforward; but this is the nature of the Old Testament-New Testament progression of redemption.

translating "cover." Hebrew *kasah* also means "cover, keep hidden, conceal." Psalm 85:2 uses *kasah* of "forgiving" Israel's sins in parallel with "turned from your fierce anger."

The verb *makhah* means "wipe away, wipe off," as metaphors for cleansing." Hebrew '*avar* means "pass over, "overlook," used in 2 Sam 12:18 of sin. These verbs are metaphors for removing or covering sin in some fashion not clearly specified; they too seem to fall short of absolute forgiveness of sins in the final New Testament sense,[15] or of full possession of God's righteousness. New Testament forgiveness may have been read into these terms by protestant scholars from pre-formed theological concepts and interest in harmonizing the two Testaments. As metaphors they may have contributed to the New Testament's view of the Old Testament's limits on any final removal of sin. Still, the terms represent action satisfying both God and man. W. Kaiser read the terms to mean, ". . . forgiveness in the Old Testament was personally efficacious, although objectively the basis and grounds of that forgiveness awaited the death of Christ."[16] This attempt at definition seems simple but actually fogs the matter because the actual meaning of the Hebrew terms remains unclear if one pays close attention to meanings. Perhaps Paul's ". . . left the sins committed beforehand unpunished (Rom 3:25)" reflects the lack of clarity in these terms as well as salvation's Old Testament incompleteness as in Hebrews.

Enlarged Exodus Themes in the Psalms

One prominent theme is the Exodus Psalms' attention to Yahweh's miracles for Israel and the related cooperation of earth's created powers (68:7-10; 74:12-17; 77:10-19; 114:3-6) as already noted above. The usual allusion is to opening the Red Sea, sometimes accompanied by reference to the Jordan River blocked to allow Israel's crossing. These allusions include the broken heads of water monsters (Nile crocodiles?), their use as food by desert creatures, opening of springs and streams, appearance of moon and stars, setting the earth's boundaries, and plagues, downpours, lightening, earthquakes and fire. These Psalms view the Exodus as a *cosmic* event with

[15]This conclusion is sympathetic to Scofield's note on Exodus 29:31 (SRB, 110, n. 1).

[16]*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 2:626; this is not a fully satisfactory explanation of Hebrews 9:9; 10:4's denial of completed salvation in the Old Testament.

related powers supporting Israel's salvation. A second major psalm theme is descriptions of Israel's journey through the wilderness, its miraculous victories over enemies in the Sinai, the Negev desert and Transjordan, and finally its movement into Canaan with further military and settlement victories (68:8-10; 78; 105:8-11; 135:10-12).

These portions sometimes view Israel and its land as nourished by the same or similar storms as accompanied the Exodus, the journey to the promised land (105:7-11), Israel's presence in it, or activity leading to its later loss. Psalm 80:8-18 likens Israel's presence in the land to a vine transplanted from Egypt to Canaan as noted above. Like the earlier passages extending the Exodus salvation into the Pentateuch and Deuteronomic History, these passages make the Exodus, Conquest(s) and Settlement one continuous series of miraculous acts sustained by the Abrahamic promises.[17] A third theme is the revelation of Yahweh as Israel's God as in the Exodus traditions. An important aspect of this theme is Yahweh's kingship over Israel, the world and the universe, echoing the lines of Exodus 15:17 on Yahweh's kingship and sanctuary in the land (Psa 66:7; 74:12; 114:2). Another prominent aspect is the repeated call to reject idolatry and return to God. This problem is the breach of the first and second commandments of the Sinai treaty (Exodus 20:2-3).

Conclusion

At least fifteen Psalms have recognizable allusions to the Exodus. Sometimes it is described in exalted lyrical poetry with expansions of the Exodus-to-settlement journey—the earthly goal of the Exodus salvation from the beginning. The Abrahamic promises merge into the Exodus story; both land promise and Exodus are magnified as great works of Yahweh. The Psalms re-use the Exodus salvation vocabulary in the Exodus and other

[17]A large literature has grown up on the archaeological exploration of early Israel's settlement sites in Canaan. More than 400 Iron Age I sites (Israel's settlement period, c. 1300-1200 B. C.), have been identified including a small number actually excavated. The sites are concentrated in the central hill country but not limited to this area. They produce a pattern of remarkable likenesses to biblical descriptions of Israel's settlement region, and raise many issues for further study. Three major studies are R. Miller, *Chieftains of the Highland Clans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003; A. Faust, *Israel's Ethnogenesis: Settlement, Interaction, Expansion and Resistance* (London: Equinox, 2006); R. Hawkins, *How Israel Became a People* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2013).

Psalms. The Exodus salvation story is the basic formative event of Israel's life and relationship with Yahweh; its vocabulary is continuous through the Old Testament and thus supports this article's thesis: the Exodus-salvation is the foundation salvation of the Old Testament; it was national Israel's salvation by grace and lacks any appeal to national merit.

Only within this framework does a psalmist appeal to his own righteousness as a basis for God's further favor. Roughly half the uses of the Hebrew terms for salvation refer to the older use for physical deliverance from slavery, threats or death. Salvation in Psalms includes deliverance from serious social needs and moral problems, and forgiveness of sins and reception of God's righteousness. *The Psalms develop the Old Testament's first detailed thought movements toward a completed future salvation.*

Following the language of the old Exodus and Davidic covenant, Psalms reveals the coming salvation of Israel, the nations, and individual persons within both—the final revelation of God's own righteousness and forgiveness of sins through the promised Savior-King.

Speaking a Better Word: Toward a Concrete Occasion of Hebrews 12:18-24

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Introduction

The Epistle to the Hebrews contains significant theological advancement for the New Testament. Although it does not line up exactly with Pauline theology, the Church has historically bundled it alongside the works of the Apostle Paul. The author remains unknown and debatable as does the intended audience of the book. Unlike much of the New Testament, Hebrews does not include an introduction, nor does it have a formal conclusion. The logic of the book is dense and its language is terse. The epistle reveals a rich knowledge of the Old Testament, and assumes the audience would naturally possess a similar understanding. While it is true that we cannot truly know who the author of Hebrews is, the task of theology urges us nonetheless to wrestle with Hebrews' mysteries.

In a particularly intriguing passage, 12:18-24, the author argues for his audience to loosen their grasp of the necessity of the temple and realize they have come to a new, better place. Their identities are no longer defined by their sacrificial duties. The gospel demands its hearers assume an entirely "new orientation of being."[1] If the time comes when they no longer have the temple at Jerusalem, they can be sure Christ's work solidifies them and their new identities. This suggests the audience of Hebrews to be a Christ-following community at Jerusalem.

[1] Richard B. Hays, "Here We Have No Lasting City" in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology* (ed. Richard Bauckham, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2009), 172-173.

Authorship

Historically, church leaders have suggested several different authors for the Epistle to the Hebrews. Until the last century, Paul was considered a main contender as the primary author.[2] While the theology of Hebrews is similar to other Pauline works, the overall diction choice and syntactical structure is much different. Furthermore, Hebrews has a much more specific focus of Jesus' work in light of the Old Testament. Paul's works usually focus on the global, Gentile-inclusive effects of the gospel, while Hebrews seems to be arguing the importance of Jesus' work to people who have formed their identity around the Old Testament.[3] However, Origen comments that only "God knows," but ultimately declares if he must confess an author, it seems most fitting to declare Paul.[4]

Further suggested authors could be one of Paul's associates. Barnabas, Apollos, or another unknown student of Paul could be argued. Each one would have the knowledge of Paul's teachings, explaining the author identifying himself as "one who heard the gospel" (Hebrews 2:3) rather than proclaiming his unique authority of apostle to the Gentiles as Paul typically does. The author of Hebrews could be tangential to Paul, someone impacted by his teaching. Proof for Barnabas or Apollos as authors is thin and seems to be mere speculation. Barnabas was a Hellenistic Jew, and the intensely Jewish language of Hebrews would not make sense in his case.[5] Apollos would make sense as Acts 18 describes him as an educated Jewish person with knowledge of the Scripture ("Scriptures" specifically meaning the Old Testament books). While this is appealing, there is not enough known about him to assert his role in the compiling of Hebrews.[6] Apollos as and author was not proposed until Martin Luther, and no earlier church fathers affirm (nor deny) his authorship.

Several other authors have been presented throughout the history of the Church,

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[2] Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews,* (NIGTC 11; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993), 4.

[3] I. Howard Marshall, "Soteriology in Hebrews," in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology* (ed. Richard Bauckham; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2009), 264-269. In this essay, Marshall presents the nuanced view of salvation in Hebrews, arguing its rich Pentateuch-focused soteriology. The New Covenant is enacted by Jesus, its mediator, and it is better than the old one. This contrast demands a new paradigmatic approach to life, but not an abandoning of identity markers.

[4] Ellingworth, *Hebrews,* 5.

[5] Peter O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Hebrews,* (PNTC 13; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010), 6-7.

[6] Ellingworth, *Hebrews,* 21.

but there is not enough internal or external evidence to declare anyone as the author of Hebrews. A helpful trajectory at this point is to acknowledge the problem of authorship and instead illuminate the situation in which the epistle was originally written. Although we cannot know the author, and we cannot know the absolute situation of the letter, we can construct a helpful view of the timeframe, culture, and occasion in which the letter was written.

Occasion

There is ample internal and external evidence to support a very concrete, specific situation for Hebrews. While some have tried to use the major themes of Hebrews to make general claims about its purpose, they usually err on the side of ambiguity. Discussion of moral backsliding is subjective. Nowhere else in the New Testament do we see such harsh words about the inability to return to redemption. Suggestions of persevering through persecution seem to misunderstand tone. Elsewhere in the New Testament, perseverance through persecution is presented in gentle, positive, hopeful language. The author of Hebrews purposefully chooses harsh and condemning words. The tone is less encouraging and more forceful.

The temple and the sacrificial system play a central role to the development of Hebrews' argument, and thus suggests the audience is a community of Christians in Jerusalem. The tone of the letter suggests the author is also part of this community. The first person plural sense is used throughout the book, hinting at an informed intimacy. Carl Mosser suggests the author is a leader of a group of Christ-followers in Jerusalem who is away from the city and writing back to the members of Jerusalem community.[7] The various urgings to "listen to a prophetic word"[8] concern a very specific instance in which an affirmed prophet, in the power of Jesus, declared a warning to the Christ-followers in Jerusalem. Perhaps this is the warning spoken of by Eusebius: "But the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella."[9] This early church father recounts a situation in which a group of prophets come to the community at Jerusalem, commanding them to leave the city before it is destroyed. Such a specific event gives color and backdrop to the author and audience, placing them both in an urgent, well-defined context.

[7] Carl Mosser, "No Lasting City" (Ph.D diss., St. Andrews University, 2004), 330.

[8] Heb. 2:1-4, 4:12, 13:7.

[9] Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, *Eusebius: Church History, Life of Constantine the Great, and Oration in Praise of Constantine* (A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series 1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 138. (H.E. 3.5.5.)

In his commentary on Hebrews, F. F. Bruce declares "certainty on the destination of the epistle is unattainable in the present state of our knowledge…" He continues, "…fortunately its exegesis is for the most part independent of this question."[10] Although he is correct that the exact occasion is unknown, exegesis absolutely depends on context. Every interpretive question flows from presupposed occasion. Many scholars argue the allusions to Jerusalem and the temple seem to be less spatial and more illustrative.[11] They consider the temple imagery to be symbolic rather than something the hearers had interacted with daily. This leads some to assume the audience to be Jewish Christians in Rome. They interpret the references of location to be encouraging. This shares similarities to Jewish writings during the exile, which used references to the temple to remind the hearers of a hopeful return to the city. Although they were not in proximity to the temple, the allusions to the temple would have been comforting, as if the temple and Jerusalem were somehow transcendent over space and time. This would mean that proximity was not required for the sacrificial system. However, Hebrews 12:18-24, argues the exact opposite!

Scholars have often argued Hebrews was written to warn of moral backsliding. This is presented as either a general backsliding or "drifting away,"[12] or even some sort of slipping back into Judaism. These are both legitimate arguments, but they fall short once we see that Jewish customs—including but not limited to sacrifice—continued up until the temple destruction in A.D. 70. Moreover, early Christianity existed as something within Judaism.[13] Early Jewish Christians, particularly those in Jerusalem, would not have seen their Christian identities as overruling their ethnic identity, rather, Christianity existed alongside and *within* their Jewish practices. Although Hebrews argues Christ is the mediator of a better covenant, this does not mean the old covenant or its practices are obsolete. These activities were temporary. Jesus' ministry and his work on the cross are eternal and not contingent on location.

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[10] F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (NICNT 14, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 14.

[11] Bruce ultimately decides to assume Rome is the destination and this leads to many interpretive questions and conclusions. Ellingworth ultimately declares Rome as the most logical place, considering the denotation "from the Italians", which can also be translated "those originating from Italy."

[12] Hebrews 2:1-4 specifically discuss a warning to not παραρυῶμεν, which can mean more generally "drift", but also more concretely to "defect" or "refuse" to remain faithful. The latter two translations seem to carry more weight and connect to a concrete idea of obeying God's command.

[13] Carl Mosser, "No Lasting City" (Ph. D diss., St. Andrews, 2004), 45.

The warnings of moral backsliding are legitimate, but are perhaps too vague to be helpful. "Backsliding" can be defined subjectively in any context, but it seems that the author of Hebrews has a very concrete reason for using such a harsh term. 2:4 includes the command to προσέχειν, "to give heed" or "to carefully pay attention"[14] to the things the community has heard. This implies something specific had been spoken to the community. If this specific word spoken to the community in Jerusalem is connected to the aforementioned oracle Eusebius mentioned, then the community is being urged by one of its temporarily absent leaders to pay attention to, consider, and heed the command to get out of Jerusalem before the city is destroyed. If this is the case, the context of Hebrews is shortly before the fall of Jerusalem, written by a leader of the Jerusalem community, back to his people. They are to seriously consider and obey a prophecy declared to them even if that means abandoning the temple and forfeiting the outward affirmation of their identity as Jews.

Exegesis in Hebrews 12:18-24

Hebrews 12:18-24 is a hortatory appeal, an exhortation.[15] It is separated into two major sections, each signified by the second person plural perfect active verb προσεληλύθατε. First appearing in verse 18, it is negated by the [o]ὐ; in verse 22, it is preceded by the disjunctive ἀλλὰ. Immediately, this establishes a contrast between each respective passage. In verse 18, the audience "has *not* come to" something, whereas verse 22 explains where they actually "have come to." The use of this verb forces the hearers to enter into the story and become the major actors in it.[16] It is apparent the negative nuance in verse 18 is used to throw the listeners off kilter. Often, this passage is used to argue the hearers were in Rome, as if they had literally not come to that which could be touched, meaning Jerusalem or the temple. The use of this negation here is more likely rhetorical. It brings the author's entire argument to a climax.[17]

The author up to this point has been systematically arguing the sacrificial system and the historical traditions of those who remained faithful to God are actually temporary versions of the true sacrifice: Jesus himself. His priestly line—the line of Melchizedek—exists outside of the Levitical line. In fact, in Hebrews 7:6-9, Melchizedek is argued to be the one who ultimately blesses Abraham and his an-

[14] BDAG, 714.
[15] William Lane, *Hebrews 9-13* (WBC 47B; Dallas: Word, 1991), 446.
[16] O'Brien, Hebrews, 477.
[17] O'Brien, *Hebrews,* 477.

cestors because the potential of their existence was still within Abraham's body. The author says "it is beyond dispute that the superior blesses the inferior." Jesus, in the line of Melchizedek actually transcends the tradition of Torah. His work as sacrifice is eternal, not transient. Whereas the temple sacrifices were temporary, Christ's death is final. Not only is he the completely effective High Priest, he is the complete sacrifice. Ultimately, Jesus' Lordship is effective on an entirely different, transcendent level which exists separate from what happens in or *to* the temple.

The author of Hebrews spends the next few verses explaining the object of where the hearers have not come: ψηλαφωμένῳ, "to that which can be grasped."[18] This is the same word used by Paul in Acts 17:27. Discussing the nearness of God, Paul says God can be found, if the people might grope for him and find him. The word suggests the idea of something physically near which can be felt, touched, or handled. The hearers have not come to something tangible to be clung onto or held, but instead something more permanent. In light of the context of possibly having to leave Jerusalem, this would encourage the hearers. They do not need to be near something which can be touched in order to be assured of their inclusion in God's blessing. The temple was the central monument symbolizing God's presence, but the author is saying this is not the place where Christ's faithfulness has brought them.

Although the name Mt. Sinai is explicitly left out of this passage, verses 18-21 clearly describe the scene and phenomena of the giving of the Law. Rather than presenting Torah in liberating terms, the author uses oppressive and impersonal[19] words: κεκαυμένῳ πυρὶ (blazing fire), γνόφῳ (darkness), ζόφῳ (gloom), θυέλλῃ (windstorm). These words all connote the chaotic, oppressive nature of the law. This is not to say that the law was detrimental, but—in this rhetorical section—it was unnatural. The law itself was incomplete. While Mt. Sinai could be touched and seen, without fulfillment it remained oppressive, distant, and impersonal.

The author then highlights the experiences of the people at Mt. Sinai. The author chooses not to give the name of the mountain, but instead to describe the scene and envelop the hearer's imagination.[20] The people could not see the source of the trumpet blasts, nor see the face of God, but they could hear them. They only saw the results of God's presence and it was chaos and gloom. This was especially terrifying. As the passage continues, the author directly connects this feeling to the reactions of the people at Sinai. Verse 21 shows Moses' reaction: ἔκφοβός εἰμι καὶ

[18] BDAG, 892.

[19] George Guthrie, *Hebrews,* (ZIBBC 4; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002), 77.

[20] Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 460.

ἔντρομος. The first phrase, taken directly from the LXX account in Deuteronomy 9:19, is translated "I am terrified." In the LXX, this is translated as a historical present, echoing the qal perfect form in the Masoretic text, which means "I was fearful." This would have been narrative, hence the past tense nuance in most English translations.

The word ἔντρομος is a predicate nominative, declaring Moses' action in response to his fear, "trembling." This word does not occur in Deuteronomy but does describe the general feeling of the entire scene at Sinai in Exodus' Hebrew account. There דרח is used, meaning "to tremble with fear." Thus, this reaction verse clearly describes the entire tradition of the people's experience at Sinai, using both words from Exodus and Deuteronomy and incorporating both the Masoretic and Septuagint texts. In this verse, even the mediator of the old covenant is terrified by it. The one through whom the law is given is also completely terrified, so much so his physical body is shaking.

This entire scene set up by these four verses highlights the oppression of the old covenant. It is terrifying, impersonal, crippling, and filled with gloom. The author of Hebrews, however, clarifies this is *not* the place where the hearers have been led. They are not under a covenant that is crippling. They are not required to remain there. While the people of Israel were able to be near Mt. Sinai, the oppressive results of the law ultimately did not make its tangibility worth it. The author purposefully does not use the words "Mt. Sinai." This is not just because it is obvious which story the author is alluding to, but I believe it is because s/he is attaching those consequences of the incomplete law implicitly to the city of Jerusalem and to the temple. One could argue this is more reason to say the hearers were in Rome and this is merely as allusion to Sinai they would connect with. However, I believe the purposeful exclusion of the name "Sinai" leaves the location open-ended in order for the people to identify those same feelings with what has become the major identity marker of Jewish practice: sacrifice in the temple at Jerusalem.

This argument is reinforced by verse 22, as the author finally announces the reality of where the people have arrived: Σιὼν ὄρει καὶ πόλει θεοῦ ζῶντος, "Mount Zion, also the city of the living God." Rather than a terrifying and oppressive situation, the people have been brought in to a reality that is invisible. It cannot be touched, but rather it characterized by the majesty of Zion and is under the direct influence of the one, true living God. Some have argued this section of verses suggests a type of middle Platonism, where "better" is somehow outside of our tangible reality.[21] This would be in line with Plato's theory of forms, where the

[21] James Thompson, "What has Middle Platonism to do With Hebrews? In *Reading the*

physical word in ontologically less good than the immaterial world. It seems more likely, however, the author is drawing a parallel in two separate traditions in order to illustrate the hearers' current status with God. Rather than being under a shroud of trembling and fear, the people are welcomed into permanent relationship with God, with myriads of angels, on the cusp of massive celebration.

Furthermore, the author drives this point home by stating the people have come to Ιερουσαλὴμ ἐπουρανίῳ, the heavenly Jerusalem. Jerusalem is here mentioned by name, with the adverb "heavenly," drawing a distinction from where they currently are, the earthly Jerusalem, and where they mysteriously are through the work of Jesus, the heavenly Jerusalem. Rather than thinking of this as some sort of gnosticism, the hearers are being comforted that if they decide to leave the temple and have no access to the sacrificial system, their status in relation to God is permanent. Jesus goes before them, enters into the peace of the age to come, where the "spirits are made complete" (v. 23) and he promises the hearers' arrival and perfection as well.

The identity of the mediator is finally revealed in v. 24 as Jesus, whose blood speaks a better word than Abel's. The word "covenant," διαθήκης, is clarified by νέας, meaning "new" or "fresh." This word is used specifically to contrast Jesus' work with the oppression of Sinai. It makes it fundamentally different than the responsibility under the law. Whereas Moses was the mediator of the old way and could not handle the force of it, Jesus is mediator of the new way, and his own blood speaks of something liberating.

