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TABLE OF CONTENTS

BOOK REVIEWS

EDITORS

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Gateway Seminary's mission is shaping leaders who expand God's kingdom around the world. As a theological seminary committed to biblical inerrancy, we cherish the words of Paul to Timothy: All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17, ESV). The Gateway Journal of Theology invites readers on a journey of exploration and discovery; of theologians, their ideas, and their contributions. In this inaugural edition, the exploration covers well-known historic figures like Andrew Fuller and lesser known persons like Osgood Wheeler, the first Baptist missionary to California. Readers are invited to explore questions about how certain passages of scripture relate to others, to consider how to serve unreached people groups, and to discover the history of Baptist work in the Mountain West region of the United States and Korea. This exercise, however, is not an end in itself. The ultimate purpose is to draw us closer to God's Word and to the Jesus Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation. The goal of this exploration is not merely information, but transformation. To discover truth pointing us to the glory of Christ and then to be increasingly conformed to His image. The second president of Gateway Seminary, Dr. Benjamin Herring, served from 1946-1952. In his first presidential convocation titled "The Wheel of Progress", Herring said that sound doctrine is like a wheel propelling the progress of the kingdom of God. The Gateway Journal of Theology is written to sharpen the minds of readers to both know Christ and to make Him known, in fulfillment of the mission of Gateway Seminary.

Adam Groza

President, Gateway Seminary

THE GATEWAY JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

ANDREW FULLER'S SHORTHAND NOTES ON THE CONDUCT OF EVENING PRAYER MEETINGS

PETER J. MORDEN & JONATHAN WOODS

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Introduction

Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) was one of the foremost English Baptist ministers of his generation.[1] Although he never worked in the academy, spending the whole of his ministerial career in local church pastorates, he was a published theologian of significant standing and influence. His seminal Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation first appeared in 1785 and had an impact that was both broad and deep.[2] Fuller's denomination, the Particular Baptists, had been declining numerically throughout the first half of the eighteenth century.[3] However, the warm-hearted,

* Morden has written the article and the notes on the text of Fuller's address; Woods has provided the translation from the shorthand.

1 For biographical details, see Peter J. Morden, *The Life and Thought of Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2015).

2 *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* (Northampton: T. Dicey, 1st edn., 1785). The 2nd edn., published in 1801, is more readily available. For this, see *The Complete Works of the Rev Andrew Fuller, With a Memoir of his Life by the Rev. Andrew Gunton Fuller*, ed. Andrew Gunton Fuller; rev. ed. Joseph Belcher; 3 vols (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle, 3rd edn., 1988 [1845]), II, 328–416.

3 "Particular" because Fuller's denomination were Calvinistic: they believed in particular rather than general redemption.

invitational Calvinism which characterised the *Gospel Worthy* provided the theological underpinning for a profound revitalisation of their fortunes, a revitalisation which coincided with the years of Fuller's active ministry. Existing churches grew, new churches were planted, and many new initiatives were pioneered.[4] Important waymarkers in this remarkable story of revival and renewal were the "Call to Prayer" of 1784, with its stress on focused intercession for the worldwide spread of the gospel, and the establishment of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792, a development which enabled the denomination to give practical expression to their prayers. Fuller was intimately involved in both ventures; indeed, he was the founding secretary of the BMS, a role he would diligently fulfill until his death. The new Mission Society became a model for many others and a fresh wave of cross-cultural mission work ensued.[5] Through the BMS, Fuller and the English Particular Baptists were at the forefront of a missional movement which would have profound global implications.

Fuller's importance as a pathbreaking theologian and missionary statesman is increasingly recognised and studies of different dimensions of ministry abound.[6] Even so, until recently, Fuller scholarship has been based solely on his published printed work and the longhand autograph manuscripts—for example, letters and a volume of his diary—deposited in various archives, especially those at the Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford, and Bristol Baptist College. This considerable body of material constitutes a rich resource which is being well mined by researchers. However, Fuller also made copious notes in his own style of shorthand, and attempts to decipher these have, until recently, been unsuccessful. As an example of this material, there are five closely written books of his shorthand sermon outlines extant, all composed by Fuller himself. The preacher took these outlines into the pulpit and preached from them. His five books were later bound into one volume by his son, Andrew Gunton Fuller, and this is held in the Bristol archive.[7] The importance of these books has long been recognised and the inability to understand them acknowledged as a serious lack. The breakthrough was achieved by Jonathan Woods and Stephen Holmes of St Andrew's University, Scotland, who worked with the Bristol manuscripts and a key to the shorthand likely written by Gunton Fuller and inserted in the volume. After some painstaking work they were able to understand Fuller's shorthand

4 For detail, see Morden, *Fuller*, passim; Michael A.G. Haykin, "'A Habitation of God, through the Spirit': John Sutcliff (1752–1814) and the Revitalization of the Calvinistic Baptists in the Late-eighteenth Century," *Baptist Quarterly* 34 (1992): 304–19.

5 Morden, *Fuller*, 109–23. William Carey and John Thomas were the Society's first missionaries, arriving in Bengal in 1793. It is important to note there was Protestant cross-cultural mission that predated the BMS. See Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society, 1792-1992* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1992), 1–3.

6 Two particularly fine examples of Fuller scholarship have been authored by Gateway professors. See Chris Chun, *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards in the Theology of Andrew Fuller* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), and David Rathel, *Andrew Fuller and the Search for a Faith Worthy of All Acceptation: Exploring Fuller's Soteriology in Its Historical Context* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2024).

7 Sermons by Andrew Fuller in Shorthand, with Occasional Meditations in Longhand, Bristol Baptist College Archive, Books I to V (G 95 A Ful).

method. Transcriptions and translations of two important sermons have already been published, namely the farewell messages he preached in 1782 at the conclusion of his pastorate at Soham, Cambridgeshire.[8] The understanding of how the shorthand operates has been generously shared by Dr. Woods and further translation work and analysis has begun involving researchers at both Bristol Baptist College and Gateway Seminary. This is an important moment in the development of Fuller studies.

The five books contain notes for messages which would have been preached in the course of Fuller's pastorates, firstly at Soham and then, from 1782, at Kettering, Northamptonshire (the sermons in the five books are rarely dated, but the first book begins in 1778 and the outlines continue to at least 1784, probably beyond). The messages appear to be mostly from his regular Sunday ministry, but there is material that relates to other occasions as well. This paper offers a translation, supplied by Jonathan Woods, of some notes on "the managing of evening meetings" which are more detailed than many of the other outlines.[9] Whilst they are not dated, their place in the volume and internal evidence from the notes themselves indicates they form the basis of a message given at one of the Monday night prayer meetings that Fuller began in Kettering in 1784.[10] The establishment of some of these meetings was a response to the 1784 Prayer Call that Fuller himself had been instrumental in giving. But it appears there were other Monday evening meetings at Kettering at which the prayer offered was more wide-ranging. There are references to both types of Monday gathering in Fuller's diary. So, on 6 December 1784 he recorded that on one of these occasions they had had an "affecting meeting of prayer" for the "revival of real religion" with much "freedom to God in prayer."[11] On 7 March 1785 he wrote that he personally "enjoyed Divine assistance at the monthly prayer meeting, in speaking on *continuing in prayer*, and in going to prayer, though I felt wretchedly cold before I began."[12] On 2 May 1785 he felt "more than ordinarily drawn out in prayer for the revival of religion" as well as being "overcome" on hearing one of his deacons, Beeby Wallis, pray for his pastor.[13] These Monday evening meetings had become an important feature of life at the Kettering church, one to which Fuller himself was personally committed.

Whilst most time on these Mondays was given over to extempore prayer, there was sometimes sung worship, the sharing of testimony, and on occasion, as already noted, the pastor would

8 Stephen R. Holmes and Jonathan Woods, "Andrew Fuller's Soham Farewell Sermons: Context and Text," *Baptist Quarterly* 51 (2020): 2–16. See esp. 4–6 for the account of how Fuller's shorthand was eventually decoded.

9 I am deeply grateful to Jonathan Woods for supplying this translation and giving permission to use it in this paper, and for his continued help and encouragement.

10 For the Prayer Call and the meetings at Kettering specifically, see Morden, *Fuller*, 111–15, 123.

11 *Diary of Andrew Fuller*, eds. Michael D. McMullen and Timothy D. Whelan (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 6 December 1784, 94.

12 *Diary of Andrew Fuller*, 7 March 1785, 113. Italics original.