The reference to Abel's blood is initially jarring. The author has been forming an argument about the tangibility of Mt. Sinai, but suddenly alludes to Abel at the very rhetorical climax.[22] This harkens back to 11:4, where Abel's blood is said to "still speak." The same verb is brought in here, λαλοῦντι. Two main possibilities exist for the sudden inclusion of Abel. Firstly, this could be referring back to the first acceptable sacrifice given in Scripture. This would mark Jesus' sacrifice as transcendently acceptable in the same way his priesthood was in line with Melchizadek and thus transcendently effective over the Levitical line. Secondly, in Genesis Abel's blood "cries to God from the ground." This means it was longing for justice. This understanding would reinforce the connection with the old covenant as longing for completion and also highlight Jesus' sacrifice, which offers a better option: reconciliation. It follows that both of these arguments coalesce into one. Jesus did become the ultimate faithful sacrifice, connecting to Abel's acceptable

Epistle to the Hebrew (ed. Eric F. Mason: Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 50.

[22]Ellingworth, *Hebrews,* 682.

offering. Abel's blood did cry out for an inferior result: justice. Jesus' blood offers something better: new life

Conclusion

The book of Hebrews, although seemingly masked in layers of context, is accessible once we understand the possible concrete situation in which it was written. The hearers at Jerusalem who found their identities in the practice of being Jewish are now faced with a command to leave. They need to get up and flee from the central aspect of their identities. They will no longer have the temple or access to its tangible practices. Instead, they will have to rely on their understanding of Christ's Torah-fulfilling work on the cross. Where they used to physically participate in sacrifice to feel the security their salvific status, they will now have to align themselves with the faithfulness of Christ. Their response to the call to heed the prophet's words directly relates to their faithfulness.

Their challenge is the same as ours: how do we practice being faithful without the tangible feeling of security? How do we remove ourselves from trying to grasp the ecstasy of feeling approved and focus instead on simply acting out in faithfulness and love? The better word Jesus' blood speaks of moves us from worrying so much about feeling included and bids us to invite others into the new life Jesus offers. We often can settle back in to continually re-constructing communities that define acceptable boundaries of who is in and who is out. Our role as communities of Christ-followers is the same as the community in Jerusalem: remain faithful and invite others into that faithfulness.

A Multidimensional Thomas

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Introduction

In contrast to the one-dimensional doubting Thomas of popular culture, the Thomas of Scripture has depth and complexity and was not intended by John[1] to be primarily understood as a man of doubt. This paper will demonstrate this by analyzing Thomas' involvement in the Gospel of John. Thomas is involved in John in three passages, the first two being dwarfed by the third. Before looking directly at Thomas, we will briefly discuss the contexts in which he is found.

Thomas is a minor character in the Gospels. This is especially true in the Synoptic Gospels since he is only mentioned in lists of the twelve disciples. Even in John, he does not play a primary role in most of the narrative and dialogue. Why, then, should students of the Word seek to understand Thomas? Besides the easy answer about all Scripture being useful,[2] there are several compelling reasons.

First, those reading John for the first time who only marginally understand Thomas as a flat doubter will be puzzled by whom they meet in John, especially his first two appearances in the book. Coloring in Thomas's outline allows the character to perform in the story as John intended. Second, Thomas is a classic whipping boy for scholars, preachers, laypeople, and overused expressions alike. Though it is easy to stand above the characters of biblical narrative when we caricature them—i.e., Peter the buffoon—it is far better to empathize with their full persons as they progress through the story. Rather than inflating out of proportion Thomas' negative characteristics, readers should seek to gain a fully-formed picture of this man. Third, John intentionally and selectively places Thomas at one of the most

[1] Due to the Gospel of John's anonymity and questions about its authorship, some refer to its author by the title, "the evangelist." I will forego this cumbersome workaround.

[2] 2 Timothy 3:16.

important locations in the book, the end of chapter 20. If we are to understand John and his purpose for writing, fully understanding Thomas is an important key.

Preliminaries

Since Thomas is interspersed throughout John's Gospel, it is helpful first to overview briefly some key developments in the Book as a whole, then specify where Thomas falls within this scheme.

John's Gospel is often divided into two sections. Chapters 1-12 are dubbed the "Book of Signs" and Chapters 13-21 the "Book of Glory."[3] The shift in book takes place when the threat on Jesus' life has become great and the text tells us Jesus knew his hour had come (John 13:1), beginning the Passion events. The swelling threat to Jesus' life looms large in John's Gospel even before its culmination in the Book of Glory. Though it is true Jesus' death is a focal point of all four of the Gospels, John highlights it brightly, being sure to bring it up often and in ever-increasingly urgent terms up until chapter 13.[4] In many of these passages, John specifically ties the plot to kill Jesus to Judea and Jerusalem. Craig Keener observes in John 6 even "Galileans who reject Jesus become *Ioudaioi* ("Jews," "Judeans") in the process" (John 7:52).[5]

Thomas' first appearance in John is in chapter 11, and his voice in the passage becomes the fulcrum around which the narrative shifts toward Jesus' final journey to Judea, the center of the threat on his life. John places Thomas here in part to introduce him to the hearers of his Gospel, letting them know Thomas is going to play a part in the second half of the Gospel, the Book of Glory. Early in the Book of Glory, Jesus tells his disciples they cannot go where he is going, referring to his death. Peter asks where he is going, and Jesus doesn't really answer, only saying a bit later the disciples know the way to where he is going.[6] Thomas makes his second appearance here in the beginning of John 14, asking a question dripping with palpable exasperation, and this question prompts Jesus to say one of his "I am" statements. Thomas' third, final, and most important appearance in John happens

[3] Mark Allan Powell, *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2009), 170.

[4] This swelling begins in 4:1-3, with John saying, "Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John… So he left Judea." It continues through 5:16, 18; 7:1, 11, 12-13, 19, 25, 30; 8:59; 10:31, 39; 11:8, 16, 50, 57; and into the Passion narrative.

[5] Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2003), 228.

[6] John 13:33, 36; 14:4.

after Jesus' resurrection, in which he offers one of the highest praises of Jesus in the New Testament.

Analysis of Thomas' Appearances

I will now trace Thomas' character through his three appearances. I will briefly introduce the story into which Thomas enters and then discuss what can be learned about his character from these stories.

Thomas in John 11

In John 11, the climate is tense. The narrative is reaching its tipping point into the Book of Glory, and this is the story John intentionally used to make this transition.[7] The anger against Jesus has reached a fever pitch in Judea. Jesus did not want to go to back there,[8] but Lazarus has died in Bethany, a city two miles east of Jerusalem in Judea.[9] "For God's glory," to "wake up" Lazarus, and so that the disciples "may believe," Jesus announces to the disciples they will return to Judea (John 11:4, 6, 11, 15). The disciples are understandably uneasy about this proposition. Even as they reminded Jesus he was not long ago almost stoned (John11:8), they suspect to return to Judea is to invite death. Jesus is insistent despite two attempts to change his mind and says again, "Let us go to him" (John 11:15). This is where Thomas enters the scene: Then Thomas, the one called Didymos, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go so that we should die with him" (John 11:16).[10]

Both the Hebrew name, Θωμᾶς, and the Greek, Δίδυμος, mean "Twin."[11] The text does not specify, however, whose twin Thomas was, so it remains unknown.[12] Since John does give us this note about Thomas, however, scholars have offered different takes on its significance. Ironside remarks perhaps Thomas is the "twin" of the hearer of John's gospel, someone with whom we ought to empathize.[13] This

[7] Ben Witherington, III, *John's Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 198.

[8] John 7:1.

[9] Andreas J. Köstenberger, "John" in *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary* (ed. Clinton E. Arnold; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002), 2:107.

[10] My translation of John 11:16 in the UBS 5th edition.

[11] Andreas J. Köstenberger, "John", 108.

[12] D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (PNTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991), 410; though on the same page he does offer a "minority report that has not prevailed," that Thomas was another name for Judas, the brother of Jesus, who, this view would say, is in fact the twin of Jesus.

[13] H.A. Ironside, *Address On the Gospel of John* (Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux Brothers, 1973), 459.

might be a good devotional understanding of the text, but it is hard to say this is what was intended to be understood. Godet proposes "twin" refers to his dual personality, being "a believer and an unbeliever."[14] Bruner, commenting on Godet, remarks in return, "In this sense, however, are not all believers 'Twins'?"[15] In fact, Witherington pulls the camera wider and says "even those people presented in a generally positive light… are not portrayed as full-fledged Christians."[16] In this way, and in contrast to the idea that John presents characters in his book as starkly good or evil, dark or light,[17] even the most admirable characters of John often have weaknesses. It is difficult to allow the incidental to be incidental, but frankly that Thomas' name means "twin" does not seem important; it is simply a passing detail John decided to include perhaps for reasons only known to him.

Despite fear, Thomas turns to his fellow apostles and bids them go with Christ. Michaels marks Thomas' words "sounds strangely redundant," as Thomas says "us also," though Jesus just specifically addressed them before, and there are no other groups present.[18] The καὶ may be better understood as an addition of emphasis since there is already an emphatic use of ἡμεῖς, which was also not present in Jesus' bid to go, though this is difficult to capture in translation: "Let us—even us!—go!" The last two words, μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ, are normally understood to refer to Jesus. Michaels perceptively observes it would be grammatically exceptional for αὐτοῦ to refer to Jesus, as Lazarus is the person most recently referred to both directly as a proper pronoun and indirectly as a pronoun. "If not grammatically certain," says Michaels, then it is "at least the more natural way of reading the text."[19] This also makes much better sense theologically, as it would be astounding for Thomas to refer so unblinkingly to Jesus' death, for which later all the disciples will suffer crises of faith. Thomas does not imagine Jesus will die in Judea, but that the disciples themselves will suffer the same mortal fate as Lazarus, not for sickness, but for Jesus.

Thomas' words are not unmistakably clear, however. With the disciples' previ-

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[14] Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on John's Gospel* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 1978), 737.

[15] Frederic Dale Bruner, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2012), 633.

[16] Witherington, *John's Wisdom*, 199.

[17] Mark L. Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2007), 337.

[18] J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010), 623-624.

[19] Michaels, *John*, 624.

ous words in this conversation being attempts to dissuade Jesus in the foreground and Thomas' future doubt of chapter 20 in the background, it is a challenge to establish if Thomas' words are actually a bold call to follow Christ or a cowardly, sarcastic last attempt at changing Jesus' mind about the trip to Judea. As far back as the fourth and fifth centuries A.D., Chrysostom wrote Thomas' expression is "one of cowardice."[20] Johannes Oecolampadius, in the early sixteenth century said Thomas intended to "dissuade Christ" and offers the less-harsh assessment that Thomas' word "is not a statement of robust faith."[21] Johannes Brenz, from around the same time, also agrees and says his exhortation "stems more from rashness than firm faith."[22] Köstenberger concurs with these, saying it is "unlikely" that Thomas' words are sincere.[23]

Others however have understood Thomas as exhibiting a complex combination of fear, courage, instability, and love. Cyril of Alexandria, writing in the fourth and fifth centuries, thought Thomas was a pessimistic to see their destiny to be death, but he honored Thomas for his willingness to suffer.[24] Theodore of Mopsuestia, from around the same time, saw Thomas as having an "unstable faith" but also a "deep love for the Lord."[25] More recently, Bruner wondered why Thomas "does not seem to have quite heard Jesus's immediately preceding joy…" seeing "only death ahead."[26] Lindars resonated with this, as he claims Thomas offers only a "gloomy saying."[27] Both Bruner and Lindars, however, also recognize Thomas' words betray goodness. His "desires can be only good," and his act is one "of leadership and courage."[28] D.A. Carson says Thomas has "raw devotion and courage," though it is "shot through with misunderstanding and incomprehension."[29] Keener believes Thomas to be "more courageous than Jesus' brothers, who did not believe in Jesus."[30]

[20] Chrysostom, *John 11-21* (ACCS IVb; ed. Joel C. Elowsky; Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity, 2007), 9.

[21] Johannes Oecolampadius, *John 11-21* (RCS IV; ed. Craig S. Farmer, Timothy George, and Scott M. Manetsch; Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2014), 407.

[22] Johannes Brenz, *John 11-21* (RCS), 408. He also believes Thomas is "bolder and more courageous than the others."

[23] Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker, 2004), 332.

[24] Cyril of Alexandria, *John 11-21 (ACCS)*, 10.

[25] Theodore of Morsuestia, *John 11-21* (ACCS), 102.

[26] Bruner, *John,* 662.

[27] Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John: Based on the Revised Standard Version* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1972), 544-545.

[28] Bruner, *John,* 662; Lindars, *John*, 544-545.

[29] Carson, *John,* 410.

[30] Keener, *John*, 842.

It is not within good reason to diagnose Thomas' bid to his fellow disciples as sarcastic and insincere. As John places Thomas at this important juncture in the narrative, it would be counterintuitive to make the final voice propelling the story toward Judea to be one of derision. This rings truer even as Thomas acts here as the spokesperson to and for the Twelve, and—though the disciples in John are naïve and misunderstanding[31]—they are not ill-willed or disrespectful. The only two causes a person might have to suspect sarcasm, as briefly mentioned earlier, are (1) Thomas' words are recorded in conjunction with the words of the disciples trying to dissuade Jesus and (2) Thomas is doubtful about Jesus' resurrection later in John. The first does not make sense, however, as Thomas' words mark a transition toward resignation, not a continuation in apprehension. They are juxtaposed intentionally to indicate the shift of Jesus and party from avoiding Judea to now turning toward it. The second seems more sound but quickly breaks down. Thomas' doubt only rises, we can infer, out of the shockingly unexpected arrest and death of Jesus, just as the doubt of the other disciples does. Saying Thomas' faith is false because of his shaken state after Jesus' death is like saying Peter's zealous faith before Jesus' arrest is shown to be an act by his denials of Jesus after. Instead of dismissing Thomas' exhortation, it is better to see it as the courageous, though misunderstanding word that it is. It is the sort of faith in spite of fear to follow Christ, "a clarion call to would-be disciples,"[32] which "is addressed to every reader of the Gospel."[33]

Thomas in John 14

Chapter 13 begins the Book of Glory, the second half of John's gospel which emphasizes Jesus' impending death. Jesus begins to predict more directly his coming departure from them.[34] Even as he does so, however, John shows the disciples do not understand what he is talking about, and so they ask him a series of questions. Thomas' appearance in this text may be primarily incidental, as he is listed simply as one of the four people asking the series of four questions.[35] Because of this, it is hard to know to what degree this is a passage from which we can glean insight into how John wants us to understand the character of Thomas specifically, and to what degree John only brings Thomas up again to keep him in the back of the minds of his readers. Peter asks Jesus first, "Where are you going?" and Jesus

[31] See John 4:33, 11:13; 13:28; 16:17-19.
[32] Carson, *John*, 410.
[33] George R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (WBC 36; Waco, Tex.: Word, 1987), 189.
[34] John 13:33.
[35] Witherington, *John's Wisdom*, 249.

tells him he cannot follow yet.[36] Jesus then expands his answer, telling his disciples though they cannot yet follow him where he is going, they know the way to the place he is going.[37] Thomas then joins the conversation in 14:5, "Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how are we able to know the way?"[38]

It is difficult to know how much this text is focusing on Thomas as a specific individual rather than only using him as the arbitrary mouthpiece of the group of disciples. When Peter spoke to Jesus a bit earlier in the narrative, he uses first person singular verbs, referring to himself, and Jesus addresses him specifically in his response. When Thomas speaks to Jesus, he uses first person plural verbs, speaking on behalf of the whole group of disciples. When Jesus replies, the text tells us he is replying αὐτῷ, the masculine singular personal pronoun, referring specifically to Thomas. When Jesus begins actually addressing to whom he is speaking, however, he uses second person plural verbs, addressing the group. Michaels believes Jesus first addresses Thomas specifically with the famous verse 6, and then turns and addresses the group of disciples in his following words in verse 7, "thought the transition is barely noticeable."[39] This seems plausible, as Jesus responds to Philip's question in a similar manner, first addressing Philip specifically and then addressing the group.

Thomas is visibly exasperated. He bluntly[40] reminds Jesus he did not answer Peter's question about where he was going.[41] This notion, to Thomas, makes Jesus' comment that they know the way illogical. They cannot possibly know the way if they do not know the destination.[42] Commentators describe Thomas' question as "crassly natural," "literalistic, and "undiscerning."[43] Thomas should not be condemned for this desire to understand clearly what Jesus is saying, though, as Jesus is being purposefully elusive in his words, they are at a notably dangerous time in Jesus' ministry, and Jesus is now telling them he is leaving to a place they cannot go. Beasley-Murray aptly remarks it is just this "lack of understanding" that "provides opportunity for Jesus to clarify the revelation."[44] It may very well be Jesus

[36] John 13:36.
[37] John 14:4.
[38] My translation of John 14:5 in the UBS 5th edition.
[39] Michaels, *John*, 774.
[40] Köstenberger, *John*, 428; Ironside, *John*, 606.
[41] Michaels, *John*, 774.
[42] Carson, *John*, 490; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 252.
[43] Beasley-Murray, *John*, 252; Carson, *John*, 490; Michaels, *John*, 774.
[44] Beasley-Murray, *John*, 252.

is desirous his disciples would interact and ask these sorts of questions, and so take part in what Jesus wished to reveal, particularly here the "sixth 'I am' saying featured in John's Gospel."[45]

The clearest thing to say about Thomas here is he speaks representing the rest of their disciples and their lack of understanding. Witherington states the appearances of four different disciples indicate "that it was not just one but all of the disciples who failed to understand these things."[46] He also argues this lack of understanding may be to emphasize further the need for τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, "the Spirit of Truth," who διδάξει, "will teach," the disciples all things.[47] Besides these things, this passage does not seem to offer particulars about the character of Thomas. It is primarily a dialogical theological discourse.

Thomas in John 20

John 20 records Jesus' resurrection. Mary Magdalene finds the tomb empty and panics, believing someone has taken the body (John 20:1-2). She tells Peter and the beloved disciple, who then run into the tomb, and at least the beloved disciple is said to have "believed" (20:1-2) even if the following verse clarifies this by stating they still did not understand that Jesus had to rise from the dead (20:9). Mary then comes into frame again and is crying by the tomb, only to have Jesus surprise her with a visit (20:11-16). She tells everyone, "I have seen the Lord!" (20:18). The disciples were meeting on the first day of the week, Jesus appeared in their midst, gave them the Holy Spirit, and everyone rejoiced. Thomas enters the story here, in verse 24.

> John 20:24-29 But Thomas, one of the twelve, who was called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. Therefore the other disciples were saying, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the mark of the nails and put my hand into his side, I will certainly not believe." And after eight days again his disciples were inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus comes through the doors have been locked, and he stood in the middle and said, "Peace to you." Then he is saying to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and put your hand and put it into my side, and do not be faithless but faithful." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God." Jesus says to him, "Because you have seen me you have believed; blessed are the ones who do not see and still believe."[48]

[45] Köstenberger, *John*, 428.
[46] Witherington, *John's Wisdom*, 249.
[47] Witherington, *John's Wisdom*, 249; John 14:17.
[48] My translation of John 20:24-31 in the UBS 5th edition.

It is strange Thomas appears to be the only one who did not attend the meeting of the disciples. As the text tells us they gathered again a week later,[49] it seems this meeting referred to an early incarnation of a weekly "church" meeting. Thomas' absence is hard to interpret. Was this to his fault, or circumstantial? It seems Thomas' being identified as "one of the twelve" may have been a subtle pass of judgment on him. Michaels points out besides Thomas, Judas Iscariot is the only other identified in this way in John's gospel. In both cases, the text is drawing contrast, "even though" he is one of the twelve, "he handed Jesus over," or in this case, "he was not present."[50] Bruner agrees, "His call and responsibility make his absence… especially culpable or at least lamentable."[51] However, the sixth century writer Gregory the Great considered Thomas' absence to be by divine appointment. "It was not an accident that that particular disciple was not present… the unbelief of Thomas is more profitable to our faith than the belief to the other disciples."[52] Whether or not it was counted against Thomas that he was not there, it is notable after Thomas expresses his unbelief, Jesus does not help him to belief until the following gathering of the disciples the next week. Bruner emphasizes this, "Jesus puts in appearances to his disciples … at Sunday meetings," and John's Gospel emphasizes this "anti-merely-individualistic" ethos. If Thomas had fallen into unbelief so far as not to meet with believers anymore, it is unlikely Jesus would have met him outside of the regular gatherings.

> John 20:25 Therefore the other disciples were saying, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the mark of the nails and put my hand into his side, I will certainly not believe."

The disciples "were telling" (ἔλεγον) Thomas, "We have seen the Lord." These words echo perfectly Mary Magdalene's words to them. Thomas then gives his famously sharp reply, that he will οὐ μὴ, "certainly/absolutely not," believe (20:25). Some commentators are inordinately harsh on Thomas because of this. Beasley-Murray says Thomas is the "most outrageous doubter of the resurrection," and that "the conditions he lays down for believing are unreasonable."[53] Brown thinks Thomas "demanded" a "crass demonstration of the miraculous."[54]

It is helpful to remember Thomas' humanity. He is likely traumatized from his

[49] John 20:26; "Eight days later" is idiomatic for "This same day next week."
[50] Michaels, *John*, 1015.
[51] Bruner, *John*, 1184.
[52] Gregory the Great, *John 11-21* (ACCS), 367.
[53] Beasley-Murray, *John*, 385.
[54] Brown, *John*, 1046.

Lord being executed and hurt he is the only one of the Twelve who did not have what he imagined to be this fantastic experience. If ἔλεγεν is taken to be a customary imperfect,[55] then the disciples can be seen "continually telling" Thomas their joy, and so he may be understandably frustrated. Though some have seen Thomas' words as being his stated qualifications for belief,[56] it seems more natural to read it in the hyperbolic wits-end cry that it is. Bruner cites Temple who thought Thomas' "negative is very strong… Such vigor of disbelief plainly represents a strong urge to believe."[57] This is not to say Thomas' words are approved,[58] but that they are framed in humanity.