13 *Diary of Andrew Fuller*, 2 May 1785, 125–26.

bring a short message to encourage his church forward in prayer.[14] "On the managing of evening meetings" appears to be notes for one of these short, informal addresses (see the reference to "our religious Services [sic.] particularly our Monday night meetings" in the text that follows). The absence of any explicit mention of prayer for revival makes it likely this talk was given at one of the more general Monday gatherings, although it is impossible to say for certain. The notes for the address are transcribed in full. They formed an important part of the Jonathan Edwards Centre lecture I was privileged to give at Gateway Seminary in 2024. They are published here for the first time. In engaging with them, the reader should be aware these are *notes*: the preacher would surely have expanded on points made when he delivered the message. Further, they were intended for personal use and not for publication, therefore they are not polished. Fuller's underlinings are retained, together with his rather random capitalization, original punctuation, contractions, and—to our eyes—unusual spellings of some of the words he inserted into the text in longhand. On the very rare occasions when there is doubt as to the word used this is indicated in square brackets. I have added a number of footnotes which hopefully help illuminate the text.

On the Managing of Evening Meetings

1 Corinthians 14:26. Every religious service will be lost labour else we have an <u>end</u> in view. Unless this end be <u>good</u> worse than lost labour offensive to God and hurtful to us. Next to the glory of God one grand end we should keep in view is our own and others <u>edification</u> or holding each other up in allusion [?] to an edifice --- Farther as all ends are accompanied by means[15] it behooves us to take heed that we use such means as tend to the end we aim to – I have been thinking my brethren a little concerning <u>the management of our religious Services particularly our Monday night meetings</u>. They are meetings which I heartily and highly approve, And what if I were for once to drop a few free hints about the conduct of them and all such opportunities in such a way as tends to godly edifying? I hope I need make no apology for so doing as I have this persuasion that you will all suffer the word of exhortation. I shall only take up these 2 exercises which make the chief part of these opportunities <u>Prayer and the relating of our Experiences</u>. And First concerning Prayer. Social Prayer is a [either 'lovely' or comely'] Exercise.[16] Many

14 *Diary of Andrew Fuller*, 7 March 1785, 113; 6 December 1784, 94; John Ryland, *The Life of Andrew Fuller*, ed. C. Ryan Griffith (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2022 [London: Button and Son, 1818]), 174.

15 The stress on "means" was a crucial one for Fuller and it is fascinating to see it deployed here in an informal address. God's sovereignty was not in dispute, but against those "high Calvinists" who downplayed the importance of human agency Fuller and his evangelical colleagues stressed that God used human "means"—for example preaching and, here, the prayers of his people—to accomplish his "ends." Thus divine sovereignty and human responsibility were held in careful balance, and passionate intercession and vigorous gospel work encouraged.

16 The phrase "social prayer" was in regular use to describe what happened when Christians came together to pray. See, for example, Abraham Booth, *The Amen to Social Prayer Illustrated and Improved: A Sermon…* (London: Wm. Button, 1801). Like Fuller, Booth was a Particular Baptist, but the phrase was common currency amongst evangelical Christians in the long eighteenth century.

Instances of it in Scripture especially in the New Testament and of its good Effects Acts 1:14. – 12:5. Paul & Silas.[17] – And if conducted in a spiritual, edifying way tends as much as any ordinances to cultivate Christian love and is that whereby we taste each other's spirits – but we must not forget this end if we do it may become hurtful to the Interests of Religion more than helpful –-- The chief things necessary are I think these 2 viz that a due regard be had to time, and that that time that is taken up be upon things tending to edification. I say time, for the mind of man even the best of men is soon weary unless something very excellent to atone but we are not to suppose this in general of our own prayers therefore not so. I have known many persons go to prayer and in the forepart were edifying but by a tedious Circuit, or by endless repetitions, have tired the patience of people and undid the good already done

It may be thought a limiting the spirit of God, but perhaps tis only a limiting our own spirits – Our Lord spake against Matthew 6.[18] One of the longest was Solomon's and that not above ¼ of an hour.[19] Christ prayd all night but that in Secret[20] – if we have anything very pressing upon our spirits go into thy closet…I said it was only limiting our own spirits. Philippians 2. "own things"[21] … but we must as well watch ourselves that that time be taken up to edification – allow me then to give a few advices here –

1. Use no needless Repetitions Not but that if a matter lie peculiarly upon the heart it may be repeated Christ did so but vain repetitions[22]
2. Dwell not upon things which can concern you merely as an Individual your case may be the case of others such as to mourn under guilt – [unclear; dul.s] etc. but to bring particular cases which concern only yourselves looks like a way of telling people of em[23]
3. Say not everything that can be said about other things. Those people spin out time in praying for wife and children, king and Queen, Church and State and everything they can think of. All good in their place but the place for some of them should be the closet, others the chimney corner, I once heard a minister pray for his wife in your pulpit at a public Association till the Sweat trickled down his face plentifully – I suppose a very light attention to edification would have reserved that for his chimney corner Mr. [Mabbot?][24]

17 Silas is not introduced in the book of Acts until Acts 15:22 so Fuller must be using Paul and Silas as an additional illustration of "social prayer" alongside other examples he had previously adduced from Acts 1:14–12:5.

18 Matt. 6:7.

19 Cf. 1 Kings 8:22–61; 2 Chron. 6:12–7:22.

20 Luke 6:12.

21 Phil. 2:3–4 (AV): "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

22 The acknowledgement that Jesus sometimes repeated himself in prayer is probably a reference to his prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane. See Matt. 26:44.

23 A contraction of "them."

24 The reference may be to Thomas Mabbott who for a while was Baptist Minister at Big-

4. [page 132] [top of page says 'how great that darkness'] Don't reduce Prayer into preaching not but that we may use scriptural expressions. That's good and sometimes a word explanatory may fail but to leap all about the Scripture from Moses to Malachi from Judges to Jude and so on is quite unedifying Once more
5. Beware lest under the Colour of speaking to God our end is to gratify some selfish inclination in speaking to men As when a person has had a little applause and wants everybody should know it – and says in prayer "Lord thy people declare their approbation of me but I reply to em don't ascribe it to me but to the Lord." Bernard.[25] Pharisee God I thank thee etc. [Luke 18:11] – this a dreadful mocking of God! – Or as when a person whose gifts are weak and broken imagines himself slighted and he goes and says "Lord, tis not high fine words that pleases thee but thou lookest at the heart. Some can come before thee with words at will but I can't, but Lord thou lookest at the heart" etc.[26] Such a prayer as this may seem to be a speaking highly of God but in reality tis only meant as a reflection on the people. Such commonly disclaim all Complaisance and yet their prayers are made upon Compliments though awkward ones – on God for being better than his people – and on themselves for the goodness of their hearts. This not to edification

Second. Concerning relating our exercises and experiences this good Malachi 3:16. Forsake not the etc. [Hebrews 10:25] The edifying tendences of this lies in its being a communication of Sentiments and feelings – not only desirable to your minister to hear the effect of his labours, but tis edifying

1. It is of an edifying tendency to drop now and then a suitable observation respecting our walk with God – It is supposed that experience teaches wisdom By Experience we know more of God, more of ourselves, more of Sin, more of Satan and his devices Now then as philosophers who live a private life keep making Experiments when they find out anything that may be of benefit to Society they communicate it so we. –
2. To communicate our doubts sorrows Joys and Spirituality – the last may stimulate, Joys may animate, Sorrows excite prayer and Sympathies and so love.

But in order to these ends being answered in this also regard should be had to time. If ½ or ¾ of an hour is set apart for 10 or 12 persons they must all consider if they would give place to others as well as themselves that not above 3 or 4 minutes should be occupied by anyone unless on

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gleswade, Bedfordshire. See Timothy D. Whelan (ed.) *Baptist Autographs in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester, 1741–1845* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009), 440. Presumably there were some present at the prayer meeting who would have remembered the incident. The "Association" was probably a reference to a meeting of the Northamptonshire Baptist Association, of which the Kettering church was a part.

25 Possibly a reference to Bernard of Clairvaux, who was warmly regarded by many evangelicals.

26 1 Sam. 16:7 (AV): "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

having something extraordinary to relate. – We should try and select that from our exercises that may be of the most use

Suffer me to add that an extreme low and slow way of speaking should be avoided low can't be heard by some therefore can't edify and slow spends time after nothing and has such an effect On people as a narrow mouthed bottle on a thirsty man. – These are free things and what would not be fit to say anywhere, nor here could I not depend upon your candor – But Let me intreat that none may be discouraged by any of these things from praying or speaking at all that's not the design, only that we may endeavour to conduct things so as to edify. – I shall think if anything of that, you are offended and as such can't bear to be advised I need not add surely that many and most of these things I have seen in the course of my life not among you chiefly but elsewhere.

Initial Reflections

A more comprehensive analysis of these and other sermon notes in the Bristol volume is likely to open up a wide variety of new perspectives on Fuller, his ministry, and late eighteenth-century English Particular Baptist life. The notes for "On the managing of Evening meetings" show us a side to the Kettering pastor rarely seen. He speaks informally and uses humour, for instance in the analogy that slowly spoken prayers are akin to a "thirsty man" having to drink through a "narrow mouthed bottle," and in the story of Mabbott's prayers for his wife. By contrast to these light-hearted remarks, his confessional diary is full of introspective soul searching in the Puritan style, and the extant letters, for example to missionaries, are rarely as informal as this in tone. It appears Fuller was especially relaxed as he shared with what may have been a small and intimate gathering of people he knew well and trusted. To conclude, I offer two initial reflections on this freshly translated material.