We should not raise our proverbial noses at Thomas. Bruner says, "Perhaps we ought to have a little sympathy for his hearing this, at first, really "in-credible" message. Michaels, too, thinks Jesus showed his hands and side to the other disciples already,[59] and perhaps they would too have desired the same "proof" if he had not done so.[60] Peter Chrysologus, from the third-fourth century A.D., agreed with this and even widened the lens further. By confronting his disbelief, "Thomas was curing not only the uncertainty of his own heart but also that of all human beings."[61]

> John 20:26-27 And after eight days again his disciples were inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus comes through the doors have been locked, and he stood in the middle and said, "Peace to you." Then he is saying to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and put your hand and put it into my side, and do not be faithless but faithful."

Verse 26 is almost identical to verse 19, except Thomas is with them to meet this time. Jesus addresses Thomas directly right away after a quick greeting.[62] It is important that Jesus confronts Thomas according to the details of his pronouncement

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[55] Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 1996), 548.

[56] Origen (3rd century A.D.) said, "Thomas seems to have had some precision and carefulness about him," and Brown in the present day says that Thomas was "demanding that he be able to examine Jesus' body with finger and hand;" Origen, *John 11-21* (ACCS), 368; Brown, *John*, 1045.

[57] Bruner, *John*, 1190.

[58] Brown and Carson both mention Thomas' demand seems a little too reminiscent of Jesus' condemnation of people who would "never believe" unless they "see signs and wonders;" John 4:48; Brown, *John*, 1045; Carson, *John*, 656.

[59] John 20:20.

[60] Michaels, *John*, 1016.

[61] Peter Chrysologus, *John 11-21* (ACCS), 367-368.

[62] Bruner, *John*, 1187.

of disbelief. Both Carson and Ironside mention this; saying by this Jesus subtly proves his power, that he hears all.[63] It does not seem Thomas is given as an example in Scripture to be mocked or judged, but to be comforting. Bruner remarks, "Thomas' desire is every honest person's desire, and so we are grateful that the Evangelist gave Doubting Thomas this space and that the Risen Lord gave him this satisfaction."[64] God gives grace to all sin, even doubt. But along with that grace, Jesus gives a warning that doubt is not to be continued in, but to be converted to faith.[65]

John 20:28 Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God."

Just as Jesus spares formalities, Thomas does not seem to take him up on his offer to inspect his wounds[66] and hardly even forms a reply to Jesus. His directness and clarity display the depth of Thomas' adoration for Jesus, how strong is his joy at the sight of Jesus alive. This confession marks the highest professed Christology in the fourfold Gospel.[67] It is the narrative-discourse counterpart to the poetic introduction to John's gospel, forming a wide *inclusio*.[68] The way this confession is structured, too, echoes Old Testament language, as Brown remarks, "It is Thomas who makes clear that one may address Jesus in the same language in which Israel addressed Yahweh."[69] Beasley-Murray observes the use of κύριος here is higher than previous uses of the word in this chapter, and is in fact the "fullest meaning of the term as applied to God."[70] In addition to this loftiness, Thomas also nuances his words by repeating μου. Jesus is not *just* Lord and God, but "my Lord" and "my God," making this "confession even more warmly personal and experiential."[71] Carson clarifies this by saying this does not "diminish the universality of Jesus' lordship and deity, but it ensures Thomas' words are a *personal* confession of faith."[72] It is in this light Thomas should be seen, as the one through whom John desired one of the highest praises of Jesus to come through, forming one of the

[63] Carson, *John*, 657; Ironside, *John*, 876.

[64] Bruner, *John*, 1185.

[65] Bruner, *John*, 1187.

[66] I agree with Beasley-Muray, *John*, 385; I do not go so far as Brown, on the other hand, who says John "would not have considered Thomas' faith adequate if the disciple had taken up Jesus' invitation and would never have put on Thomas' lips the tremendous confession of vs. 28;" Brown, *John*, 1046.

[67] Bruner, *John*, 1188.

[68] Beasley-Murray, *John*, 389; Brown, *John*, 1047; Köstenberger, *John*, 579.

[69] Brown, *John*, 1047.

[70] Beasley-Murray, *John*, 390.

[71] Bruner, *John*, 1188.

[72] Carson, *John*, 659.

most important verses of his gospel. Gregory the Great poetically summarized this experience of Thomas', "He saw a human being, and he confessed him as God."[73]

> John 20:29 Jesus says to him, "Because you have seen me you have believed; blessed are the ones who do not see and still believe."

Those who read Thomas as an antagonist of sorts, not one to be imitated, read Jesus words here as primarily negative toward Thomas' faith. Köstenberger agrees to a point, saying Jesus' word "constitutes a mild rebuke," but he clarifies by saying "The point of Jesus' remark is not so much to pronounce Thomas's faith inferior."[74] If Jesus' intended to rebuke Thomas, it seems he already did so and gracefully so in verse 27. Rather, it is more accurate not to see this as a condemnatory word. Carson says it is a "confirmation of Thomas' faith," which "triggers in Jesus' mind the next step, the coming-to-faith of those who cannot see but who will believe."[75] Jesus' final words to Thomas here bring to mind his prayers only a few chapters earlier, in which he begins by praying for his immediate disciples and ends by praying for "those who will believe in me through their message."[76] Bruner exclaims, "Jesus spreads a benediction over *us* readers and hearers, too… How kind! How like a Gospel!"[77]

Conclusion

Thomas is a complex, multidimensional character. He who colored him in did not stay within some lines. Though our minds enjoy flatly categorizing people as either "good" or "bad," "faithful" or "unfaithful," "wise" or "obtuse," sometimes these categories conflate. Even for John, who dualizes concepts like "light" and "dark," sometimes concepts cannot be so starkly separated. As Köstenberger says, "Remarkably… the categories between faith and unbelief are not rigid in John's presentation."[78] Instead, sometimes humans will be humans, complicated. Thomas' emotional doubt is highlighted brightly, but it only allows his lofty revelational confession to be highlighted even brighter.

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[73] Gregory the Great, *John 11-21* (ACCS), 373.

[74] Köstenberger, *John*, 580.

[75] Carson, *John*, 660.

[76] John 17:6-26, specifically verse 20.

[77] Bruner, *John*, 1189.

[78] Andreas J. Köstenberger, *A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters: Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2009), 12.3.8.

In churches today, doubt is often taboo: no one wants to admit they have doubts. When I was baptized as a child[79] my pastor asked me in front of the church, "Do you believe beyond the shadow of a doubt that, if you were to die today, you would go to be with the Lord in Heaven?" I still remember the roar of laughter from the congregation when my response came out of my mouth, "Um, I think so?" It seems to me to be very gracious of God to let Thomas' doubt stand up and introduce itself to Jesus, and to let Jesus show he is not afraid of it. Doubt must not be such a taboo in the church, because, as it stands, those with any measure of it either feel compelled to keep it cripplingly mum or to leave the Church out of sadness and fear they are not true disciples. Jesus does not shy away from doubt, but confronts it head-on. He only calls Thomas to turn away from his unfaith and toward faith, because "true faith, by its very nature, is faith that perseveres."[80] And so must we. We must walk with those in doubt, and call them toward faith..

[79] This was in my days before understanding Scripture from a mid-Acts dispensational perspective.

[80] Köstenberger, *Theology of John's Gospel*, 12.3.8.

A PAULINE DEFINITION OF WORSHIP

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With the advent of Christianity, Old Testament animal sacrifice was replaced by New Testament living sacrifice, a lifestyle of surrender to God and merciful service to others characterized by those who were called Christians. The ancient Christian apologist Marcus Minucius Felix, in his *Octavius*, dating from between 197 and A.D. 248,[1] affirms and rationalizes such a lifestyle as follows:

> Now you think that if we have neither temples nor altars we are concealing the object of our worship? But what image would I fashion for God, seeing that man can be rightly considered as himself the image of God? What temple would I erect to Him, seeing that this entire universe, the work of His hands, cannot contain Him? Would I enclose the might of such majesty within the confines of a single chapel, while I, a man, may lodge more spaciously? It is a better course, you must agree, that He should be dedicated in our minds, or rather consecrated in our hearts. Would I offer to God victims and sacrifices which He has produced for my benefit, casting back at Him His own gifts? That would show ingratitude, seeing that an honest heart, a pure mind, and a clear conscience make acceptable offerings. And, therefore, to cherish innocence is to make supplication to God; to practice justice is to pour libation to God; to refrain from wickedness is to offer propitiation to God; to rescue others from peril is to slay a perfect victim. These are our sacrifices, these are our acts of homage to God. This explains why, with us, a man is counted devout according as he is just.2

This chapter will explore the lifestyle of worship described above as the necessary foundation for all other acts of worship; for just as in the Old Testament God wanted his people's surrendered hearts of mercy rather than animal sacrifice (Hosea 6:6), this is what he still desires from us today (Romans 12:1-2). This lifestyle

[1]Marcus Minucius Felix, Octavius, trans. G. W. Clarke, Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation 39, ed. Johannes Quasten, Walter J. Burghardt, and Thomas Comerford Lawler (New York: Newman Press, 1974), 8.

[2]Ibid., 111-112.

of surrendered service to God and others will be referred to as incarnational living, because it is the means by which Christ can accomplish his work in the world today. As we put our whole selves—body, mind, and spirit—at the disposal of God, we are enabled to understand God's will for us and to execute it in our daily lives. We thus become Christ's hands and feet in the spheres of our own influence.

Biblical Foundations for Incarnational Living

Three Scripture passages will establish a biblical foundation for incarnational living today. Isaiah 6 narrates the story of the call of the prophet Isaiah in the eighth century before Christ during a time of turmoil and transition in the nation of Judah. Philippians 2:1-11 is the majestic account of the humiliation of Christ with a call for our own sacrificial service (verses 1-5). Romans 12:1-21 constitutes the Pauline appeal to incarnational living through the imagery of living sacrifice.

Isaiah 6

The book of Isaiah encompasses the historical period of the nation of Judah from the Assyrian captivity under Tiglath-pileser III (745-727 B.C.) and the Babylonian captivity under Nebuchadnezzar through the Persian captivity under Cyrus.[3] It then continues with the deliverance of Judah from Persia and the Jewish people's return to Palestine to rebuild the ruined cities of Judah, Jerusalem, and the temple.[4] The artistry of the book of Isaiah, according to Brueggemann, is in how it synthesizes "the realities of lived public history in that ancient world and the inscrutable reality of Yahweh," who is "reckoned to be the primal player in the life of Judah and in the life of the world around Judah."[5] The book of Isaiah establishes God as the rightful Sovereign of the world and for this very reason it makes an excellent starting point in the case for self-surrender as the gateway to incarnational living. God alone is all-worthy of our sacrificial service.

Not only is God sovereign, but he is also inclined toward his people, even though they have turned from him in rebellion. Isaiah is punctuated throughout with images of Yahweh's love for his people (43:4), his provision as their Husband (55:5-6), his care for his people as a Father (63:16) and as a Mother (66:13), his healing of them as their Physician (30:26), his work as Husbandman in meeting their needs (27:2-6), his care of them as their Shepherd (40:11), his shaping of

[3] Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1-39* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 60.
[4] John T. Willis, *Isaiah* (Austin, Tex.: Sweet Publishing Company, 1980), 40.
[5] Brueggeman, *Isaiah*, 1.

them as a Potter (29:16), and his instruction of them as their Teacher (48:17-18).[6] Andrew Bartelt finds in the language of Isaiah 6 powerful evidence of God's inclination toward his people through the image of God's glory which fills the temple and brings God's presence into space and time.[7] Bartelt contrasts the austere "otherness" of God, which seems to have overwhelmed the worshiper in this scenario, with God's "desire to make us a holy people by his grace and through the sacrifice that forgives sins and empowers holy lives."[8] This juxtaposition of God's sovereignty and mercy provides a powerful foundation for our understanding of the sacrificial worship inherent in incarnational living. God's sovereignty rightfully deserves our self-surrender, while his merciful and self-giving inclination toward us simultaneously invites and encourages our self-surrender.

Although some scholars have questioned the prophet Isaiah's sole authorship of the book of Isaiah through textual criticism and on the basis of the sweeping time frame of the book,[9] others have continued to uphold Isaiah's sole authorship.[10] John Oswalt bases his belief in one author of Isaiah on the "theological and ideological unity of the book" which precludes the "complex redactional process functioning over several hundred years" which is assumed by those who claim multiple authorship for the book of Isaiah.[11] My position, based on the witness of the New Testament, is that Isaiah is the sole author of this book. Several New Testament passages refer to the prophet Isaiah as the one who spoke messages recorded in chapters 40-66—chapters which some scholars have attributed to authors other than Isaiah himself.[12]

The book of Isaiah juxtaposes two kinds of sacrificial worship. Bartelt mentions the unholy sacrifices of a wealthy stratum of society in Judah who displease God with their "multitude of sacrifices" (Isaiah 1:11) offered without the sacrifice of their hearts.[13] Chapters one through five of Isaiah present the details and consequences of this abuse of sacrifice. Then follows the magnificent account of Isa-

[6] Willis, *Isaiah*, 36-37.

[7] Andrew H. Bartelt, "Isaiah 6: From Translation to Proclamation," *Concordia Journal* 39 (2013): 16-17.

[8] Ibid., 17.

[9] Willis, *Isaiah*, 20-21.

[10] For example, J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity, 1993), 23-30; John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1-39* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1986), 23-26.

[11] Oswalt, *Isaiah*, 25.

[12] References are listed in Willis, *Isaiah*, 30-31, and include Matthew 3:3; 8:17-21; John 1:23; 12:38-41; Romans 10:16; 10:20.

[13] Bartelt, "Isaiah 6," 16.

iah's calling in chapter 6, which provides the contrast to this abuse—Isaiah's own self-sacrifice. This chapter abounds in Old Testament sacrifice imagery, from the setting of the narrative in a temple-like room, to the smoke which implies sacrifice or incense,[14] to the altar with its burning coals. Such imagery supports my premise that Isaiah's offering of himself is an example of Old Testament living sacrifice.

Several points must be noted in reference to the self-sacrifice of Isaiah portrayed in Isaiah 6. First, Hans Wildberger notes God invites Isaiah into the "heavenly meeting of the full council, for 'surely Yahweh God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets' (Amos 3:7)."[15] This invitation is evidence of God's inclination toward his people as represented in the person of Isaiah—of God's self-giving toward them. Second, God does not command Isaiah's self-surrender but freely offers forgiveness as the unsolicited response to Isaiah's acknowledgment of his own unworthiness. Wildberger comments as follows:

> Naturally, God expects that Isaiah will declare himself ready to be sent. But one must understand that the history of traditions connected with the concept of the heavenly council dictated that this take the form of a question, not a direct command. … God wants Isaiah freely to make a decision. Isaiah, unlike Jeremiah, has the impression that he is in no way being coerced or even forced into service. Just like a heavenly being, he freely declares his readiness to be sent out: "Here am I, send me!"[16]

This appeal to Isaiah's free will in self-sacrifice foreshadows the Pauline appeal to self-sacrifice in Romans 12:1-2, which uses the term "beseech" and thus implies a softer sense than "command" would have portrayed. God wants our free decision to surrender ourselves in trust and love to him.

Third, Isaiah 6 emphasizes the two-way aspect of self-giving in the calling of Isaiah. Oswalt points out two thoughts form the core of Isaiah's theology: if humankind will humble himself before God, God will "raise us up to fellowship with himself."[17] Oswalt continues, "Conquerors cannot bend down to the lowly; the God of eternity is mighty enough to do so."[18] Our self-sacrifice, though it may loom as a potential loss to ourselves, is in reality not loss, but the gaining of communion with God in fellowship.

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[14] Ibid., 18

[15] Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12: A Commentary* (Trans. Thomas H. Trap; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 253.

[16] Ibid., 270.

[17] Oswalt, *Isaiah*, 32.

[18] Ibid.

The prophet Isaiah does not stop with the account of his own sacrifice, which is pleasing to God, in contrast to that of the Jewish people. In chapter 53, he prophecies the coming of the ultimate sacrifice in the person of Christ. This sacrifice is the deepest manifestation of God's self-giving to humankind. Above all, it reveals the heart of God, who "undoes and dismantles," but also "has procedures and means for reclamation of the one undone," according to Oswalt.[19]

Philippians 2:1-11

God's inclined heart is also clearly seen in Philippians 2:6-11, which provides an exposition of his plan to remedy fallen humanity. From this passage we learn Christ humbles himself to the point of giving himself to die for us. The apostle Paul summarizes how the incarnate Christ himself lived. If we are to live that same sacrificial lifestyle, we must study it well. Philippians 2:1-5 exhorts us to follow the lifestyle of the incarnate Christ, while Philippians 2:6-11 provides the description of that lifestyle through the demonstration of Christ's self-sacrifice. But first, we must better understand the people to whom Paul addresses this epistle.

Peter Oakes describes the ancient Roman colony of Philippi as "clearly of high strategic value" with its location on the route between Europe and Asia.[20] It was near the site where Antony and Octavian defeated Cassius and Brutus in 42 B.C.[21] Twelve years later, it was refounded as a Roman colony by Octavian who installed a company of Praetorians and a group of civilian supporters of Antony.[22] Peter Oakes has attempted to produce a model of the mid-first-century Philippian society around the time Paul wrote his epistle to the Philippians.[23] He concludes a population of around 10,000 people inhabited the city itself, while another 5,000 lived in surrounding suburbs; of these people, he estimates 40% would have been Roman and 60% Greek.[24] On the basis that Philippi was too remote to be of military significance, Oakes contradicts scholars who have traditionally held Philippi was largely inhabited by veterans of the Roman army.[25] Concerning the church at Philippi, Oakes speculates that 39-43% of the people would have been in the service professions, 16% would have been slaves, 15-23% would have been colonist

[19] Ibid., 59.

[20] Peter Oakes, *Philippians: From People to Letter* (SNTSMS 110; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 12.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., 13.

[23] Peter Oakes, *Philippians*.

[24] Ibid., 50.

[25] Ibid., 50-51.

farmers, 21-25% would have been the poor (below subsistence levels), and 1% would have been elite (military, or otherwise).[26] The picture portrayed by Oakes contrasts radically with Bruce Malina's model for the city of Philippi as 20% elite and 80% craftspeople.[27] Malina's Philippi would probably have been far wealthier and more influential than the one portrayed by Oakes. Oakes' proposed constit ency of predominantly poor and working class Greek non-citizens under Roman rule, however, provides some congruency for understanding the Pauline challenge in Philippians 2 and provides the model which I accept and build upon below.

Although scholars have usually maintained the sole authorship of the Apostle Paul for the epistle to the Philippians, redaction criticism since the nineteenth century has questioned whether the epistle was originally written as only one letter.[28] Ronald Allen proposes the first two chapters of this epistle constitute a second letter while the last two chapters are from a first letter.[29] Pheme Perkins finds three fragments in this epistle (1:1-3:1; 3:2-4:1; and 4:2-23).[30] As I make the biblical case for incarnational living, I support those scholars who see thematic consistency throughout the epistle—though admittedly interrupted with somewhat abrupt transitions at times—and maintain its literary integrity as an original whole text. Such a view supports my analysis of the epistle as unified by the theme of suffering and sacrifice—a theme which reappears throughout the epistle.

The genre of this epistle is also much debated. Stanley Stowers has identified it as a classic Greco-Roman friendship letter (using the ancient definition of friendship) with hortatory intent.[31] The ancient definition of friendship included political and business relationships as well as kinship. Carolyn Osiek views the letter as similar to a rhetorical speech in its structure; as such, it contains an *exordium* (opening; 1:1-11); a *narratio* (statement of background for coming arguments, 1:12-26); a *probatio* (arguments with examples; 1:27-3:21); a *peroratio* (a recapitulation intended to arouse commitment; 4:1-20); and a conclusion (4:21-23).[32] The theory I find most compelling, however, is the consensual *societas* model proposed

[26] Ibid., 61

[27] Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Third Ed; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 72.

[28] Carolyn Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 16.

[29] Ronald J. Allen, "Philippians 2:1-11," *Interpretation* 61 (2007): 72.

[30] Pheme Perkins, "Philippians: Theology for the Heavenly Politeuma," in *Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 98.

[31] Stanley K. Stowers, "Friends and Enemies in the Politics of Heaven: Reading Theology in Philippians," in *Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 107-108.

[32] Osiek, *Philippians*, 19-20.

by J. Paul Sampley.[33] According to Sampley, consensual *societas* was a "legally binding, reciprocal partnership or association, freely entered upon between one person and one or more other persons regarding a particular goal or shared concern."[34] Sampley notes that *societas* "allowed persons of different social strata to become equal partners with one another" and could involve even slaves, who usually had no legal standing in Roman law.[35] Sampley presents three examples of evidence that Paul and the Philippian Christians had entered into such a "consensual partnership in Christ for preaching the gospel:" (1) receipt terminology[36]; (2) the use of the term *koinonia* as partnership in *societas*, and (3) other terminology characteristic of *societas*.[37] Sampley also cites the use of "technical terms of law and commerce…some of these terms are *hapax legomena* in the Pauline corpus although they are common in extant commercial documents."[38] This interpretation seems to resonate with the diverse constituency of the Philippian church, for in this type of legal partnership all members regardless of social status would share a Christian mission, obligation, and voice. Paul's encouragement, exhortations, and instructions could then be construed as directives to partners in this consensual *societas*.