Puritan and Evangelical

Firstly, these notes indicate Fuller's own deep commitment to prayer in the Puritan and evangelical traditions. The assumed prayer life of the faithful believer is made up of three strands: prayer in the "closet," that is private prayer (cf. Matthew 6:6 [AV]); prayer in the "chimney corner," namely family prayer;[27] and "social prayer," when Christians come together to pray, for instance, in a meeting like the one Fuller is addressing. These three strands weave together to make up a strong, vibrant prayer life. The first two emphases—a daily, private time of devotion and regular family prayer—are both typically Puritan.[28] These Puritan habits had been carried over into En-

27 See William Burkitt, *The Poor Man's Help, and Young Man's Guide* … (London: Thom. Parkhurst, 1709), 35, for an explicit reference to family prayer as "chimney corner" prayer. The chimney corner was the warmest place in the house where the family would naturally gather.

28 See Belden C. Lane, "Puritan Spirituality," in Philip Sheldrake (ed.), *The New SCM Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* (London: SCM, 2005), 518–20, esp. 20.

glish Particular Baptist life which had its roots firmly in the English Puritan tradition. Therefore the patterns of prayer previously practiced by the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century "godly" continued to shape the devotional lives of Fuller and his congregation.

However, gatherings for corporate prayer apart from Sunday worship were less typically Puritan; indeed, they have been described as "innovative" in the context of the eighteenth century.[29] The impetus for such meetings, certainly when prayer for worldwide revival was the explicit focus, had come to the Particular Baptists via the influence of transatlantic evangelicalism, especially through a treatise by the New England Minister and theologian Jonathan Edwards (1703–58). The short title of Edwards's work was the *Humble Attempt*.[30] In this treatise, the New England pastor advocated for the establishment of prayer meetings specifically to intercede for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the rapid extension of God's Kingdom around the world. Edwards's appeal was grounded in the movement to promote a "Concert of Prayer" for revival which had begun in the 1740s and subsequently criss-crossed the Atlantic.[31] In many ways, the *Humble Attempt* was a quintessentially evangelical tract although it had little impact when originally published in 1747/48. It carried a recommendatory preface by five other New England clergy that George Marsden describes, not unfairly, as "tepid," and it achieved only modest sales.[32] Unsurprisingly, given its lukewarm reception, it had decidedly limited success in its avowed aim of promoting the prayer concert.[33] By 1784, the work was little known on either side of the Atlantic and the Prayer Concert had essentially fizzled out. However, when Fuller and his fellow Particular Baptists John Ryland Jr. (1753–1825) and John Sutcliff (1752–1814) read the tract in April 1784, they were deeply impressed and quickly determined to establish a Concert of Prayer of their own. After their appeal went out to the churches by means of an Association gathering

29 Rhys Bezzant, *Jonathan Edwards and the Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 145–56. Michael Haykin notes that the New England Puritan Cotton Mather advocated for the formation of small groups for prayer in his *Private Meetings Animated and Regulated* (Boston, MA: T. Green, 1706), 10–11. However, Haykin largely accepts Bezzant's description of the Concert of Prayer as "innovative." For further discussion, see Michael A.G. Haykin, "The Prayers of His Saints," in Chris Chun and Kyle C. Strobel (eds.), *Regeneration, Revival and Creation: Religious Experience and the Purposes of God in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2020), 106–107.

30 Jonathan Edwards, *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer, for the Revival of Religion, and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth, Pursuant to Scripture Promise and Prophecies Concerning the Last Time* (Boston, MA [printed for D. Henchman in Cornhill], 1747).

31 On this, see Michael J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace: Colonial New England's Revival Tradition in its British Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 229–31; David W. Bebbington, "The Reputation of Edwards Abroad" in Stephen J. Stein (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 240.

32 George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (London: Yale University Press, 2003), 337.

33 Jonathan Yeager, *Jonathan Edwards and Transatlantic Print Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 11.

and a printed tract, meetings sprang up and considerable momentum began to build.[34] Edwards's argument was now being heeded and bearing fruit. These meetings were thoroughly evangelical both in origin and character: biblical, practical and—above all—missional. Thus, the Monday night gatherings at Kettering should be seen as part of a wider movement, one that was located firmly in the larger context of the anglophone Evangelical Revival.

Practical and Humble

Secondly, Fuller's instructions on the conduct of the Monday evening meetings are—certainly for this reader—striking for their practical, "homely" detail. There is an emphasis on the importance of "edification" (the word occurs five times in the text, with similar words and emphases abounding). Those who lead in spoken prayer are to be aware of their corporate setting, and they are to bring others into God's presence by praying in a way that "edifies." The five so-called "advices" Fuller shares with his hearers all relate to this central theme. People are to avoid "needless" and "vain repetitions"; intensely personal prayers are better left for the "closet" or "chimney corner"; praying exhaustively, for "wife and children, king and Queen, Church and State" is wearying and to be avoided; prayer used as a cover for preaching to others or for self-aggrandisement after the manner of the Pharisee in Luke 18:11 is to be shunned. In further comments which relate not only to prayer but also to the sharing of experiences he asks people to avoid "low" and "slow" ways of speaking. In other words, speak up so you can be heard and speak at a reasonable pace. The pithy instructions are practical rather than theological, simple rather than profound.

These "advices" prompt a final reflection that is both pastoral and missional, as well as being deeply personal, offered by someone who is first and foremost a disciple of Jesus Christ and a pastor. Those of us who study this period are used to dealing with big themes of theology and missiology, as well as noting the global significance of Fuller's ministry and the wider impact of the revival of English Particular Baptist life. The prayer which flowed in the 1780s is recognised as an important driver for the far-reaching missional initiatives which followed. Through Fuller's personal notes we are probably taken closer to the heart of one of these crucial meetings than we have ever been. What strikes me, as someone who has studied Fuller since the mid-1990s, is how homespun and "ordinary" Fuller's instructions were. There is biblical reflection and encouragement, but it is straightforward and the Kettering pastor clearly believed he was speaking to people who needed reminding not to mumble or ramble in prayer, and who brought to corporate prayer all of the struggles we might have ourselves. This is not a gathering of "spiritual super saints," but of people who would have been conscious of their own weakness but had still made the commitment to come together to pray. God used their prayers and he can use our own faltering prayers as well, in our own day and generation.

34 Yeager, *Edwards and Transatlantic Print Culture*, 124.

THE GATEWAY JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

THE BEGINNINGS OF BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA AND KOREA

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Arrival of Baptist Missionaries and the Need for Theological Education in California

Nineteen months before California became the thirty-first state, the American Baptist Home Mission Society took steps to take the gospel to the "darkest spot on earth." S.H. Cone, President of the Home Mission Society, challenged Osgood C. Wheeler (1816-1891) to become the first Baptist missionary to California with these words:

> Do you know where you are going, my brother? I would rather go as a missionary to China or Cochin-China than to San Francisco. Don't you stir a step, my brother, unless you are prepared to go to the darkest spot on earth.[1]

Cone's jolting summons might not have been the most tactful way to recruit a missionary by twenty-first-century standards, but in this situation, it worked. Before Cone's speech, several influential clergymen had tried to persuade Wheeler to go to California as a pioneer, but his answer was always the same, "I cannot go, sir" or "No, sir; I will not leave."[2] But Cone's challenge to go to the "darkest spot on earth" clearly intrigued him. Wheeler later recounted the drama of the call and his surrender to it:

1 O.C. Wheeler, "The Story of Early Baptist History in California," (Paper presented at the California Baptist Historical Society, Sacramento, CA, April 13, 1889), 12.

2 Wheeler, "Early Baptist History in California," 11.

> After a night of prayer, without sleep, and at the close of an unusually earnest and agonizing season at family devotions, a burden as distinct as that which rolled from the shoulders of Bunyan's Pilgrim, at the foot of the cross, was removed from my shoulders, and my wife and I arose simultaneously, and without the interchange of a word, both broke out in the song: "To God I'm reconciled; His pardoning voice I hear; He owns me for His child, I will no longer fear."[3]

Wheeler's heart and resolve were set. He and his wife made plans for the move that would shape California's history. California was considered a dark spot in the mid-nineteenth century because, as American expansion moved further west, people got further and further away from church life and the pervasive influence of Christian society. People in the West often did not live near churches and were unable to attend church consistently, much less be church members. To address this need, the Wheelers answered the call to exchange the comfortable life of New Jersey for the untamed lands of the American West. Foreign and domestic mission boards, as well as Baptist leaders in California, understood the urgency. This movement of people into California due to the California gold rush captured the imagination of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