Regardless of whether or not such a legal partnership did exist between the Apostle Paul and the church at Philippi, this epistle is much more than a business letter. Paul is writing from prison—probably during his last imprisonment in Rome because of his reference to "Caesar's household" (4:22), although his imprisonment in Ephesus is another possibility (1 Corinthians 15:32; 16:8-9).[39] The occasion for writing the letter was Paul's sending of Epaphroditus back to the Philippian church; he had fallen ill while traveling with Paul but was now either recovered or recovering.[40] Paul seizes the opportunity to thank the Philippians for their financial support (or possibly reimbursement) as well as to exhort them in their situation at Philippi. As we have seen, most of the church members would likely have been non-citizen Greeks, without notable status, and under alien (Roman) rule, even though residing in their homeland. Such conditions could be

[33] J. Paul Sampley, *Pauline Partnership in Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971) 11-20; 51-72.

[34] Ibid., 13.

[35] Ibid., 17.

[36] Partners who incurred expenses could be expected to keep an account (ibid., 15).

[37] Ibid., 51.

[38] Ibid., 53.

[39] Dennis Hamm, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2013), 61.

[40] Ibid., 67.

perceived as suffering, even if no active religious persecution were taking place, although it may well have been. In this context, Paul reminds the Philippians of the humiliation and servanthood of Christ (2:6-11), and asks them to pattern their lives after that model (2:1-5). Philippians 2:6-11 is sometimes called a "hymn" and may have existed before Paul's writing of this epistle, although, according to Dennis Hamm, "a pre-Pauline composition is no longer a consensus view among scholars."[41] At any rate, this passage is an exquisite account of the Gospel of Jesus Christ set forth as a model to be emulated by the Christians at Philippi. Paul crafts the language specifically with them in mind, describing Christ's humiliation as taking the form of a servant (Philippians 2:7), a degraded status well understood by the Greek Philippians within their imposed Greco-Roman society as noted by Oakes:

> Christ was heard to suffer obediently the worst possible death. He was heard to be raised to universal authority. The logic of this was heard as natural because self-sacrificing, morally good acts were a common legitimation of imperial power. The Philippians (with the prompting of 1.27-2.4) inferred from 2.6-11 that they should be willing to lose status and suffer faithfully. They inferred that Christ's authority made his imperatives and security far outweigh those of the society in which they lived.42

A careful study of the hymn today will simultaneously demonstrate to us the ultimate model of self-sacrifice and instruct us in incarnational living. According to Alva McClain, the action of Christ in verse 7, *ekenosen* (self-emptying), is in the aorist tense, and "seems to favor a definite act, once for all."[43] First, Christ emptied himself, "stooping from God to humanity;" and then, he humbled himself, "stooping from humanity to death," in the full assurance all would be returned to him after he had accomplished his purpose of redemption.[44] Osiek defines this kenosis as Christ's own choice and action of giving up "the status and quality of God" and taking on "the far inferior status of humanity by becoming incarnate."[45] Without giving up any aspect of his deity, Christ voluntarily surrendered himself to the "power and direction of the Father through the Holy Spirit."[46] David MacLeod articulates that Christ had an unfallen human nature; therefore, death

[41] Ibid., 66-67.

[42] Oakes, *Philippians*, 207-208.

[43] Alva J. McClain, "The Doctrine of the Kenosis in Philippians 2:5-8," *MSJ Journal* 9 (1998): 89; reprinted from *The Biblical Review* 13.4 (October 1928):506-27.

[44] Ibid., 90.

[45] Osiek, *Philippians*, 61.

[46] Alva, "Doctrine of Kenosis," 92.

was not inevitable for him.[47] According to Ernest F. Scott, the full magnitude of Christ's self-giving life on earth was a revelation of who he has been from eternity.[48] This knowledge compels us to a life of self-surrender and self-giving. We must acknowledge we have already been given the mind of Christ (2:5) with which to carry out the service of God in the interests of others (2:4).[49] Thus the example of Christ recorded in Philippians 2:1-11 becomes our call to an incarnational style of Christian living and service and our model for a Pauline definition of Christian worship today.

Romans 12

Our obligation toward incarnational living through self-sacrifice is laid out in the twelfth chapter of Romans where the apostle Paul urges us to present our bodies as living sacrifices to God (Romans 12:1). In order to understand this exhortation in context, I will now examine the historical and cultural frame of the Roman churches to whom Paul addresses his epistle.

Based on Paul's reference to "Erastus, the city treasurer" (Rom 16:32) who is linked to the city of Corinth by 2 Tim 4:20, Luke Timothy Johnson proposes Paul wrote this letter from Corinth during the winter of 57-58.[50] This letter differs from other Pauline letters in that Paul had never been to Rome and was not the founder of Christianity there.[51] Marva Dawn has observed, on the basis of the list of believers in Romans 16, the letter was probably addressed to several small Roman house churches led by both men and women.[52] Acts 18:2-3 presents evidence of Emperor Claudius' banishing Jewish Christians from Rome in 49 A.D.; Aquila and Priscilla were among the exiles and fled to Corinth.[53] George Smiga sees this temporary expulsion of Jewish Christians (49 A.D. to 54 A.D.) as a key to interpreting the purpose of this epistle.[54] Gentile Christians took leadership over the house church-

[47] David J. MacLeod, "Imitating the Incarnation of Christ: An Exposition of Philippians 2:5-8," *BibSac* 158 (2001): 327.

[48] Ernest F. Scott, "The Epistle to the Philippians," (IB 11; New York: Abingdon, 1955), 47.

[49] Allen, "Philippians 2:1-11," 73.

[50] Luke Timothy Johnson, *Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1997), 4.

[51] Marva J. Dawn, *Truly the Community: Romans 12 and How to Be the Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1992), 4.

[52] Ibid., 4.

[53] Johnson, *Romans*, 4.

[54] George Smiga, "Romans 12:1-2 and 15:30-32 and the Occasion of the Letter to the Romans," *CBQ* 53 (1991): 262.

es during this time, and when the Jewish believers returned, conflict arose on the place of Israel in the new Christian schema.[55] This division can be seen as one purpose for Paul's letter to the Romans. Johnson cites another purpose as Paul's appeal for financial support in his plan to evangelize Spain (Rom 15:23-24).[56]

Christopher Bryan defines the genre of Romans as *protreptic*, a philosophical form associated with a particular school or ideology and used to "confirm believers and to convert outsiders, inquirers, or neophytes."[57] According to Bryan, this form supports the purpose of a particular ideology, while refuting arguments against it, and frequently includes a *parainesis* (passage of appeal and exhortation).[58] His analysis of Romans as *protreptic* includes the epistolary opening (1:1-15); the refutation (*apelegmos*; 1:16-4:25); the affirmation (*endeiktikos*; 5:1-11:36); the exhortation (*parainesis*; 12:1-15:13); and the conclusion (15:14-16:23).[59] Espousing this theory, I believe the ideology being affirmed by Paul is the efficacy of the gospel of salvation by grace through faith for all who believe, Jew and Gentile alike; and the argument being refuted is either group of Roman believers (Jew or Gentile) has an exclusive right to the gospel. The pinnacle of the entire epistle is Romans 12:1-2, which links the expository chapters (1-11) and the hortatory chapters (12-16). It also articulates the remedy for the disunity of the Roman church houses: "Present your bodies as living sacrifices to God." Self-sacrifice in the context of the Roman churches would generate loving service toward one another and at the same time produce in the congregation a desire to help Paul in his proposed evangelization of Spain.

A study of Paul's writing technique indicates his inclusivity toward both factions in the Roman church. Timothy Johnson views Paul's treatise as a form of Jewish midrash (his use of Torah in argument) combined with Greco-Roman diatribe (the type common to Greco-Roman classrooms).[60] The apostle Paul juxtaposes Greco-Roman imperial and Jewish phraseology indiscriminately throughout the book. For example, Romans 1:1-5 couches the gospel in Jewish terms (verse 3) and then in Greco-Roman imperial terms (verse 5).[61]

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[55] Ibid.

[56] Johnson, *Romans*, 6.

[57] Christopher Bryan, *A Preface to Romans: Notes on the Epistle in its Literary and Cultural Setting* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 19.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid., 19-23.

[60] Johnson, 11-13.

[61] Neil Elliott observes "the obedience of nations was the prerogative claimed by the Roman emperor." Neil Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow*

In our postmodern world of diversity, we, like the Roman believers, are confronted with the appeal of Romans 12:1-2. We are called to live the incarnational life represented by this living sacrifice imagery described in verses 3-21; therefore, a careful textual study of this chapter is in order.

Christopher Bryan calls Romans 12:1-2 the "climax and purpose of his [Paul's] *protreptic*: the exhortation, or *parainesis*," and cites the phrase "I appeal to you" as a typical introduction to the *parainesis*.[62] James Dunn argues Paul is framing the obedience demanded here in cultic language in an effort to transfer identity from Israel to the body of Christ.[63] The notion of sacrifice is supremely familiar to Jewish and Gentile believer alike, but the notion of "living" sacrifice is a new concept for a new entity—a unified body of Jewish and Gentile believers called the body of Christ. This phenomenon must not be interpreted exclusively as spiritual sacrifice, but must be what James Dunn refers to as a "somatizing," or a "physical embodiment of the individual's consecration in the concrete realities of daily life."[64] This sacrificial lifestyle indeed utilizes both our material bodies as well as our self-surrendered mindset and hearts. Bryan makes the point the life sacrificed by the believer is the new life that has been acquired in relationship with Christ (Rom 6:4).[65]

The verb "present" is in the aorist tense, which signifies an initial action at a point in time; but as we will see, that action must be repeated whenever necessary. James Montgomery Boice identifies our model as Christ who was both the Sacrifice and the Priest when he offered himself on the cross for our redemption.[66] The presentation of ourselves as living sacrifices is the key to incarnational living. This sacrifice is not commanded, but is to be given by us as a free offering in view of the mercies we have received from God. It is holy and acceptable to God because it is a life has been redeemed by the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ. Marva Dawn traces the word "holy" back to the Old Testament image of a vessel set apart for holy service; in this way, we who present ourselves to God are also set apart for his service.[67]

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of the Empire (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 25.

[62] Bryan, *Romans*, 194.

[63] James D. Dunn, *Romans 9-16* (WBC 38; Dallas: Word, 1988), 705.

[64] Ibid., 709.

[65] Bryan, *Romans*, 195.

[66] James Montgomery Boice, *Renewing Your Mind in a Mindless World: Learning to Think and Act* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 1993), 32.

[67] Dawn, *Truly the Community*, 23.

Our action of self-surrender is identified by God as our "true and proper worship" (Rom 12:1, NIV). The English Standard Version uses the term "spiritual worship." The word translated spiritual is *logikos*, which according to Douglas Moo, has a significant background in Greek and Hellenistic Jewish philosophy and religion.[68] Certain Greek philosophers believed only *logikos* worship was truly worship; this idea was then adopted by Hellenistic Jews who stressed the necessity of self-giving with sacrifice, as we see in Philo's writing (*Special Laws* 1.272):

> And indeed though the worshippers bring nothing else, in bringing themselves they offer the best of sacrifices, the full and truly perfect oblation of noble living, as they honor with hymns and thanksgivings their Benefactor and Savior, God.[69]

Paul continues in Romans 12:2 with the appeal that the believer should not be conformed (*syschematizesthe*) to his world, a phrase Boice interprets as the fourfold worldly mindset of secularism, humanism, relativism and materialism.[70] N. T. Wright interprets the verb "conformed" as being squeezed into the world's mould.[71] This image is then counter-balanced with Paul's exhortation to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. In this concept lies the key to the continuous mindset and lifestyle of incarnational living. Boice states the Greek word *metamorphosis* is the same word used in the Gospels to describe Christ's transfiguration on the mountain with Peter, James, and John.[72] According to Bryan, the present tense of both the terms "conformed" and "transformed" are in present tense, indicating an ongoing process in which old thinking must be replaced with new Christ-like thinking.[73] Marva Dawn observes the present tense and passive voice of the verb "transformed" indicates God is continually acting upon us to create the persons and communities he wants us to be.[74] Although this transformation is the work of the Holy Spirit within us, we are responsible to fill our minds with the Word of God through a five-fold pattern articulated by Chip Ingram as hearing God's Word (Rom 10:17), reading God's Word (Rev 1:3), studying God's Word (II Tim 2:15), memorizing God's Word (Ps 119:9, 11) and meditating on God's Word

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[68] Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1996), 752.

[69] Philo, *Special Laws,* 1.272, as quoted in Moo, *Romans*, 752.

[70] Boice, *Renewing Your Mind*, 73-80.

[71] N. T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: Romans, Part 1* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 68.

[72] Boice, *Renewing Your Mind*, 82.

[73] Bryan, *Romans*, 196.

[74] Dawn, *Truly the Community*, 40.

(Josh 1:8).[75] The result of this continual transformation of the mind in a constant stance of self-surrender is that believers will be able to approve, or live out, God's will in their lives.

The word "prove" in Romans 12:2 (*dokimazo*), according to Douglas Moo, means to "understand and agree with what God wants of us with a view of putting it into practice," and stands in contrast to the unregenerate "worthless" mind that is "unqualified" to understand the ways of God (Rom 1:28).[76] Johnson cites Romans 2:18 to establish the contrast between the unregenerate mind and the transformed mind: the Jews boasted of the ability to determine God's will by the Torah, but now Christians are able to determine God's will because their minds are being renewed by Christ.[77] According to Johnson, Paul is using, in the term "prove," a reference to the Greek philosophical concept of prudence (*phronesis*), which was the virtue of putting knowledge of the good into practice.[78] Marva Dawn gives the term "prove" a practical nature: "Just at the right moment when we need to know, we will know—provided we are open to God's action in our lives and his renewing of our minds."[79] Boice observes the Holy Spirit is praying for us according to God's will for us, and that his will is perfect *(teleios*) in the sense it is complete or characteristic of the mature Christian.[80] It is, however, our obligation to put God's will in place by submitting to him, and only then will we know his will for us is good, pleasing, and perfect.[81]

The remaining verses of Romans12 flesh out the implications of God's will for us in incarnational living. The admonition in verse 3 not to be high-minded supports Paul's purpose to reinstitute unity between Gentile and Jewish believers. Our thinking, Paul states, must be according to the measure God has given us in his Word. According to Ingram, this measure constitutes all the truths which have been articulated in the first eleven chapters of Romans:

> We are completely new creatures when we put our trust in Jesus. Our old man dies, we receive the Holy Spirit, we have become an entirely new person (2 Corinthians 5:17) with a new standing and position before God. This call for an accurate view of self is to see yourself through the lens of Scripture.82

[75] Chip Ingram, *True Spirituality: Becoming a Romans 12 Christian* (New York: Howard Books, 2009), 98-99.

[76] Moo, *Romans*, 757.

[77] Johnson, *Romans*, 180.

[78] Ibid., 180.

[79] Dawn, *Truly the Community*, 53.

[80] Boice, *Romans*, 124-125.

[81] Ibid, 128.

[82] Ingram, *True Spirituality*, 132.

Bryan notes in this hortatory passage Paul speaks in Hellenistic values of "familial affection, mutual honor, and that ability to endure which is a mark of true self-control."[83] But that these values were to govern behavior toward the outside (unbelieving) community would have been contrary to both Jewish and pagan cultural understanding, which viewed outsiders as "less than fully human."[84] In God's perfect will, however, all mankind must be welcomed into the community of faith. Romans 12:3-21 addresses God's will not only that the Jewish and Gentile believers in Rome would be unified in gracious living with one another, but their love would extend to unbelievers around them as well. This passage, then, provides for us a working definition of incarnational living in our own society—we are to offer our lives as living sacrifices to embody God's love and mercy to all people around us.

In summary, Isaiah 6:1-11 presents an Old Testament example of Isaiah's self-surrender as a living sacrifice—a model which foreshadows both the sacrificial work of Christ and the Pauline definition of Christian worship as self-surrender. Philippians 2:1-11 describes the ministry of Christ as the Ultimate Sacrifice given to the Father on our behalf, and exhorts us to follow in his example. Finally, Romans 12 exhorts the believer to make an offering of his or her body as a living sacrifice at a certain point in time and continually thereafter. These biblical passages lay the foundation for a Pauline understanding of Christian worship as a daily stance of self-surrender to God and self-giving service to others through incarnational living for Christ.

[83] Bryan, *Romans*, 200.
[84] Ibid., 203-204.

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Worship as a Sub-theme in the Book of Romans[1]

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Introduction

Romans 12:1-2 is a key passage when studying worship in the New Testament, and especially Paul's understanding of worship. These verses form a solid foundation (or a framework) for worship in an overall sense. One can also look to the entire book of Romans and see a clear picture for a broad-based perspective on worship. There appear to be structural elements which build toward Romans 12, and beyond that to explain the results of a life dedicated to worship.

It appears worship in Romans may have been a deliberate sub-theme Paul placed within the book, or it may just be the result of Paul's overall perspective on the Christian life as a lifestyle of worship. He shows how it intertwines with the realities of our daily lives based on the wider perspective he has as an expert and interpreter of the Old Testament. His special understanding of Israel's stunted relationship with God, as well as God's gracious gift of salvation to the Gentiles, is evident throughout the entire book of Romans.

Essentially there is a four-fold consideration of worship within Romans which can be delineated in the following way:

- The Focus of Worship (Romans 1:18-32)
- The Faith of Worship (Romans 4:19-5:11)
- The Form of Worship (Romans 12:1-8)
- The Fellowship of Worship (Romans 15:1-7)

[1]This article is adapted from Mark Sooy, *The Life of Worship: Rethink, Reform, Renew* (Blue Maroon, 2006).

These four principles paint an extensive portrait of what worship is to be, and not be, in the realm of human experience.

The Focus of Worship

> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor (glorify) Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. (Romans 1:18-23)

Romans 1:18-23 is a well-known description of man's innate understanding there is something, or Someone, beyond himself. Deep within the heart of man is a yearning and searching for meaning. This search can only be accomplished when man's spirit is united with the Creator. As St. Augustine famously wrote, "You stir man to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."[2] Only when the soul rests in God is the innate yearning satisfied, yet our search is hindered by sin. The rest Adam enjoyed with God in the garden was shattered through his pride and disobedience. The resulting separation from God, the damaged relationship between God and mankind, extends to each of us today, and yet it is the continued search for restoring this most significant of relationships that consumes our innermost being.

Paul acknowledges this scenario as he begins his discussion in Romans. We can perceive his mind is centered on the ideas of worship and glorifying God for his vocabulary is full of such references. He speaks of "honoring" or "glorifying" God (1:21) and the "glory of the incorruptible God" (1:23). He notes how humanity "worshiped" and "served," which denotes the concepts of commitment and focus (1:25).

Rather than being a presentation of properly focused worship, Paul is describing the *wrong focus* in these first few verses of Romans. Humanity's sin so blinded each person that there is no end to the lusts and desires that promote self. Rather than listening to the voice of God, found both within themselves (1:19) and with-

[2]Augustine, *Confessions*, Trans. by Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3.

out (1:20), humankind pursue their own lusts and pleasures and their hearts are perpetually darkened (1:21).

This darkened heart leads man continually away from God. Paul even directly refers to this in 3:11-12, "There is none who seeks for God; All have turned aside…." Man has become wise in his own eyes and exchanged the true worship and service of the incorruptible God for "an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures" (1:23). Mankind is addicted to idolatry and seeks to fill the inner yearning with everything other than God Himself.

If there seems to be a stark contrast between the ways of sinful man and the ways of God in these verses, it is because there ***is*** a stark contrast. God's ways and wisdom are wholly different than sinful humanity's, and the ways of sinful man are always to turn away from God in pursuit of his own desires. Look at the opposites Paul uses even in these few short verses: suppressed truth (v. 18) and revealed truth (v. 19); clear knowledge about God (v. 20) and futile speculations (v. 21); clear sight (v. 20) and darkened (v. 21); wisdom and foolishness (v. 22); the reality of God and the image of creatures (v. 23); and the incorruptible and the corruptible (v. 23).

Later in the book, Paul contrasts the freedom and redemption in Christ as signified by the gospel, and the power of sin and death in the law; the contrast of law and gospel. For some theologians this is especially significant. For good reason Martin Luther allows the contrast of law and gospel to infiltrate his entire theological perspective–because he finds it in Paul's epistles, and in Romans in particular. "According to Luther, the preservation of pure doctrine absolutely depends on the accurate theological statement of the nature and meaning of both law and gospel; they must be carefully distinguished and their true relationship to each other must be rightly understood."[3]

> Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being

[3]Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 251.

> filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and, although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them. (Romans 1:24-32)

The results of idolatry and misplaced worship were, and continue to be, devastating for humanity and his broken relationship with the Creator God. The effects of this broken relationship are tragic and ongoing. Paul uses the phrase "*God gave them over*" three times to describe the results of man's rejection of God's love and activity among them.

First, "God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them" (1:24). The deterioration of the body in sickness, disease, and brokenness is directly the result of sin. Ultimately the body dies, yet it was never meant to. Only because of sin (can we call it misplaced worship?) and its results does this wasting away occur. Worship directed toward self and self-satisfaction is ultimately unsatisfying and destructive.

Second, "God gave them over to degrading passions" (1:26). This in turn led to promiscuity and homosexuality, and all of the associated problems of this kind of evil lifestyle. The word "degrading" should be a clue promiscuity and homosexuality are steps leading away from God and his purposes for human relationships. In fact, Paul describes the ultimate results of these lifestyles as "the due penalty of their error" (1:27). Again, worship is misplaced and focused toward those who cannot fulfill the yearning.

Third, "God gave them over to a depraved mind" (1:28). Note the first two examples refer to external actions. Now Paul comes full circle and commits the whole man to sinfulness. Although not yet considered in this article, one can reflect on Romans 12:1-2 and the importance of the internal (thinking) and external (action), as well as the interdependence of the two. Here in the first chapter of Romans Paul reflects this same idea as he describes God as allowing man the fullness not only of depraved activity, but also of a depraved mind. The cycle of sinfulness and denial of God is complete both internally (mind) and externally (actions). This cycle will continue in human experience without divine intervention to bring health and healing. Paul ultimately shows the divine intervention personified in Christ.