In 1849, however, the SBC faced several financial barriers that had to be overcome before sending someone to California.[4] A year later the Board of Domestic Missions decided to move forward in spite of these challenges.[5] The SBC commissioned one of their most prominent missionaries, J. Lewis Shuck (1812–1863), to contribute to mission work in California. Shuck had been the first U.S. Baptist missionary to China. Shuck was a man of warm evangelical piety and attractive personality. These gifts were instrumental in his laying a significant foundation for missionary work in China with the SBC's Foreign Mission Board (FMB). His story as a pioneer missionary began during the meeting of the Triennial Convention of 1835 when an offering was collected for foreign missions. Instead of putting money into the offering plate, Shuck placed in a slip of paper that said, "I give myself."

Soon after, Shuck married Henrietta Hall (1817–1844), and the couple was commissioned as missionaries by the Triennial Convention. They set sail for Macau in 1836 when Henrietta was only 19. The couple kept up a steady stream of letters and ministry updates to their supporters back in America. The churches grieved when Henrietta, at the young age of 27, died in childbirth. With her death, Henrietta secured a place in Southern Baptist missionary circles second only to Lottie Moon (1840–1912).[6] Shuck later returned to the United States to work with the newly

3 Wheeler, "Early Baptist History in California," 12.

4 Board of Domestic Missions, "Second Triennial Report," Proceedings of the SBC (1849): 64.

5 Proceedings of the SBC (1849): 42.

6 Alan Neely, "Shuck J(ehu) Lewis and Henrietta (Hall)," in *Biographical Dictionary of Chris-*

formed FMB. In 1853, however, he accepted a new appointment from the Domestic Board as a missionary to Chinese immigrants in California, making him the first Southern Baptist missionary to that region. On June 10, 1855, after eighteen years of service in China, Shuck planted a Chinese-speaking Baptist church in San Francisco.[7]

The mass movement of people, spurred on by the race for gold, attracted many to California, but it was difficult to motivate pastors to go to the "darkest spot on earth." It would mean leaving the comfort and security of more established pulpit ministries. Trained ministers and theological educations were a critical need. Shuck described the situation in California as being filled with "feeble Baptist Churches, most of them without pastors."[8] Since few were willing to go west, the obvious answer was to raise up ministers in California among those who were already there. Recognizing the need to establish an indigenous church and provide theological education suited to California's culture and context, Southern Baptist home missionary Harvey Gilbert (1811–1877) attempted to open a theological school in 1859.

However, this vision of theological education for the West (or Pacific Rim) went underground due largely to the American Civil War (1861–1865), only to resurface when Isam B. Hodges (1895–1967) became convinced that it was God's will for him to start a seminary in the West. This led to the founding of Gateway Seminary in 1944, (formerly known as Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary). The institution continues to provide theological education for the Western United States.[9]

Arrival of Baptist Missionaries and the Need for Theological Education in Korea

While this was happening in California, Protestant missionaries began arriving in the 1880s across the Pacific Ocean on the Korean peninsula. The story of the success of Presbyterians in Korea is well known, but the history of Baptist beginnings in Korea has not been as carefully

tian Missions, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 1998), 619. See also, J. L. Shuck, *Portfolio Chinensis, or, A Collection of Authentic Chinese State Papers Illustrative of the History of the Present Position of Affairs in China with a Translation, Notes and Introduction*. (Macao, China: Printed for the translator, 1840); Jeremiah Bell Jeter. *A Memoir of Mrs. Henrietta Shuck: The First American Female Missionary to China*. (Boston: Gould, Kendall, & Lincoln, 1846).

7 Sandford Fleming, *God's Gold: The Story of Baptist Beginnings in California 1849–1860* (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1949), 180.

8 J. L. Shuck as quoted in Sam Harvey, "The Southern Baptist Contribution to Baptist Cause in California Prior to 1890" (Th.M. thesis, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, 1958), 24.