All of this sinful denial of God and misplaced worship takes place in spite of humanity's knowledge of God the Creator. Paul clearly states mankind had every opportunity to acknowledge God as God. He states, "that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them" (1:19) and that the invisible nature of God was "clearly seen, being understood through what has been made" (1:20; see also Psalm 19). He also shows humanity "knew God" (1:21), had access to his truth (1:25), and knew the "ordinance of God" (1:32).

In spite of all the evidence, mankind rejected him and his persistent offers of mercy. There is every indication, as well, that humanity has made this decision willfully and with sufficient knowledge of who God was and what he was doing. There is no other conclusion than to say humanity, in the person of Adam and ever since, chooses to worship and serve everything and anything other than God. The misplaced worship of Adam, as he esteemed his own thoughts and desires higher than God's (otherwise known as autonomous *pride*), truly flows in the blood of every one of his children, and though we yearn and search for the fulfillment only God can provide, we willfully wander the other way.

The Faith of Worship: Abraham

> In hope against hope [Abraham] believed, in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, "So shall your descendants be." And without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong, in faith giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform. Therefore, also it was reckoned to him as righteousness. (Romans 4:18-22)

Although it is evident man misplaces, or misdirects, his service and worship when left on his own, there has always been a divine solution to this problem, and that solution remains today. Paul addresses this in a theme which might be considered the main emphasis of Romans: faith.

Faith is central in the whole biblical narrative, even early in Genesis, and Paul uses his knowledge of Scripture to pursue this theme. That we would find a connection here between Paul's discussion of Abraham's faith and the concept of worship is demonstrated in the vocabulary Paul uses.

Romans 4 explains the way of faith as exemplified in Abraham. Although he could be considered a man of good works, Abraham's activities and "goodness" were not able to earn God's favor. "For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God" (4:2). This coincides with what we

saw in Romans 1. Man's ability to worship and serve God properly was damaged by the Fall, and this is true of Abraham as well.

However, Abraham is held up as one who responded to the evidence of God's mercy around him and believed what he heard and saw. It was this belief, this faith, that allocated God's saving mercy into his life. This is what Paul designates as righteousness (4:3-5). In simpler terms, righteousness is the status of a rightly restored relationship with God. Paul contrasts Abraham's faith in God's word and promises with the lack of faith described earlier in Romans 1. Evidence of God's word and activity were known in both cases, but only acted on by Abraham.

Paul says Abraham's faith gave "glory to God" (4:20), thus establishing a connection with worship terminology. Abraham's unwavering faith in God's promises is the example of a proper response and appropriately focused worship.

Abraham was around 100 years old when God promised to give him a son, and Sarah's womb was "dead" according to Paul's account (4:19). In truth, all of the odds were against Abraham. He was old, his wife was old, the likelihood of either one of them parenting a child was slim, and literally impossible for the two of them to have a child together.

Yet Abraham responded in faith. He did not "listen" to his body or his observations of the deadness of Sarah's womb, but he listened to God's words and believed them. Paul says he did not "become weak in faith" (4:19) or "waver in unbelief" (4:20), but rather "grew strong, in faith giving glory to God" (4:20). Abraham knew this in the deepest part of his being and he believed what God promised he would be able to perform (4:21). It was this faith, this belief, which became the cornerstone of Abraham's righteousness. It is a righteousness based not on his own actions, but upon the Word and promises of God.

That Abraham's active faith can be considered true worship may be best summarized by Martin Luther's words in commenting on the first commandment, "If your faith and confidence are right, then likewise your God is the true God. On the other hand, if your confidence is false, if it is wrong, then you have not the true God. For the two, faith and God, have inevitable connection. Now, I say, whatever your heart clings to and confides in, that is really your God."[4]

[4]Martin Luther, *Luther's Large Catechism* (Trans. J. N. Lenker; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1935), 44.

The Faith of Worship: Us

> For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. (Romans 5:6-11)

This divine provision of faith, as exemplified by Abraham, comes to us as well through Christ. Paul proceeds in Romans 5 to draw the parallels between our faith and Abraham's faith. And again, Paul uses worship related terms. He writes "we exult" regarding to God himself and his glory (see 5:2 and 11). This exultation only comes our way by faith and through the work of Christ.

Just like Abraham, all of the odds were against us. Paul describes us as "still helpless" and "ungodly" (5:6) and "sinners" (5:8) when God demonstrated his love through Christ. Not only that, we were actually his enemies when he reconciled us to himself through the death of his Son (5:10). Even now, as we look at ourselves before God's call, we must admit the impossible position we were in to draw near to God in any way. In Ephesians, Paul describes us as having "no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). This would appear to be a position of complete despair.

Yet, just as Abraham responded in faith and believed God's word and promises, Paul recognizes we also can respond to God's word and promises by faith. In spite of how things appeared and our inability on our own to have a relationship with God, he calls us to faith in Christ and to be reconciled with Him (Romans 5:8-11). God's grand "Yes" of Christ and the Gospel trumps the "No" found in the power of sin and the Law, as reflected in Paul's comment in 2 Corinthians 1:20, "For as many as may be the promises of God, in Him they are yes; wherefore also by him is our Amen to the glory of God through us."[5]

The divine provision and gift of faith helps the believer to grow strong and persevere (5:3-4). This, again, is a direct parallel with Abraham's ability to not waver in his faith in spite of his supposed reality. The progress of our daily salvation

[5]The idea of God's "Yes" in Christ in contrast to the "No" of sin and the Law is also a common theme of many theologians. It seems to me to be most highly definite in Martin Luther's writings in the contrast of Law and Gospel, as well as in Karl Barth's theology, the very nature of which is described in its name: Dialectic Theology.

(sanctification) in the Christian life is seen in the development of godly character. Tribulations lead to perseverance, which lead to proven character and hope. God is intimately involved in our growth and progress of faith from beginning to end.

This is also evident in the Trinitarian perspective displayed in Romans 5. We have already noted God's work of reconciliation through the work of Christ on the cross. Often we overlook the truth in Romans 5:5 which brings the reality of God's love into our daily life, "because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." This is our security, our absolute confidence in God's word and promises for what we need in our lives. Ephesians 1:13-14 describes the Spirit as the "down payment" for the promises of God. Just like Abraham, God will deliver to us the promises he made.

And so, "we exult…we exult…we exult…" says Paul (5:2, 3, 11). As our response to God reflects the response of Abraham, we are made righteous beside him. This righteousness is a gift of mercy from the love of God, not because of anything we have done, but as Paul goes on to say, "…even so through the obedience of the One the many were made righteous" (5:19). This is the faith of worship, and our exultation is thanksgiving for what he has given us in Christ!

The Form of Worship

> Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. (Romans 12:1-8)

Let us now turn to Romans 12, a well-known and studied passage. However, it is often separated from the larger context of worship in the whole book of Romans. It is important to connect this passage with the larger picture of what Paul is teaching in the full text. There are several points to be made regarding Romans 12.

First, we observe the form or pattern of worship in Romans 12 is physical and

active. This is what it means to present our bodies (12:1). Appropriately, it comes in Romans after the discussion of the faith of worship, for the actions of worship must only be a thankful response to a work already completed in us, rather than a way to earn the favor of God. Faith first, then action–just like Abraham!

Second, we balance the physical and active with the internal. To phrase it a different way, one might say the appropriate form of worship comes out of, or is the result of the right attitude about worship. Note the importance of the "renewed mind" and that our activity is always the result of our internal decisions (12:2).

Third, the form of worship is empowered by God. It is God who has gifted his people to serve him and others. This is why his love has been "poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Romans 5:5). Our ability to serve God and others is empowered by His indwelling Spirit. Paul's writings are filled with references to the work of the Spirit in our lives, and this is evidenced in Romans 12 as he has "allotted to each a measure of faith" (12:3). He has given us what we need for what he is asking us to do.

Fourth, and ultimately, the best form of worship is cooperative. As God has gifted each person, we are then responsible to serve others with those gifts (12:4-8). None of us have all the gifts. We need each other to be complete and serve in the fullness of the Body of Christ. This diversity and unity is vital to the proper working of the church. In fact, this unified diversity is worship in the truest sense of the word.

The Fellowship of Worship

> Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell upon Me." For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus; that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God. (Romans 15:1-7)

We now come to the finale, so to speak, of the picture of worship Paul is painting throughout the book of Romans. We find here the goal to which this path has been leading. Let us remember our steps quickly in shortened form. First, we saw the focus of worship to be God and God alone, and the corruption that is a result

by misplacing that worship onto idols of any kind, whether it be man, beast or non-living entity (Romans 1). Then Abraham was presented as an example of true worship. His worship was one of responsive obedience and an unwavering belief God could and would do what he promised. We referred to this as the faith of worship (Romans 4-5).

After this, the path led once again to Romans 12 and the reality of worship being both internal and external. This is the form of worship that engulfs the whole person and the whole of daily life. And now we come to the fellowship of worship, which ultimately signifies the wholeness, not only of each person, but also of the Church, which is Christ's body.

We can examine this goal for living the Christian life in the worship of God in Paul's words in Ephesians 4:13. Paul indicates the point of the lifestyle of worship within the Church is to "attain to the unity of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ." Although we find this concise phrase describing the results of a healthy Church life in Ephesians, we also find this end goal for our worship described in Romans 15:1-7.

As before, we discover Paul using worship terminology to discuss the fellowship of Christians loving and serving one another. He is expecting the combined Christian effort of living godly lives to issue forth in a unity of purpose and voice. "That with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (15:6). Obviously, from the perspective of the larger context, our unified "voice" is not necessarily vocal but a reflection of our daily lives of obedience and service (i.e., faith).

> "The word liturgy [i.e., the service of the people] derives from the Greek *leitourgia*. The Greek connotes an action through which persons come together to become something corporately which they were not as separate individuals. It means a gathering whose unifying purpose is to serve (minister to) the world on behalf of God."[6]

In this pattern of the worship life we are to be others focused. Paul refers to our "neighbor" (15:2) and his or her needs as that which determines our activity. He even points to Christ as an example of this outward focus (15:3). It is clear here, and in other places, the life of worship is one of actively serving God by serving others. James indicates this in his epistle when he says, "Show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works" (James 2:18). This is not to say a verbal and community time of "worship" (i.e., a worship service) is

[6]igen Guroian, "Seeing Worship as Ethics: An Orthodox Perspective" in *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 13 (1985), 334.

unimportant, but in the broad sense of the idea of worship in Scripture such an occasion is only a part.

Paul also has the expectation we will be committed to the body of Christ, forgiving and loving one another as God forgave and loved us (15:7). This matter of loving, forgiving, and persevering with and for one another draws the body together. Paul says it leads to the "same mind" (15:5) with "one accord" and "one voice" (15:6). This is unity. Unity in diversity is a hallmark of the Body of Christ. We differ in our giftedness and abilities, yet serve toward the same purpose; bringing glory (worship) to God.

Of course, Paul reiterates the "renewal of the mind" (12:2) idea in 15:4 when he states, "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." It is no accident Paul reuses phrases and terms we have already discussed in previous sections. His thinking is interconnected throughout Romans, and his desire is that the Body of Christ becomes a community of loving individuals unified in their service to God so that God would be glorified in what we do.

And so we see worship is an integral theme in the book of Romans. It would be unique if it only appeared here, but one may also observe these concepts cross through many of Paul's writings, as well as the other writers of the New Testament. Indeed they should, since they are founded upon principles laid down in the Old Testament. This is why it is important to *think* properly about worship, so we may then experience a life of worship, which encompasses the whole of our daily lives.

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The Challenge of Sabbath and the Rest of God

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Introduction

Keeping the Sabbath holy (Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15) amidst the modern technological distractions (i.e. social media, Internet, TV, smart phones) is challenging. We have become increasingly distracted with our ever-present social media updates and email reminding us of what we might be missing if we simply shut down our devices and focus on the presence of God. Whether observing a literal Sabbath is necessary, the need for regularly experiencing the presence and "rest" of God is clearly important to contemporary Christians who seek to experience God's presence. Because of our many distractions, experiencing the rest of God is more necessary today than ever before.

In this article, I will look at the example given through God's commandments to Moses (Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15), considerations from Jewish and "High Church" and "Low Church" traditions, Colossians 2:16 and Acts 10 to lend guidance on considering the implications of Sabbath rest to contemporary Christians today. Many modern believers (especially within Evangelicalism) do not observe a literal Sabbath. This non-practice will be reviewed in order to unpack the implications of current cultural practice. This is far from the final word, but merely an invitation to consider how Christians might engage Sabbath rest as a divine gift if God

Sabbath in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15)

Sabbath is prescribed as one of the "Ten Commandments" in Scripture (Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15) along with the commandments of having no gods before the Lord (Exod 20:3; Deut 5:7), not creating and worshipping any carved image (Exod 20:4-6; Deut 5:8) and not taking the Lord's name in vain (Exod 20:7; Deut

5:11). God's children were commanded to honor their parents (Exod 20: 12; Deut 5:16). Other commandments included the prohibition against murder (Exod 20: 13; Deut 5:17), adultery (Exod 20:14; Deut 5:18), stealing (Exod 20:15; Deut 5:19), bearing false witness or committing perjury (Exod 20: 16; Deut 5:20) and coveting one's neighbor's wife or lusting after someone other than one's spouse (Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21). Each of these prescriptive (or proscriptive) statements provided a context for spiritual development and right living to the Israelites. Though we will examine the later implications of Sabbath in particular in the present age, at first reading all of the commandments give clear guidance for God's people, whether Jew or Gentile, ancient or modern. Prohibitions against murder, adultery and bearing false witness seem as relevant now as when they were initially given to Moses. The implications for the Sabbath command are discussed as to whether this commandment also applies to Christians today, and if so in what context.

Jewish Perspective on Sabbath

A discussion of Sabbath tradition in Jewish culture recognizes the teleological nature of time (Heschel, 1951, 2005). Time itself is created by, yet separate from God and is the lens through which life is lived on earth. Humanity understands mortal life through birth, development throughout the lifespan, and ultimately death as a natural sequence over time. The salvation experience itself is for many Christians a point in time, celebrated as a spiritual movement from death to life through a profession of faith in Christ. Holidays are also recognized on the yearly calendar (i.e. Easter, Christmas) and help focus attention during the year.

Heschel (2005, p. 8) explains "Judaism is a religion of time aiming at the sanctification of time," emphasizing the attachment to a "holiness in time." Key events are remembered as special days on the calendar. Heschel likewise compares the holiness of space (i.e. the Tabernacle) with the holiness of time (i.e. Sabbath) as sanctified by God for his people. The 'set apart nature' of time and space are key elements of Jewish culture and the practice of Sabbath historically and in modern life. Because space and time are significant, a literal Sabbath is important as an expression of worship. The practice of Sabbath has been maintained throughout Jewish history.

Baker (1994) observes the prescriptive nature of Sabbath as a commandment of God which is for both the historical nation of Israel and modern Jews in the present dispensation. However, Baker also advises this prescription on Sabbath in particular while important to modern Jews, is not relevant to contemporary Christians today. This makes the Sabbath command unlike the other commandments given to

Moses in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. A dispensational theological perspective affirms the dual revelatory nature of God's work in the present time as applying to Christians who have accepted Christ as Savior as separate from revelation intended for the nation Israel (Baker, 1994; Lewis & Demarest, 1987). Dispensational theology therefore highlights the Jewish cultural and faith perspective by emphasizing the distinct purposes and roles of Israel as contrasted from the universal Christian Church. Similar cultural emphasis for Jewish revelation is not emphasized to the same degree in covenant theological perspectives, where the church is viewed as the fulfillment of historical Israel over time.

Maintaining a literal Sabbath day (Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15) is a key element of Jewish faith and culture. Modern Jews practice Sabbath rest by ceasing from work from sunset Friday to enjoy the Sabbath day of rest until Saturday evening. This is a time when work is discontinued to enjoy family time together over a pre-prepared meal (Heschel, 2005, p. viii). The Sabbath sunset observance changes with the seasons to begin on Friday as early as four or five in the afternoon during winter to as late as seven or eight in the summer months. The Sabbath is practiced by religious Jews throughout the Diaspora worldwide as a religious and cultural expression of identity. Visitors to Israel see the Sabbath practice evidenced through pre-prepared meals and "Sabbath elevators" that stop at every floor to avoid having to push buttons (i.e. work on the Sabbath).

The Jewish understanding of Sabbath is informative to Christians today as a contemporary way to visualize a modern application of the command to keep the Sabbath holy as given to Moses (Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15). Whether Christians adopt a literal Sabbath or not depends largely upon theological and cultural practice, as influenced by cultural norms as theological understanding (du Preez, 2008). Significant to Sabbath discussion is the future (teleological) reminder that Sabbath brings of the "already and not yet" presence of God, a common theme in Evangelical theology. God's presence as practiced during the Sabbath (already) is a reminder of God's presence in eternity (not yet), also evident in the Jewish cultural practice of Sabbath (Heschel, 2005).

Christian "High Church" and "Low Church" Traditions Concerning Sabbath

The Christian High Church theological traditions have provided a useful perspective in understanding of Sabbath and highlighting key events on the yearly church calendar (i.e. Easter, Christmas, Lent). Buchanan (2006) purposely uses the word *liturgy* to emphasize a strength of High Church practice, highlighting the

importance placed on right education and structured processes from prayer and fasting, to understanding the importance of observing the Sabbath. Protestant High Church tradition maintains symbology and ritual, from many clergy wearing clerical robes (akin to priestly robes) to use of candles and incense, and reading from published prayer books. The experience is often similar between churches and highlights the formal, liturgical shared unified experiences between congregations (Buchanan, 2006).

High Church worship has adopted several of the liturgical practices that more closely reflect historical Jewish priestly behaviors (i.e. robes, incense) than in the "low church" movement. Traditional liturgy highlights the nature of the Christian church becoming central following Christ's earthly ministry as opposed to the nation Israel and adopts more of the liturgical processes in worship. Reformed theologian John Calvin (1509-1564) noted three distinct lessons of Sabbath, calling it the shadowy commandment unlike the other commandments. The Sabbath command was to be viewed differently by Christians because "external observances were abolished with the advent of Christ" (Calvin, 1535, 1994, Vol. 1, p. 426). Calvin noted three primary purposes of the Sabbath that can more broadly be summarized as the commandment to rest and focus on Christ. First, Calvin stated the Sabbath is designed to cause people to rest from work and focus more on the internal spiritual work of God "within them." Second, by design, the Sabbath was an identified day each week that facilitated corporate worship together as an assembly. Third, the Sabbath allowed physical rest for servants and workers to cease from their labors and employment for a day out of the week. Practically, having a designated day for worship and reflection provides a clear context to both corporate and private spiritual development for believers.

In contrast to the historical High Church practice, the so-called Low Church moved away from standard rituals to embrace a more organic, less-structured expression of faith and worship. For many from evangelical and dispensational backgrounds, an emphasis on "liturgy" causes some discomfort. Many congregants from the Low Church Evangelical perspective appreciate prayers offered naturally (i.e. not from a script), and having a preacher present God's Word from the Spirit instead of read verbatim following rigorous preparation. Prepared responsive readings and prayer books are rarely (if ever) integrated in weekly worship, along with clergy robes and incense. Spontaneity and informality are important characteristics of low-church services, where congregants (and sometimes even the pastor) wear less formal attire, perhaps even including jeans. Weddings and funerals might be the exception to reading scripted liturgical messages and prayers in all traditions,

yet the importance on flexibility and following the Lord's leading is a common admonition in the Low Church tradition.

God's omnipresence is highlighted in Reformed and evangelical theology, helping guide modern Christian away from "legalism and categorical thinking," recognizing that God is intimately involved in all aspects of our lives (Grudem, 2000, p. 320). If God is always present in our lives at all times, then we can worship him every day and sanctify Him in all things. Concerning Sabbath, what is the need to sanctify one day, when we can acknowledge Christ's presence every day? We acknowledge that all of our thoughts and external behaviors are under God's providential care moment by moment. Grudem says "…God's work in the lives of individuals, lead us to conclude that God's providential work of concurrence extends to all aspects of our lives. Our words, our steps, our movements, our hearts, and our abilities are all from the Lord." Grudem defines concurrence as, "God cooperating (italics mine) with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do" (2000, p. 317).

Of significance to readers from the Grace dispensational theological position is the discussion on the Sabbath in particular in Charles Baker's *A Dispensational Theology* (1972, 1994). Baker (1994, p. 265) distinguishes between elemental laws (i.e. physical laws) and published commandments or moral law, and highlights that published commandments (such as the Ten Commandments) are "either partial or temporary expressions of God's will" (p. 265). He goes on to provide the example of the Sabbath (Exodus 31:16-17) in particular as relevant to the nation Israel "as a distinctive feature of God's covenant with that nation" as an ongoing sign of faithfulness (p. 266). Baker subsequently concludes his discussion on Sabbath saying, "the Sabbath and the ceremonial laws related only to God's will for the nation of Israel and have no application to the Gentiles or to members of the Body of Christ in this dispensation" (p. 266). We can therefore conclude that the Sabbath is not required for Christians of this present Dispensation of Grace.

The Low Church tradition has highlighted the omnipresence of God and often downplayed the necessity (or desirability) to dedicate one day (over all days) to Sabbath rest (Allender, 2009). At risk of becoming like the Pharisees who admonished Jesus for healing on the Sabbath (Mark 3:1-6), Evangelical Christians have likewise sought to not become overly ritualistic in understanding the Sabbath (or in other matters of corporate worship). Viewing the Sabbath day as not required for modern Christians in the present dispensation of Grace, or potentially valuable to the believer's spiritual acknowledgement of God's grace is a matter of personal preference (Baker, 1994).

Colossians 2:16 and Modern Implications of Sabbath

In Colossians 2:16 Paul states "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in question of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath." He seems to be responding to false teachers who were advocating additional Jewish observances that went beyond the simplicity of the Gospel message. Keeping additional practices that were no longer necessary appeared to have crept into the church and was confusing to Christians on clarifying how they should live. Many might argue that this tension is ever-present in living as Christians in a fallen world, seeking to be uniquely biblical while also remaining culturally relevant in demonstrating the love of Christ.

Paul then goes on to highlight Christian holiness and "putting off" the things of the world: "seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator" (Col 3:9:10). Paul says here is neither "Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised…but Christ is all and in all" (Col 3:10-11). In this context, the discussion of Sabbath appeared to be a stumbling block for some of Jewish Christians who were requiring the Sabbath observance similar to non-Christian Jews of the time who also had restrictions on diet and other matters of daily practice. Paul seems to be emphasizing the nature of grace extending beyond ritual practices which have little to do with faith. Sabbath in this context is discussed as a volitional matter of the heart. In Colossians 2:16, the Sabbath is not included as a commandment prescription (Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15), but rather is included with the Old Testament Jewish religious practices (i.e. food, drink, new moon, festivals) that have little relevance to the New Testament Christian.

Within Protestantism, Seventh Day Adventists emphasize a more literal understanding of maintaining an observed Sabbath day (du Preez, 2008). Adventists hold worship on Saturday rather than Sunday, unlike most of Western Christianity who hold Sunday as the preferred day of worship. The SDA church also practices stringent food and drink recommendations (i.e. no caffeine, mostly vegetarian or vegan diet). Du Preez (2008, p. 18) argues biblical linguistics support a correlation between a literal Sabbath (*sabbat*) as keeping "this day" (rather than "any day") holy as God's day because God owns this day and desires for his followers to keep it holy as well. He argues every time Sabbath is discussed in the Hebrew Bible, it is always associated with the seventh day Sabbath, highlighting the importance of this day over other days of the week. Since a more literal interpretation of Sabbath is adopted, it is not surprising that many of the health laws in Deuteronomy and

Leviticus are maintained today by the SDA church (i.e. avoiding unclean foods) and promoted as healthy dietary principles aligning with God's "natural laws," leading most contemporary Adventists to maintain a vegan or vegetarian diet in addition to the proscribed unclean foods (www.seventhdayadventistdiet.com).

Non-Adventist Christians could respond to Old Testament food laws (and possibly literal Sabbath observance) with Peter's vision in Acts 10. While in Caesarea, Peter was at the home of Cornelius, a Gentile Christian centurion (Acts 10:1-2) and became hungry. Peter then had a vision of the heavens opening and a sheet descending with all kinds of animals, birds and even reptiles, with a voice saying, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat" (Acts 10:13; ESV). Peter responded that he could not, since the foods were "unclean" according to the Jewish dietary laws. The Lord responded to Peter's refusal by saying "God has made clean, do not call common (unclean)." Peter acknowledged that as a dedicated Jew, he had always followed the dietary laws. Now, Peter was being encouraged to eat from God's bounty without regard to clean and unclean distinctions as had been previously required for Jews. Peter subsequently preached and ministered to the Gentile Cornelius, which would have been difficult if he had required the Jewish food restrictions, no longer required under the new Dispensation of Grace.

Synthesis and Application

Most New Testament scholars do not recommend a literal Sabbath as essential to Christian living and practice (Baker, 1994; Buchanan, 2006; Grudem, 2000). While finding value in Sabbath worship, Calvin (1994) concluded that in Christ we are not under the law of Sabbath restrictions. Baker (1994) agreed, Sabbath also is not a requirement (or even necessarily recommended) for modern Evangelical Christians in this present dispensation, as Sabbath remains relevant today only to the nation Israel. Most of the readers would accept this understanding of Sabbath as separate from the other Commandments given to Moses (Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15) such as not murdering, fornicating, dishonoring one's parents et cetera. Contemporary Christians will find resonance in seeking to place God as central in daily life, as opposed to simply one designated day. The challenge comes in practically finding the mental focus to place God first amidst the daily distractions of life that seek to maintain our attention.

Bruggemann (2014) sees Sabbath observance as personal and metaphorical-form of resistance to the modern world. "Sabbath resistance" (Bruggemann, 2014) is a purposeful aversion to anxiety (Exod 20:12-17), coercion (Deut 5:12-14), exclusivism (Isa 56:3-8), and even aversion to multitasking (Amos 8:4-8). Sabbath

is therefore not a literal day, but rather a volitional focus on God at any time. Bruggemann offers the example of Christians in church multitasking and working on other tasks during the sermon or on their smartphones instead of purposefully engaging in worshiping the Lord (the true purpose of corporate worship). Bruggemann cites Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth." The present day distractions of smart phones, email, Facebook and other distractions (during corporate worship) also apply to this discussion.

In John 21, Jesus asked Peter an important probing question that resonates with the ethos of this Sabbath discussion. Peter had denied Christ (John 18), as Jesus had predicted, and was again affirming Peter's love for Jesus and the ministry to come. Jesus intended his question "do you love me?" to encourage Peter to be intentional about his priorities and setting the plan for the future ministry to come. This question helped Peter internalize the "why" behind his ministry and later martyrdom. For Peter, this became a question of focus and purposeful attention.

Conclusion

As a professional counselor, I often ask consultees what they want or ask them to clarify goals (i.e. I want to lose weight, or improve my marriage). This is good and necessary to the process of goal formation, but altogether inadequate because "goal planning" often lacks the emotional grounding to truly fuel long-term behavioral change. This is observed yearly in "New Year's Resolutions" that begin strong and quickly fizzle out. As Christian philosopher James Smith (2016, p. 9) comments, "it is our loves that orient us toward some ultimate end or *telos*. It is not just that I "know" some end or "believe" in some *telos*. More than that, I long for some end. I want something, and want it ultimately. It is my desires that define me. In short, you are what you love."

Being honest with our desire for Sabbath rest in God is the first step to building a life of putting God first (Buchanan, 2006). Like Peter in his conversation with Jesus, we need to consider our "loves" when considering our attentional focus. Omitting a literal Sabbath with the goal of having the daily presence of God in our lives is not enough if we do not actually practice Sabbath amidst our busy lives. If we are honest with ourselves in our use of time, routine and daily activity (dare I say "ritual"?), we will find what we truly love in practice. We must be volitional in seeking the "rest, renewal and delight" of God in our lives if Sabbath is to become reality (Muller, 1999).

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It Is All About Relationships: An Eclectic Theory of Counselling

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Introduction

This theory of counseling is an eclectic approach which gleans from major theories of counseling those biblically congruent components of counseling philosophy, key concepts, human personality, definitions of health and abnormality, as well as psychotherapeutic goals, processes and techniques. These components are primarily taken from cognitive theory, individual psychotherapy, and narrative therapy. The theory recognizes the intrinsic value of human beings, intentionally created by God and imbued with meaning and purpose. The ultimate meaning and purpose is relationship with God. Development of an individual's personality is impacted by spiritual, biological and relational experiences. Giving the client the opportunity to retell a life story provides the counselor access to faulty core beliefs and schemas from which dysfunctional thoughts and emotions are derived. Techniques such as questioning, imagery, role-playing, problem solving and thought recording work toward identifying dysfunctional thoughts. The counselor then guides the client to replace faulty logic with truth. Accurate logic remodels the individual's schema resulting in improved self-perception and improved relationships.

No two individuals are alike. Even identical twins, having identical DNA, are impacted differently by their environment and as a result have unique personalities (Murdock, 2009). In a church setting, a counseling pastor will meet many personalities from all walks of life, various cultures, different ages, as well as other differences. A review of the various theories available to pastoral counselors reveals no one theory can meet the needs of all clients. Eclecticism in counseling gives a pastor the latitude necessary to individualize a plan to help each unique client

regain health and wholeness (Gladding, 2009). The following theory of counseling draws from a variety of established theories. Acknowledging humans are made in the image of God and have intellect, emotion and will, this approach will lean heavily on cognitive theory.

Philosophical Assumptions and Key Concepts

A pastoral counselor must approach each human being by recognizing the individual's incredible value, meaning and purpose. Human beings were created intentionally by a just, omniscient, omnipotent God (Jones & Butman, 1991). A human being's value is derived from God's attributes. A human being's value is relatively more special because that individual is created in God's image. Finally, only a creation with incredible value would be worthy of God sacrificing his only Son in order to redeem that individual.

In addition to value, human beings have meaning and purpose. Human beings did not come into being by accident or chance (Jones & Butman, 1991). On the sixth day, "God created mankind in his own image" (Gen 1:27, NIV). Being intentionally created implies the notion that human beings have meaning and purpose because God intended them to be (Jones & Butman). From the very beginning, God gave human beings work to do and they are purposed with being good stewards of those responsibilities: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (Gen 2:15). Another purpose for human beings is to be in fellowship with God. Being made in his image ascribes relational and social characteristics to human beings, as well as a desire for fellowship with their creator (Acts 17:27). Unfortunately, human beings are also sinful beings, and sinfulness can interfere with that desire for relationship (Rom 3:10-11).

When individuals question their value, lack meaning and purpose, or fall out of fellowship with God, they struggle to find peace and live in angst. Counseling seeks to restore inner peace and restore relationships (Adler, 1998). When God created human beings with intellect, emotion and will, He gave them the ability to reason, which is what separates human beings from the rest of God's creation. These characteristics also result in the choices that cause all the pain and heartache that bring human beings to counseling. Without the help of the Holy Spirit, human beings will choose to live independently of God rather than recognize their total dependence on him. This separation from God causes inner turmoil and negatively affects relationships.

Relationships are an integral part of the series of stories which are the building blocks of an individual's life story (Murdock, 2009). From the moment a person

is born, he is in relationship with other human beings. Adler (1998) believed that people disappoint and deceive each other because they do not understand one another. Imperfect people are continually shaping other imperfect people's life stories.

A person's life story also involves the pursuit of satisfying the basic needs for survival: food, shelter and love (Murdock, 2009). How an individual perceives a particular relationship's ability to meet those needs will impact his life story. An individual's perceptions are based on core beliefs and schemas that begin developing from birth (Dobson & Dobson, 2009). All the relationships an individual encounters early in life shape those schemas (Backus & Chapian, 2000). These schemas are not necessarily absolute truth because the individuals involved in forming the schemas are imperfect beings.

The task of counseling is to listen to an individual's life story in an effort to uncover faulty core beliefs and dysfunctional schemas in an effort to restore an individual's sense of peace and restore relationships (Murdock, 2009). If an individual is not at peace with himself, his unrest will affect how he perceives the world and how he interacts with those around him. Without satisfactory relationships an individual becomes isolated and fails to thrive (Adler, 1998). "The tasks of life, for the most part, can be accomplished only by working together" (Adler, p. 189). In helping individuals see areas in their core beliefs and schemas which are built on lies, and replacing those lies with truth, a counselor can assist those individuals to see themselves as the valuable creations they are. Helping individuals recognize the intentionality with which God created them will help them see the need for healthy relationships (Backus & Chapian, 2000).

Model of Personality

Human beings are created in the image of God, having intellect, emotion and will (Genesis 1:27). Individual psychology theory posits that at birth humans are totally dependent on those around them to supply basic needs. As a result, humans start with a feeling of inferiority (Murdock, 2009). Depending on ordinal position and psychological position in birth order in the family, an individual will fall somewhere along the spectrum of striving for independence or relaxing in the complacency of dependence. Even so, "all organisms strive to grow in positive directions" (Murdock, p. 160). Individuals are motivated to grow toward independence and become more complex as a result. As a child strives toward autonomy, his behavior is assigned positive or negative value by those around him. These experiences are organized into schemas which impact how the child perceives himself and the

systems around him.

An individual's personality is also impacted by his sinful nature, the physical structure in which he resides, temporal systems, and supernatural systems. Hawkins' (2006) theory of concentric circles illustrates these elements (see Appendix A). At the core of an individual's personality is the image of God, affording him the ability to reason as well as relate and commune with God (Anderson, 2000). Reason also gives an individual the free will to claim independence from God, resulting in sin. For believers, the core is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, seeking to steer the individual toward the path of righteousness. Enveloping the core is the soul from which arises thinking, feeling and volition. Encircling the soul and core is an imperfect physical body, which as it matures, can cause an individual to be prideful or dissatisfied. Surrounding the body are the temporal systems or relationships which work to build up or tear down an individual's self-image. The individual, as well as his temporal systems, are further impacted by supernatural systems consisting of not only God and good angels, but also Satan and his demons (Hawkins). The continual impact of imperfect systems on an imperfect personality threatens the well-being and health of an individual.

Model of Health

A healthy individual is at peace with himself and has healthy relationships similar to those experienced in the Garden of Eden before sin entered the world. True peace, which transcends all understanding (Phil 4:7), comes from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. A healthy person has an accurate perception of his intrinsic value, knowing that he was intentionally created by a loving God and has meaning and purpose. He understands the concept of Phil 4:2-9, that if his thoughts are true, noble, pure, and lovely, the peace of God will be with him (Jones & Butman, 1991). Health includes "equanimity – a composite of gratitude in all circumstances (1 Thess 5:18), contentment (Phil 4:11-12), perseverance (2 Cor 4:809, 16-18) and courage (2 Cor 5:6)" (Jones & Butman, p. 185). Courage is an important resource and positively affects a healthy individual's perception of the problems that naturally arise as a result of the individual's personality and relationships.

Healthy relationships are a sign of psychological health. Adler (1998) believed humans are social beings and contribute to society as they accomplish their life tasks. Adler did not align with the Freudian belief that an individual's love is only directed toward his own body. Adler believed that a healthy individual's love is initially directed toward others in his immediate surroundings. As he matures in health, his love will extend to his community and further. Healthy relationships

have boundaries as opposed to barriers, in which individuals have responsibilities to each other, rather than for each other (Cloud & Townsend, 1999). Healthy schemas will direct an individual's perception of the concept of a healthy relationship (Murdock, 2009).

Model of Abnormality

Psychological dysfunction occurs when an individual has difficulty getting along with others and getting along with oneself. Humanist Carl Rogers argues health requires congruence between the self and what is experienced (Murdock, 2009). When one cannot get along with oneself because of the interactions between mind, soul, body, and surroundings, the result is psychological distress. Often these interactions are dysfunctional as a result of faulty thinking about the individual's sense of need, sense of self, and relationships (McMinn, 1996). Faulty thinking and emotions are a result of dysfunctional schemas and the resulting core beliefs formed in childhood (Murdock). A maladaptive schema is maintained when an individual selectively adds to the schema certain experiences that coincide with the schema and ignores or discounts other experiences that could help to change the schema (Dobson & Dobson, 2009). Relationships with significant people in the individual's childhood contribute to these schema. As a result, future relationships are impacted.

Psychological dysfunction is seen in individuals who have dysfunctional relationships or no relationships at all. Individuals who cannot get along with others become social outcasts, exacerbating their psychological dysfunction (Adler, 1998). Individuals who do not align their thinking with society's rules and mores are considered amoral even if they sense their behavior aligns with their schemas (Jones & Butman, 1991). Narcissism and lack of accountability further damage relationships. Adler believed that individuals who fail in life do so because they lack social interest (Murdock, 2009). These individuals attempt to solve their problems by focusing on themselves rather than what is beneficial to those around them (Adler). Faulty thinking results in discouragement as the individual loses courage to face the world (Jones & Butman). This further results in one deceiving oneself into believing success is impossible.

Model of Psychotherapy

The role of psychotherapy is to restore an individual's healthy sense of self and healthy relationships (McMinn, 1996). The first step is building a therapeutic alliance to enlist the trust of the client (Clinton & Ohlschlager, 2002). When a

client shares a life story, the counselor is allowed access to the client's behavior, affect, sensation, imagery, cognition, interpersonal relationships, and biological processes. How the client perceives these aspects is revealed in automatic thoughts that occur during the telling of the story. Automatic thoughts are "swift, evaluative statements" (Murdock, 2009, p. 323) that result in an emotion that is out of sync with the environment. As the life story events and accompanying automatic thoughts are assessed, the counselor will discover the faulty core beliefs and schemas from which faulty thinking is derived. Encouraging the client to share their life story from as early as can be remembered is important because early experiences have influenced personal schemas.

The role of the pastoral counselor is active and directive as the leader and encourager. It is important that the client trust that the counselor has the education and experience necessary to help the individual in a journey toward health (Clinton & Ohlschlager, 2002). If a therapeutic alliance has been formed, the counselor may confront the client if the individual is resistant to truth (Murdock, 2009). This can only be done if the client trusts that the counselor has the client's best interests in mind. The focus is on the client, who does the majority of the talking. The client is the expert in the client's own experience and knows better than the counselor "the pathway to the sources of her pain" (Murdock, p. 163).

The goals of therapy are to guide the client in recognizing and changing faulty logic, uncovering faulty core beliefs and schemas, and remodeling those schemas with truth (Murdock, 2009). As a result, the client's perspective will improve and the client will move toward congruence between self and experience. When the client has a better perception of the client's role in relationships, relationships can heal and new relationships will be healthier.

Many techniques can be used to help a client recognize and change faulty beliefs, including questioning, thought recording, imagery, problem solving, and role playing (Murdock, 2009). Initially the client will be asked to share the life story, particularly the part of the story that is the impetus for seeking counseling. As the client shares the story, the counselor will use questioning to help the client discover automatic thoughts resulting in negative emotions. The counselor will ask the client to give evidence for these automatic thoughts. Without evidence, the logic can be seen as faulty. If the client is seen over a period of time, the counselor may ask the client to record these thoughts in a journal. This provides the client a record of the progress made in the course of counseling. Imagery will help the client practice a problem situation with the counselor and imagine a solution. This technique progresses through role-playing as the counselor assists the client in ways to

problem-solve. Problem solving, imagery, role playing, and thought recording can be given as homework to help the client practice recognizing faulty logic between sessions. Once faulty logic is discovered, the client can be guided in the search for truth to replace the faulty logic. Truth will lead the client to improved self-perception, which will positively impact relationships.

Conclusion

The values and basic ideas of this theory are founded on a Christian worldview. The pastoral counselor who recognizes the intrinsic value of the client in God's eyes will be in a good position to establish a therapeutic alliance based on love and compassion for the client as one of God's children. Using the Bible as a source of truth and God's love affords the counselor a resource from which to draw accurate logic to replace a client's faulty logic. God's truth is the same for believers and non-believers. God's love for people is not dependent on whether or not they believe him. The ultimate goal of a counselor is to demonstrate the love of God in such a way that the counselor is able to "give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15). Some clients have lost hope that a relationship with God can be mended. A counselor can restore that hope with support from Scripture. Once a client heals the relationship with God, other relationships will heal as well.

The above theory incorporates concepts from several major theories of counseling. Through an eclectic approach, this theory gleans those concepts that are congruent with God's view of human beings in an effort to restore wholeness to the individual. Wholeness requires a right relationship with God. The theory recognizes human beings' need to know that they have value, meaning and purpose, all of which have been designed by God.

By acknowledging the impact of various imperfect systems on an individual's developing personality, a counselor can listen to a client's life story. By listening, the counselor can help the client to uncover the misconceptions and faulty logic preventing them from seeing themselves as God sees them.

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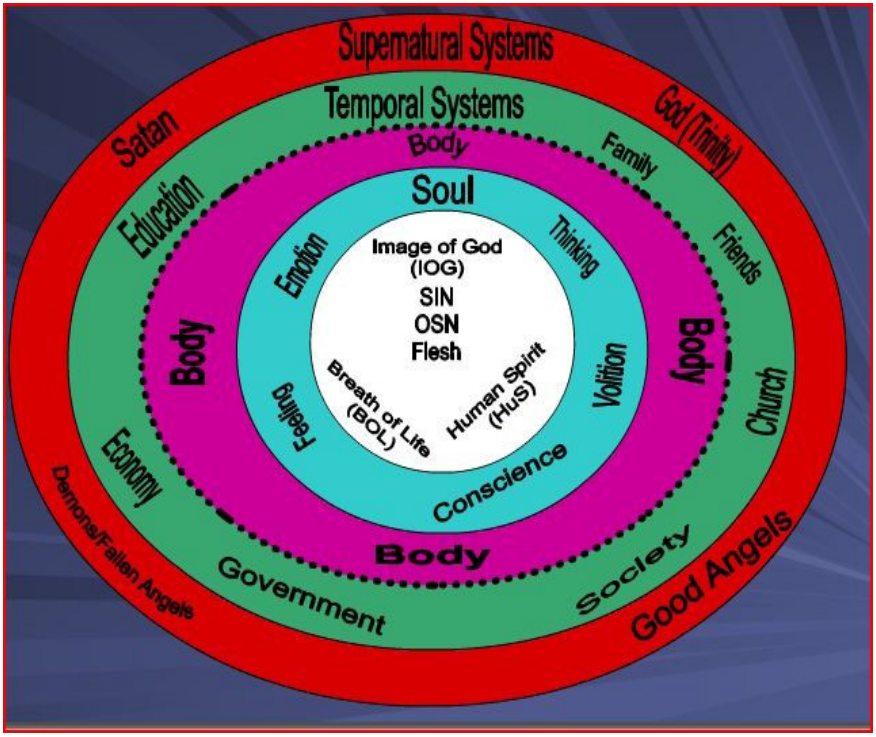
Appendix A

Hawkin's Concentric Circles



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Book Reviews

Dunn, James. *Neither Jew nor Greek: A Contested Identity.* Christianity in the Making, Volume 3. Grand Rapids, Mich. Eerdmans, 2016. 960 pp. Hb; $60.00.

Neither Jew nor Greek completes Dunn's three-volume project encompassing the New Testament. *Jesus Remembered* (2003) concerned Jesus and the Gospels, *Beginning from Jerusalem* (2009) covered the book of Acts and the letters of the New Testament up to 70 CE. This final volume tracks the later history of the early church (for the most part after 70 CE), including both canonical and non-canonical sources. Dunn ends his investigation just prior to Irenaeus, approximately 180 CE.

The title for the volume is significant since it signals Dunn's conclusions about what the early church was like in the period after the first Jewish revolt. As Dunn puts it, whatever the early Christian movement was in the forty years between Jesus and the Jewish revolt "it was not yet 'Christianity'" because Christianity as a distinct entity was not so-named until the early second century CE (4). During the time period covered by this volume both Judaism and Christianity were in the process of defining themselves, sometimes in contrast with one another.

How can this development be traced? Scholarship has attempted to define "early Catholicism," or traced the development of canons and creeds, or examined the way early Christian writers defined themselves in contrast to heretical sects within the larger Judeo-Christian movement (Hellenistic mystery cults or developing Gnosticism, etc.). Dunn sketched the character of the first generation of Christians in the first two volumes of this series and now proposes to trace the streams of early Christianity through the complicated period between 70 and 180 CE. This is an important (and often overlooked) insight. Early Christianity was not monolithic; there was no one document or one writer which fully encapsulated ideal Christianity. There were multiple streams within the orthodox river so that what it means to be "Christian" was indeed contested.

It is possible to evaluate the development of early Christianity by ac-

cepting the final result (church history from the perspective of Eusebius, for example, or for many contemporary theologians, the Reformation) and evaluating the various voices with respect to how close they come to the received orthodoxy. But Dunn comes at the question from another angle: would Peter, James and Paul have been satisfied with what happened in the second century (41)? To answer the question Dunn examines at length the Jesus tradition, the impact of James, Paul, Peter and John (in that rough chronological order). Choosing to start with James is an interesting methodological decision since Eusebius and the Reformation might choose to begin with Paul. Dunn thinks Paul is responsible for shaping the Jewish messianic sect (led by James in Jerusalem) into the international movement it would become. Despite being disciples of Jesus, both Peter and John are minor voices in the first century (if later traditions are set aside).

The first three chapters of this volume set the stage by examining the sources available for the study of the post-apostolic period. In addition to the New Testament canon, Dunn surveys the Apostolic Fathers, the apologists of the early second century, Eusibius and the Heresiologists, and the New Testament pseudepigrapha (other gospels, letters and apocalypses). He observes most of the "spin off literature is much poorer in quality" than the material later recognized as canonical (183). For this reason Dunn ranks the Apostolic Fathers and Apologists as more important for tracing the development of early Christianity than "other" literature. The exception is the *Gospel of Thomas* which Dunn treats in his chapter on the reshaping of the Gospel of Jesus (John and Thomas).

The next major section of the book concerns the development of the Jesus tradition from an oral gospel to the written canonical gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke and finally John. Here Dunn revisits the thesis of *Jesus Remembered*, although this time from the perspective of how Jesus was remember in these written gospels. Dunn concludes the rich diversity of the Gospels ("same yet different") indicates different lessons could be developed out of the same memories of Jesus. He illustrates this phenomenon in a chapter on how the Gospel of John and the Gospel of Thomas develop the Jesus traditions using two different strategies.

Dunn traces the development of the Jesus tradition into the second century by examining how the Apostolic Fathers and the apologists used the written Gospels. He provides the data in the form of lists of quotations or

allusions to each Gospel. For example, there are tables for the four Gospels as they appear in Justin Martyr. From this data it is clear Justin knew Mark but used the Gospel rarely and John only appears in a single allusion. Matthew is dominant, with a few citations of Luke and a few from the double tradition (so it is impossible to know if Matthew or Luke is in mind).

The next section of the book consists of two chapters defining what Dunn means by "Jewish Christianity" and the so-called "parting of the ways." Dunn observes it is more important to recognize the Jewishness of Christianity than to unravel the puzzle of various forms of Christianity which may (or may not) have been in competition with one another at the end of the first century (595). He examines (briefly) several Jewish groups which also followed Jesus, including the Ebionites, the Nazoraeans, the Elkesaites, the Pseudo-Clementine literature, and Syrian Christianity. In order to speak about the parting of the ways, Dunn outlines the reasons Christians may have wanted to be seen as separate after the destruction of Jerusalem and consequent Roman policy toward the Jews. The fall of Jerusalem also changed the way Judaism thought of itself, so that the beginnings of rabbinic Judaism can be found in the same events which motivated Christianity to define itself as "not Jewish." This evidence supports Dunn's contention Jews and Christians did not see themselves as separate until perhaps as late as the Constantinian settlement (673).

The final major section in the book concerns the continued influence of Paul and Peter. As Dunn observes, of the three principle characters in the early church, James makes the least impact on the development of Christianity and Peter has been the focus of Catholic Christianity but left little impact on the New Testament (assuming 2 Peter is pseudonymous, probably 1 Peter as well, possibly rejecting Peter's influence on Mark). This makes Paul the chief influence on the early development of Christianity and the so-called "second founder" of Christianity" (675). Even though he is a "contrary and troublesome figure in the history of Christianity" his contributions to the New Testament and their reception by the ensuing generations of the church are essential for understanding the development of Christianity (723). Dunn accepts the minority opinion that 1 Peter was addressed to Jewish Christians, but recognizes the Pauline influence on the letter (728).

There is some backtracking in this volume, which is to be expected in a massive trilogy written over a long period. First, Dunn returns to his first volume of the series in Part 11 by examining how the Gospel moved from oral tradition to the written Gospels. In a one hundred page chapter Dunn reviews some of his arguments from *Jesus Remembered* and the essays in *The Oral Gospel Tradition* (Eerdmans, 2013). Second, chapter 46 concerns the "parting of the ways," a topic Dunn has discussed in his essay in the collection of essays, Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways, A.D. 70 to 135 (Eerdmans, 1999). But this is not unexpected since Dunn re-used material from his Epworth Acts commentary in Beginning from Jerusalem, for example. Given the massive scope of the project, using and updating previous work ought to be expected. It is perhaps ironic that, like the Gospels themselves, Dunn's oral presentations became written essays which were then re-worked and edited and included in a final (canonical?) volume.

By way of conclusion, this volume is an indispensable resource for the study of the late apostolic period. Since Dunn takes into account many non-canonical texts he is able to trace the trajectory of the development of the Church from the oral tradition of Jesus Remembered, through the earliest written forms of that memory, to the interpretation of those memories by the next generations of the early Church.

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Gorman Michael J. *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2016. 731 pp. Pb; $48.

In the introduction to this second edition of Gorman's textbook on the Pauline letters, Gorman offers ten approaches to the Apostle Paul's letters. As is common in a Pauline introduction, the first two are the familiar traditional and new perspectives on Paul, but he also includes narrative-intertextual (Richard Hays), apocalyptic (Martyn, Gaventa, and Campbell), anti-imperialist (Richard Horsley), the "Wright-ian perspec-

tive" (N. T. Wright), Paul within Judaism (Mark Nanos), social scientific (John Barclay), feminist (Lynn Cohick, Amy-Jill Levine), and participationist (Douglas Campbell, Morna Hooker, Udo Schnelle). The reader of his introduction to Paul will find references to all of these perspectives in Gorman's presentation since all make a contribution to our understanding of Paul.

The first six chapters of the book deal with background issues (Greco-Roman context, Pauline Mission and Paul the letter-writer) and theology (the Gospel, Pauline Spirituality and Theology). Since Gorman's other work on Paul reflects a participationist model, it is not surprising to find this language throughout the book. For example, Gorman sees Romans 8 as the "cruciform life in the Spirit" and 1 Corinthians 13 as the "rule" of cruciform love. Gorman understands justification through this lens as well. Justification in Paul is both a liberation from sin and a transformation to righteousness (175).

In his chapter on Pauline theology, Gorman offers twelve fundamental convictions (which he summarizes in a single sentence, albeit about a half-page in length). Rather than list these, I will focus on what I think are the most important for understanding Gorman's approach to Paul over all. First, following N. T. Wright, Gorman understands Jesus's death on the cross as the "climax of the covenant." The cross accomplished in Jesus what Israel could not and initiated the new age of the Holy Spirit. The present age is the overlap of this age and the age to come.

Second, Gorman describes the "law of the messiah" as cruciformity; the cross is not just the source of salvation, but also the shape of salvation (177). In a text like Philippians 3:10-11 Paul can claim to be like Jesus in his death, even though he is still in this life. Third, Gorman has always challenged readers by describing the church as an alternative community. The ones who participate in the new cross-shaped life in Christ form an alternative to the world in which they find themselves. For Gorman, this is a rich source for the application of Pauline theology to present church life. If churches are to be an alternative community, then they ought to model their participation in new life by transforming communities through justice and peace-making.

Following these introductory chapters, Gorman provides a chapter on each of the thirteen Pauline letters. He begins with the title of the book with a short tagline and key verse. The first section for each chapter is the "story behind the letter." This section briefly sets the letter into the proper cultural and historical context (including the context of the book of Acts). The second section of the chapter, "the story within the letter," works through the outline of the book offering a short running commentary of each pericope. Occasionally Greek words appear transliterated in footnotes, so a student with little or no Greek will have no trouble reading the body of the chapter. Gorman provides bullet-point summaries at the end of sections for larger books. The third section in each chapter is the "story in front of the letter." Here Gorman collects a series trenchant quotations on the letter from historical and contemporary commentators (and occasionally a non-specialist). Each chapter concludes with a series of questions for reflection and a "for further reading" list, divided into both general and technical works. This provides a student with resources to write responses and papers based on the reflection questions.

Rather than survey each chapter, I will highlight a few of the usual things people want to know about a textbook on Pauline letters. Gorman lists 1-2 Thessalonians first, and although he considers the north Galatia theory to be the scholarly consensus, he thinks the south Galatia view better accounts for the data and considers Galatians to be written between A.D. 48-51. With respect to the unity of 2 Corinthians, Gorman surveys the major view for dividing 2 Corinthians into three separate letters and suggests Paul's use of rhetoric may account for the apparent disunity of the book. He says what unifies 2 Corinthians is the "Spirit-filled cruciform shape of the transformed life" (346). With respect to the purpose of Romans, Gorman argues the main purpose is Jew-Gentile friction in Rome, but I believe there is far more to Romans than this one issue.

With respect to the Prison Epistles, Gorman thinks an Ephesian imprisonment for Philippians is simpler, but it does not make much difference for the interpretation of the letter. His comments on Philippians 2:5-11 are the most detailed in the book primarily because Gorman considers these verses to be Paul's "master story." Understanding Paul's presentation of Philippians 2:5-11 will help to interpret other problem texts in the Pauline letters. Gorman does not think the a decision on the authorship of the unit

is necessary; Paul may have used a preexisting hymn, adapted a hymn, or composed the text himself.

The authorship of Ephesians and Colossians is always a major point of discussion in introductions to Paul. Gorman concludes Paul likely did not write Colossians word-for-word, but it is so close to Paul's thought it must be written by someone close to Paul who knew him well (551). He suggests Tychicus, the bearer of the letter, is the most likely candidate since he may have acted as scribe for Paul and then interpreter of the letter when it was first delivered. He thinks this is the same case for Ephesians, Tychicus wrote the book "maintaining the voice of Paul" (580).

For the Pastoral Letters, Gorman discusses 2 Timothy first because he thinks the content of the letter comes from the time of Paul and accurately represents his thoughts, but may have been written after Paul's death. 1 Timothy and Titus come from a later time and reflect the church after Paul's death (614).

There are illustrations and maps throughout the book. The map of Corinth is particularly well done, I would have liked to see these for each of the locations (although that is not always possible based on the available evidence). Many of the photographs were taken by Gorman or his students on his trips to Pauline sites in Europe and Turkey. Although they are reproduced in black and white, they are not the usual photographs found in these sorts of textbooks.

Conclusion. This new edition of *Apostle of the Crucified Lord* continues to be a valuable introduction to the Pauline letters. Gorman's presentation of Pauline theology challenges contemporary church leaders not only to know Pauline theology, but to live as cross-shaped people who seek to transform their world.

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Gorman, Michael J. *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission.* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2016. 351 pp. Pb; $28.

In this new monograph Michael Gorman asserts the apostle Paul wanted his communities to not only believe the gospel but also to become the gospel by participating in the life and mission of God (2). Gorman describes local churches as "colonies of cruciformity" Gorman has already contributed two books with similar themes (*Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross*, Eerdmans 2001 and *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology*, Eerdmans 2009). This book intends to develop this view of Paul's theology of participation by reading Paul missionally. After two introductory chapters, Gorman examines becoming faith, hope and love in 1 Thessalonians, the story of Christ in Philippians, the gospel of peace in Ephesians, and the justice of God in 1-2 Corinthians and Romans.

In this book Gorman argues Paul "expected the salvation of God to spread throughout the world not only by means of his own Gospel ministry but also by means of the participation of his converts in various house churches" (61). In fact the church was to be a "living exegesis" of the gospel of God (43).

Gorman uses Philippians 2:6-11 as a model of the gospel several times in the book. He calls this text a "missional Christology for a missional people" (109). The pattern of these verses is "although [x] status, not [y] selfishness, but [z] self-renunciation and self-giving." In Philippians, Jesus has the status of "form of God" [x], but did not consider that status as something to be exploited [y], but rather he emptied himself so he could give himself on the cross [z]. Chapter 4 contains a careful exegesis of these verses and Gorman describes them as Paul's master text. Gorman shows how Paul's example in 1 Thessalonians 2 or 1 Corinthians 9 follows this same pattern (87), but also Paul's expectation for his churches are similarly modeled.

Gorman is not advocating some bland lifestyle evangelism. Using the Thessalonian church as an example, it appears their faithfulness to the gospel was public and in some way brought them into conflict with their culture, perhaps even leading to the death of some members of the con-

gregation because of their faithful witness (74; although he admits this is a minority view in footnote 24; I am inclined to agree). In addition to this, those who have expressed public faith in the gospel would have faced questions from friends and family about their abandonment of cultic activity. This would include a rejection of family gods, but also civic and imperial worship. This would be interpreted as impious and unpatriotic behavior, potentially leading to persecution (95). Gorman says "one cannot speak of the 'good news' of Jesus as 'Lord' without focusing on the countercultural religious and political claims of this story" (134). The gospel itself challenges the false master story of the Roman world. If the church is actually living out the gospel in their lives then they will challenge culture in very real ways which will lead naturally to persecution.

Gorman spends two chapters on the church as the embodiment of peace. Chapter 5 is a biblical theology of peace which defines peace as shalom, the fullness of life promised by God (143). Although Western Christians tend to think of peace in the Pauline letters as "peace with God," Gorman follows N. T. Wright in arguing peace is central to both Paul's soteriology and ecclesiology. Certainly reconciliation with God is important for Paul, but peace within the community is constantly repeated throughout Paul's letters. If a local church is an embodiment of the gospel, and peace with God is central to that gospel, then peace with one another must be an important component of how a church lives out the gospel in a community. Gorman sees the peacemaking mission of the church as an anticipatory participation in the coming eschatological kingdom of peace (162, almost an "already/not yet" argument).

To support this, Gorman offers a detailed reading of Ephesians. Ephesians refers to peace eight times, including the introduction (1:2) and conclusion (6:15) of the letter. Before looking at the way Ephesians describes peace, Gorman must deal with several obvious objections to using Ephesians as a model for Pauline ecclesiology. He deals with the authorship problem briefly by stating Paul is the genius behind the letter regardless of who wrote it. A second problem with Ephesians is the alleged patriarchy of Ephesians 5:22-6-9. Although there are various ways to deal with this problem, Gorman points out the peace of the gospel ought to effect all relationships in which believers participate, so if a male head of a household is acting peaceably, then he cannot mistreat his wife, children or slaves (186).

He then argues the book of Ephesians demonstrates Christ's death reconciles people to God, but also people to one another (192). To emphasize one or the other is to miss the point of "Christ as peacemaker." But the church is not simply to "be peace," rather they are to keep the peace. If *shalom* means harmony, then the local church ought to be a place characterized by the same cruciform love that created the church (196). Peacemaking cannot be reduced to a nebulous imitation of Christ or God, although it certainly includes "putting on" Christ.

Each chapter concludes with a brief example of a ministry which is "being the gospel" in a particular community. For example, after arguing Paul expects his churches to be peacemakers, Gorman illustrates this by describing Christian Peacemaker Teams, an ecumenical ministry which seeks nonviolent alternatives in Palestine, Iraq, Columbia or other war-torn regions. For the church as the justice of God, Gorman draws attention to Mary's Cradle in Bluefield, West Virginia, a ministry associated with Trinity United Methodist Church. The ministry provides assistance for pregnant women and offers a range of services for women. These illustrations are helpful because they provide concrete examples of how local churches can think creatively to be the gospel in their communities.

Conclusion. I have always been associated with Christian organizations which were decidedly evangelistic although not always intentional in how they live out the gospel in a community. Missionaries went off someplace and did missions and the local church supported that mission with prayer and money. But this is not what Paul envisioned when he planted local churches in specific communities. Gorman shows Paul's "missionary strategy" was to create local manifestations of the gospel, local churches, which could then reach into their communities as a living gospel. I agree with Gorman's assessment that some churches are hearing a call to be the gospel through a "renewed imagination." In *Becoming the Gospel* Gorman provides a solid exegetical, biblical foundation for local church involvement in local communities.

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Longenecker, Richard N. *Paul, Apostle of Liberty*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2016. 435 pp. Pb; $34.

Richard Longenecker's *Paul, Apostle of Liberty* was first published in 1964. Much has happened in Pauline studies since 1964, not the least of which is E. P. Sanders's *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (1977). Since the first edition of this book, Longenecker himself contributed a highly regarded Word Biblical Commentary on Galatians commentary (Word; 1990) and most recently the NIGTC volume on Romans (Eerdmans, 2016), along with many other monographs and articles on topics within the field of Pauline studies. This introduction to Paul's theology can fairly be described as a classic text which has already served a generation of students as a classroom textbook and standard reference work on Paul's theology.

The body of this introduction to Paul is essentially the same as earlier editions. Longenecker does not survey the letters of Paul or discuss "background" issues. His interest is in tracing the more important contours of Pauline theology. After a chapter on sources, Longenecker provides three chapters on Jewish backgrounds for Pauline studies (Paul as "Hebrew of the Hebrews"; Piety in Hebraic Judaism; Saul and the Law). Longenecker uses the Romans 7 as evidence Paul was indeed "kicking against the goads" when he zealously persecuted the church.

Longenecker has four chapters on Pauline teaching: Legality and the Law; The End of Nominism; Liberty in Christ; The Exercise of Liberty. For Longenecker, liberty in Christ is essential for a proper understanding of his theology. Longenecker entitles the third section of the book "practice" although his interest in these three chapters is how Paul worked out his view of Christian freedom in Christ with respect to the Law. Chapter 9 discusses the Judaizers and Paul's relationship with Jerusalem. Chapter 10 focuses on Paul's mission strategy of "all things to all men." Here Longenecker is interested in how Paul evangelized Gentiles, but also his response to the Libertenes, the Ascetics, the "strong" and the Ecstatics.

Finally, chapter 11 deals with the "problem practices" in Acts. Late in Acts, Paul claims to have a clear conscience with respect to the Law. If Paul is the Apostle of Liberty and believed the Gentiles were no longer under the Law, why does Paul continue to preach to the Jews? Why did he

take a Nazarite vow in Acts 18? Why did he accept the Jerusalem decree in Acts 15 if he believed he was not under the authority of the Jerusalem church?

The new material in this book is a lengthy addendum tracing the reception of Paul and his letters through church history. Even in this 92 page survey, Longenecker cannot hope to present a comprehensive summary of all of the commentaries and sermons produced over 2000 years, so he provides a "Hall of Fame" intended to honor his own favorite commentators on Paul. Longenecker has divided his list into three periods: Patristic (including texts like the Acts of Paul and Thecla, the Gnostics and Marcion, but also Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Jerome, Augustine, and many others), the Reformation (beginning with Erasmus, but including all the expected reformers) and modern (Schleiermacher, Baur, Lightfoot, Barth, and James S. Stewart). For the modern period, he has purposely avoided scholars who are still active. This means there is nothing from N. T. Wright, for example, even though Wright has contributed a major Romans commentary and a massive book on Paul's theology, nor is there any attempt to deal with the often visceral reaction against Wright's views on Paul. Longenecker is not particularly swayed by the New Perspective, although in many ways the original 1964 version of this book anticipated some of the problems raised by Sanders and Dunn. Perhaps Longenecker's recent commentary on Romans offers insight into his opinion of the New Perspective, but there is very little in more than 1000 pages of commentary which reflects the contributions of the New Perspective.

In addition to this hall of fame style survey of historic commentators on Paul, Longenecker offers a series of brief summaries of modern approaches to Paul. This section includes two or three pages on:

- Rhetorical approaches to Paul which recognize the epistolary form of Paul's letters
- Reevaluation of the textual history of the New Testament
- Reevaluations of Palestinian Judaism (E. P. Sanders)
- The New Perspective on Paul (James Dunn)
- Narrative approaches to the New Testament applied to Paul

Since this is a second edition, it is fair to evaluate the value of the book in contrast to the earlier edition. As Longenecker recognizes, the field of

Pauline studies has gone through several major developments since 1964, but he has chosen not to update the body of the book to reflect these changes. Most readers of this new edition will be aware of the work of E. P. Sanders and the New Perspective on Paul as well as the reactions to Sanders and the New Perspective. Some of these responses were violently opposed to the movement, others took up the suggestions in Sanders's *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* and developed them in detail. Longenecker does not attempt to integrate any of this massive secondary literature into the 1964 version of his book, but rather comments on Sanders and the New Perspective in the addendum (p. 345-50).

By way of conclusion, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty* remains a classic of Pauline theology and ought to be read (and re-read) by anyone studying Paul's theology. The addendum is an excellent primer for a seminary student who needs to "catch up" on two thousand years of thinking about Paul's theology.

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Porter, Stanley E. *When Paul Met Jesus: How an Idea Got Lost in History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. 435 pp. Pb; $34.

Second Corinthians 5:16 is usually read as if Paul is denying he knew Jesus prior to the dramatic event on the Damascus Road. When confronted by the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus, Paul asks "who are you, Lord?" This too is taken as an indication Paul did not recognize Jesus and is used as evidence Paul did not know Jesus prior to his conversion. But there have been a few scholars in the early twentieth century who suggested Paul may have seen Jesus in Jerusalem prior to the crucifixion and perhaps even heard Jesus teach at some point.

In this monograph, Stanley Porter attempts to revive this idea by examining the relevant texts in the Pauline epistles as well as the book of Acts. Beginning with William Ramsay, Johannes Weiss, and J. H. Moulton, Porter suggests it is at least plausible to understand some of the texts used to show Paul did not know Jesus as meaning the opposite; he did recognize

Jesus on the road to Damascus and he had heard Jesus teaching in person (chapter 1). Although he admits he has not surveyed every work on the life of Paul (a nearly impossible task these days), Porter claims to have found only one recent scholar who is open to the possibility Paul heard Jesus teach at some point before the crucifixion (Tim Gombis, in *Paul: A Guide for the Perplexed*). Even works with a vested interest in connecting Jesus and Paul dismiss the possibility Paul knew Jesus prior to his conversion. Porter cites David Wenham who wrote a popular book on Jesus and Paul. Wenham simply states "Paul did not have firsthand experience of Jesus' ministry (cited by Porter, 175).

So what happened? Porter lays the blame for the common assumption Paul did not know Jesus at the feet of F. C. Baur, followed by William Wrede and most significantly Rudolf Bultmann. As Porter says, "The short answer is Rudolf Bultmann and the long answer is the general history of Pauline scholarship" since Baur (45). There are several assumptions which make the possibility Paul knew Jesus less likely. First, Baur reduced the Pauline canon to Romans, 1-2 Corinthians and Galatians. Second, he assumed Acts altered history in order to make the contrast between Paul and Peter more clear. This led to the third assumption, Peter and Paul represented the two sides of the early church which eventually resulted into the synthesis of the next generation of Christianity. Bultmann argued Jesus' teaching was irrelevant (and unknowable), and Pauline theology does not really depend on Jesus. Porter interacts at length with Bultmann's 2 Corinthians commentary since the meaning of 2 Corinthians 5:16 is critically important for the thesis he wants to defend in this monograph, that Paul not only knew the teaching of Jesus, but had heard Jesus teach, perhaps on several occasions, and may have interacted with Jesus during his earthly ministry.

As a result of the influence of Baur, Wrede, and Bultmann, most scholars reject the idea Paul knew Jesus or do not even raise the question. For many, there is a gap between the teaching of Jesus and the theology of Paul. Porter cites James Dunn, "Paul's influence in determining the beginnings of Christianity was almost as great as that of Jesus" (Porter, 71).

With respect to method, Porter realizes many scholars reduce the number of authentic epistles and often reject the Pastoral Epistles, but there is little in the disputed epistles which supports his case. He fully accepts the

book of Acts as evidence for the details of Paul's life and prefers to date the book as early as A.D. 63 (an early date even for conservative Acts scholars). Scholarship on Pauline chronology often favors the epistles and Porter sees no problem using both as sources this study.

His third chapter surveys the data in Acts and the Pauline epistles, including the three reports of Paul's conversion in Acts, focusing especially on the phrase "Who are you Lord?" For Porter, both Jesus' statement and Paul's response imply recognition, that is, Paul saw Jesus and recognized him because he knew him before the encounter (94). Porter gently suggests the phrase "I am Jesus" is similar to a Johannine "I am" saying, so Jesus is using a Christological formula to identify himself (the human Jesus) with the God (92).

Turning to the Epistles, Porter begins with 1 Corinthians 9:1, "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" Porter offers a detailed exegesis of this passage, comparing it to 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 to argue Paul had seen Jesus just as the other apostles had. With respect to 2 Corinthians 5:16, Porter interacts at length with Bultmann's highly influential commentary. Bultmann understood this verse to say Paul did not know Jesus before the Damascus road encounter, that he did not know Jesus "according to the flesh." Porter offers a detailed exegesis of eleven key points in this verse and concludes it is plausible the verse indicates Paul once knew Jesus only as a human, but now (after the resurrection) Paul knows Jesus as the resurrected Lord. He is careful to suggest this as a possible reading of the text, but along with 1 Corinthians 9:1 and the book of Acts, there is a strong possibility Paul had known Jesus prior to his conversion experience.

In chapter 4 Porter develops some of the implications of Paul knowing Jesus before the resurrection. This would imply all had firsthand knowledge of Jesus' teaching because he had heard it for himself at some point in the ministry of Jesus. To support this, Porter examines five passages in Paul's letter which seem to reflect the teaching of Jesus: Romans 12:92-21 (loving, blessing, cursing); Romans13:8 and Galatians 5:14 (loving one's neighbor); 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 (on divorce); 1 Corinthians 9:14 and 1 Timothy 5:18 (paying ministers of the Gospel); 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 (the Lord's return).

After examining these passages in detail, Porter concludes Paul had firsthand knowledge of the teaching of Jesus corresponding to three phases of Jesus' ministry. Romans 12:9-21 alludes to the Sermon on the Mount (which Porter argues was a single sermon preached in Galilee). Loving one's neighbor alludes to Jesus' encounter with a lawyer during Luke's travel narrative on the road to Jerusalem who asked him how he might inherit eternal life. 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 alludes to the Olivet Discourse, part of Jesus' teaching to the disciples in Jerusalem. Although Porter does not offer details, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 is perhaps a better example of a possible allusion to the Olivet Discourse. Obeying the government in Romans 13 may allude to Jesus' saying to "give unto Caesar."

I have several questions about this section of Porter's argument. First, acquaintance with the teaching of Jesus does not necessarily mean firsthand knowledge. If Romans12:9-11 does allude to the Sermon on the Mount, it is not necessary for Paul himself to have heard Jesus teach the words himself. The writer of the Didache also alludes to the Sermon, but no one would assume that author personally heard Jesus teach. Although it is not necessary to argue Paul had a copy of Q with him wherever he traveled, it is just as plausible he knew of some sayings sources often attributed to Q. This would account for material in Paul's letters which would later be used by Matthew and Luke.

A second and related issue concerns the method used for demonstrating Paul had firsthand knowledge of Jesus' teaching. Porter must walk a fine line between verbal parallels with the Gospels and general allusions. If Paul heard Jesus teach in Galilee and wrote his recollection of that teaching in Romans some twenty or more years later, it would be remarkable if the words he used were exactly the same as the Gospel of Matthew. Porter recognizes this as a problem for the vocabulary for divorce in 1 Corinthians 7 (148-50), eventually concluding Paul offers a paraphrase of what Jesus said.

This raises a third concern. Sometimes a common Jewish source is a simpler solution than Paul heard Jesus teach. For example, that both Jesus' and Paul's summary the of Law as "love your neighbor" is not remarkable at all since this was a well-known summary of the Law in Second Temple Judaism based on Leviticus 19:18. That a Jewish lawyer would respond to Jesus in this way is not a surprise. In addition, it is possible to find parallels

to Romans 12:9-21 in Jewish wisdom literature.

Finally, sometimes Porter makes a suggestion which goes well beyond the evidence. He very tentatively suggests Paul was the "the lawyer who asked the question" in Luke 10:25-28 (147). Similarly, that Paul "overheard Jesus' words regarding the worker being worthy of his/her wages" (159) seems to go beyond the evidence or that Paul overheard the Olivet Discourse and "heard enough" of Jesus at that point (167). All of these are of course possibilities, but move into the area of speculation which cannot be supported by evidence.

In his conclusion, Porter cites A.M. Pope who asked what benefit to our understanding of Paul if it can be proven Paul knew the life and teaching of the human Jesus. Aside from historical curiosity, the connection between Jesus and Paul would serve to further strengthen Pauline studies which place Paul in a Jewish context. The wedge driven between Jesus and Paul ought to be removed, but so too the wedge between Judaism, Jesus and Paul.

Despite these criticisms, this is a fascinating book which makes a bold claim and supports that claim with detailed evidence and careful argumentation. Porter makes his case it is at least plausible Paul knew the teaching of Jesus prior to the crucifixion and that he had personally seen Jesus on occasion.

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Allen, Leslie. *Holiness to the Lord: A Guide to the Exposition of the Book of Leviticus.* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2006. 496 pp.; Pb.; $42.00.

The book of Leviticus is often considered one of the most boring books of the Bible. It is also one of the most neglected books of the Bible by readers and preachers. Allen is a master of bringing out excellent points for exposition and application, underwritten by the theology of the book. He bridges the gap between dryness and significance of the text on a practical level by demonstrating connections with the ministry of Christ without becoming fanciful.

The introduction is one of the highlights of the book. The book centers upon holiness. Allen upholds the holiness of God, eternal, gracious and personal. God's holiness is transformed into the living of the people of God. He shows how the enabling grace of the holy things given to Israel were gifts of expiation and communion. Although Allen confronts scholarly views of this book, this book is neither detailed exegetical commentary nor a devotional commentary. He reminds us Leviticus is part of the Law. It centers upon theology, a necessary factor in understanding the book. The theology of Leviticus provides a useful message on worship, sanctification, and obedience. His study of the book is divided into the five points:

1. Laws of the Sacrifices (Lev. 1-7)
2. Laws of the Priesthood (Lev. 8-10)
3. Laws of Purification (Lev. 11-16)
4. Instructions for Holiness (Lev. 17-26)
5. Redemptive of Vows (Lev. 27)

The religious instruction contained in Leviticus presents the entire religious system of Israel. Although Leviticus is priestly guidebook, Allen presents the theological foundational truths found throughout the Bible and the work of Christ. Leviticus presents the reality of God as the Holy one. The laws of the sacrifices are for the purpose of access, acceptance, dedication, peace, purity, in short reconciliation. All sacrifices foreshadow the work of Jesus Christ. The laws of the priesthood center upon ministry. The laws of purification protect God's people from contamination. The instructions for holiness deal with sanctification and fellowship. Vows of redemption deal with exposition and reflection of God's faithfulness, and our promise to be faithful.

Allen fulfills his purpose of providing teaching to aid in learning about the book and use it in Christian exposition. If you can only afford one book on Leviticus this is the one to get. It is very helpful, reader friendly, and heightens one's understandable of Leviticus. It should be every Pastor's study.

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McDermott, Gerald R. *Israel Matters: Why Christians Must Think Differently about the People and the Land.* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, 2017. 158 pp.; Pb.; $17.90

Gerald McDermott edited a volume of essays on the status of Israel in the current age (*The New Christian Zionism: Fresh Perspectives on Israel and the Land*, InterVarsity, 2016). The volume included essays by two scholars associated with progressive dispensationalism (Darrell bock and Craig Blaising), two writers associated with the Philos Project (an organization which promotes positive Christian engagement in the Middle East, Robert Nicholson and Shadi Khallou), two writers who edited an Introduction to Messianic Judaism (Zondervan, 2013; Joel Willitts and David Rudolph). This new volume by Brazos Press is an attempt to present the ideas of this previous work at a popular level.

In the introduction to this book, Dermott traces his move from the traditional view that the church has replaced Israel as God's people to what he calls "New Zionism." He indicates his theological training convinced him the Church is the new Israel and any protests against this position came from Dispensationalism in the 1970s. Unfortunately, the Dispensationalism McDermott encountered argued for two separate ways of salvation (one for Israel, one for the church) and McDermott was repelled by popular Dispensational emphases on fulfillment of prophecy and predicting the rapture. In his previous volume, McDermott argued strenuously what he calls New Christian Zionism pre-dates the origins of Dispensationalism. This is clearly true; one of the keys for the development of dispensational theology was the rejection of replacement theology, opening up the possibility Old Testament prophecy about Israel could be (literally) fulfilled in the future.

As he began to study the New Testament, he encountered many texts which implied God still loved Israel and there was some kind of an anticipated future for Israel. This caused him to question some of the training he received in theology. His theological training had uncritically assumed the historic replacement theology of the church. In his first chapter ("Getting the Big Story Wrong"), McDermott traces this history of supersessionism through the early church (Justin Martyr. Irenaeus, and Origin) through the reformation, deism, and nineteenth century rationalism.

Chapters 2-5 deal with the biblical data on Israel. First, McDermott deals with the claim the New Testament teaches the church is the New Israel. Despite the fact the New Testament does not expressly teach replacement theology, any church history will show many in the early church did in fact see the church as a new Israel and often spiritualized the promises of the Old Testament in order to make the applicable to the church. McDermott covered this history in the first chapter of the book, but in the third chapter he tracks "those who got it right."

Chapters 4 and 5 examine the Old and New Testaments in order to show God's plan has always been to bring salvation to the world through Israel. Despite Israel's rejection of God in the Old Testament and the Messiah in the Gospels, God's plan still includes a future for Israel in the Land. McDermott has correctly recognized the importance of Peter's sermons in Acts 2-3, especially the promise of the "times of refreshing" Acts 3:19 (first in the introduction, then several more times in the book, p. 75 for example). I have written on this passage in the past, including how this phrase resonates with themes in the Second Temple period. In addition, I consider this to be one of the key texts for understanding what is happening theologically in the book of Acts

Chapter 6 deals with a political objections to McDermott's New Zionism, "What about the Palestinians?" In this chapter he offers a brief overview of the emergence of Israel over the past hundred years beginning with the British Mandate. This is the least satisfying chapter in the book, and perhaps McDermott would have been better off omitting this material from the book. It seems to me this overview is far too brief to deal with the complexity of the issue and will leave him open to criticism from those who are less positive about Israel's recent political history. McDermott is quite clear (and correct) that a proper understanding of Israel's place in history does not mean uncritical acceptance of the modern political State of Israel, nor would he agree with the strange American evangelical relationship with the State of Israel (usually having something to do with 1948 as the fulfillment of prophecy). But I do think his description of modern Israel and its relationship with Palestine will the main thing some readers will criticize about this book.

Chapter 7 deals with the status of the New Covenant in the present age. A traditional reading of Hebrews 8:13 argues the New Covenant cancels the Old Covenant, implying the Jewish people who were under the Old Covenant are no longer God's special people. At the cross they are "replaced by the Church" and the Law came to an end (at least Paul seems to think so). McDermott rejects the older dispensational idea of two new covenants, one for the Jews and one for the church, as well he should. McDermott points out Hebrews says the Law is passing away, not that it was abrogated at the cross. Paul's point, for McDermott, is the Law has a new meaning since the Messiah has come, not that the Law has been cancelled.

McDermott turns to a few practical of his new Zionism in chapter 8 ("If All This Is True, Then What?") He presents this material through the eyes of the senior pastor of his church, Mark Graham. As result of several trips to Israel and continued dialogue with McDermott, Graham has begun to read the Bible with Jewish culture and history in mind. This may be as simple as realizing (and teaching) the Greek word Christ ought to be understood as messiah, But Graham has made a conscious effort to preach more out of the Old Testament and as a result, he has rethought his understanding of church history and theology. McDermott offers one compelling example of this shift it theological thinking. McDermott includes section here on rethinking the Israel-Palestinian conflict (which is pro-Israel).

As a short conclusion to the book, McDermott offers six proposals based on the observations in this book. First, he thinks the church can see itself in Israel. By ignoring the first two-thirds of salvation history, the church misunderstands God. Second, the history of redemption is ongoing in the sense the present ages is not the last stage in God's redemptive plan. This implies (third) that prophecy is real, although it is mysterious. This means contemporary interprets ought to be wary of declaring the present State of Israel is a fulfillment of prophecy. Fourth, the land promises to Israel will be fulfilled in the future, Fifth, Israel and the church are "joined at the hip" even if neither side is aware of it. Sixth, the history of the treatment Jews shows is the "mystery of iniquity."

By way of conclusion, unlike McDermott, I was never part of a replacement theology tradition, so much of what is presented in this book sounds very familiar from two very different directions. First, McDermott has read N. T. Wright extensively and has picked up on some of the best elements

of his presentation of Jesus and Paul, as well as the now popular idea of the "drama of redemption." Although written at the popular level, there is significant substance behind the argument of this book.

Second, many of the ideas presented in this book are familiar to anyone who has read dispensationalism beyond the cartoon parody of the Left Behind crowd. Dispensationalism started with the observation the Old Testament prophecies concerning Israel remained unfulfilled and it was not satisfied by declaring these prophecies as fulfilled in the modern church.

It is this ecclesiological observation (the church is not a new Israel) which was Dispensationalism's important contribution to the theological discussion and led to re-reading Old Testament prophecy as predicting a real restoration of Israel in the future (a radical idea in 1900!) McDermott could include some Dispensationalists in his collection of people who "got it right."

McDermott's book is a very simple introduction to a very complex problem. He touches on issues which merit far more detail (perhaps their own monograph). This lack of detail will frustrate some readers, but would go well beyond McDermott's goal of presenting the case for a New Zionism in a simple, straightforward fashion.

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Hardin, Leslie T. *The Spirituality of Paul: Partnering with the Spirit in Everyday Life***.** Grand Rapids, Mich. Kregel, 2016. 192 pp. Pb; $16.99.

Leslie Hardin is a contributor to the Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care and wrote The Spirituality of Jesus for Kregel (2009). Like his previous book Hardin does not write a book on practice spiritual disciplines, but rather a series of short reflections on what Paul thinks is key to spirituality. Although this is not a "how to" guide for spiritual life, readers will be encouraged as they reflect on what Paul says about these topics. For Hardin, Pauline spirituality is a "practical partnership with the Spirit," an expression of the Spirit of God already at work in the life of the believer (17).

In the introductory chapter, Hardin discusses Paul's sometimes controversial commands to "imitate me." Hardin expresses a common frustration with Paul's somewhat arrogant view that he is worthy of imitation, especially in matters of spiritual discipline. After all, Paul seems opinionated and angry, perhaps even demanding of his congregations. Why imitate Paul, when Peter and John are original disciples of Jesus? In fact, why imitate Paul when we ought to be imitating Jesus? Like Randolph and O'Brien recent Paul Behaving Badly, Hardin wants to read Paul's letters in order to answer some of these objections while focusing on the "shape" of Paul's spirituality.

Hardin discusses ten themes in Paul: Scripture, prayer, disciple-making, proclamation, worship, holiness, spiritual gifts, edification and suffering. Some of these are certainly within the sphere of spirituality, but several are in the category of imitation. Disciple-making, for example, is not usually included in a list of spiritual disciplines. However, as Hardin explains, Paul's missionary method intentionally sought out individuals to develop into disciples who were told to go and find others to disciple. This process of discipleship hands down tradition from Jesus to Paul, to Paul's disciples and then to their disciples. Hardin's discussion of spiritual gifts is good and approaches a potentially contentious issue with wisdom, but it does not always speak to the topic of "spirituality in Paul."

Hardin discusses the shape of Pauline spirituality in his final chapter. First, Paul was faithful to Scripture. According to Hardin, Paul saw Scripture as a tutor leading to godliness through Christ. Second, Paul was an

imitator of Jesus (1 Cor 1:11). Although he encouraged his disciples to imitate him, his eyes were fixed on Jesus. This is not a lame "year of living like Jesus," but rather living out the lifestyle of Jesus in a way which impacts the world. Third, living life as an imitator of Jesus is, for Paul, a life of freedom. Hardin is clear imitating Jesus is not living exactly like Jesus in every single detail, but embracing the freed from guilt one has as a child of God. Fourth, imitating Paul as he imitates Jesus should result in glorifying Jesus. Paul sees glorifying Jesus as the goal of everything Paul says in his letters. Fifth, Paul's spirituality is committed to unity. It is undeniable Paul desires his churches to be unified both in doctrine and practice. Finally, Hardin points out the basis of any talk of the spiritual of Paul is his emphasis on the activity of the Holy Spirit.

There are a few things missing in the book. For example, Hardin has consciously avoided interacting with any of the classics of spiritual discipline. Although the focus on Paul might have limit the use of some of these classics, I would have expected some interaction with Rodney Reeves's Spirituality According to Paul (InterVarsity, 2011). It is also remarkable (or refreshing depending on your perspective) that a book on the spiritual of Paul does not use the work cruciform.

In fact, there are only one or two citations of Michael Gorman in this book. Gorman's Becoming the Gospel is likely too recent to have had an influence on Hardin, but certainly his previous books merit more than a brief citation (Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross, Eerdmans 2001 and Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology, Eerdmans 2009).

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Following the lead of the original *Grace Journal of Theology*, the present Journal is intended to stimulate constructive thought, awareness, devotion and practice in matters of ministry, biblical, theological and dispensational studies. The Journal will publish articles and reviews of merit with preference of acceptance given to credentialed and experienced writers. Articles are to be well researched, documented and relevant to the objectives of the Journal. Publication decisions will be made based on the consensus of the editorial committee. A full article will be between 4000 and 6000 words including footnotes. A "short note" on a text or topic will be between 1000 and 2000 words. Book reviews will be about 1000 words. Several books are available for review; contact the editor for more information.

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