9 Much of this section is derived from a previously published work. For the early history of California Baptists, see Chris Chun and John Shouse, *Golden Gate to Gateway: A History* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2020), 5–29.

chronicled.[10] Just as Osgood Wheeler was an important figure for the beginnings of Baptists in California, Malcolm Fenwick (1863–1935), a native Canadian, was a key pioneer for Baptists in Korea. Fenwick was born in 1863 and grew up in a religious family environment. In 1868, when he was five years old, he experienced the sorrow of his father's passing, and due to difficult family circumstances, Fenwick had neither a formal school education nor theological training.[11] As with Wheeler's earlier call to California, Fenwick's call to Korea was dramatic:

> "Lord, you know I am only a business man," I said. "Go!" said He. "But I have not a classical schooling. I am not a minister. I have never been to a theological seminary, Lord." "Go!" He said again. "But I don't want to go," I replied. That evening I hear Brother Wilder, of India, telling of a man dying of thirst out in the desert, crying for water. He said if I took him some water in a fine cut glass pitcher and handed it to him in a fine cut glass goblet, he would appreciate it. But if I had only an old rusty, battered can to take it in, he would gladly drink and live. It was water he needed.[12]

In July 1889, at the age of twenty-six, Fenwick decided to become a foreign missionary after attending the Niagara Bible Conference. Wheeler was drawn by the challenges presented in California. Fenwick, for his part, was compelled by Korea's severe persecution of missionaries in the nineteenth century.[13] News made its way to Fenwick that the wife of his missionary friend was imprisoned in Korea and to be hanged for preaching the Gospel.[14] This event strengthened Fenwick's resolve to serve as a missionary to Korea, even though he lacked theological education. The missionary to India Fenwick referenced who told of a man dying of thirst in the desert crying for water was Robert Wilder. Fenwick wanted to be the person who would bring a drink

10 Notably, some of the first were Presbyterian missionaries such as Horace Grant Underwood and Horace Allen. Malcolm Fenwick came to Korea only 4 years after these Presbyterians in 1889. According to Todd Johnson, in 1896, the total number of Protestants in Korea was just over 4,000. By 1907, this number had grown to over 100,000. This significant growth is attributed to the Pyongyang revival of 1907. Between 1950 and 1985, Evangelicals in South Korea experienced rapid growth, increasing from 600,000 in 1950 to 6.5 million in 1985. During this period, Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, the world's largest church at the time, had 350,000 members, eventually growing to over 700,000. This marked the peak of Christianity's expansion in Korea. See, Todd M. Johnson, "Korean Christianity in the Context of Global Christianity," in *Korean Church, God's Mission, Global Christianity*, eds, Wonsuk Ma and Kyo Seong Ahn, (Oxford: Regnum Book, 2015), 72.

11 Malcolm C. Fenwick, *The Church of Christ in Corea: A Pioneer Missionary's Own Story* (NY: George H. Doran Co., 1911). 3–11.

12 Fenwick, *The Church of Christ in Corea*, 13–14.

13 Catholicism was introduced to Korea in 1784, a century earlier than Protestantism. When Catholic missionaries arrived, they rejected *jesa* (traditional rituals of ancestor worship), viewing it as idolatry. This position not only led many Koreans to abandon Catholicism, but also prompted the government to impose a strict ban on the religion. As a result, a series of persecutions took place throughout the nineteenth century, leading to the martyrdom of nearly 9,000 Catholics. Andrew Eungi Kim, "South Korea," in *Christianities in Asia*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 219.

14 Fenwick, *The Church of Christ in Corea*, 9.

to the thirsty souls of Korea. With that compelling call, Fenwick set sail to Wonsan, Korea on December 8, 1889. When he first arrived in Korea, he was independent, not yet a baptist. After three long years of learning the language and reaching out to Koreans, Fenwick's quest ended in failure.[15] In 1893, he returned to North America. During this time, Fenwick met A. J. Gordon (1836–1895) and built a close relationship with him.[16] Gordon baptized Fenwick, and heavily influenced Fenwick's theology in a Baptist direction. Four years before meeting Fenwick, in 1889, Gordon had founded the Boston Missionary Training School in order to teach laypeople how to preach the Gospel using the Bible and prepare them for missionary work. Fenwick fit this description perfectly and received his training under Gordon's leadership at this school. During his time in Boston, Fenwick embraced the Baptist theology of believer's baptism and decided to align his work with Baptists. As a consequence, arguably the first baptist influence to Korea was through Northern Baptists (i.e., American Baptists) via Fenwick, Gordon, and the Clarendon Street Baptist Church of Boston, which was well known for promoting foreign missions.

Many of the leaders of the mission organization Niagara leaders, including Hudson Taylor (1832–1905) and A.J. Gordon, were driven by eschatological beliefs.[17] They shaped much of their effort in order to counter nineteenth-century higher criticism, Darwinian evolution, and theological liberalism.[18] David Bebbington describes these individuals as "strongly premillennialist, with their expectation of the imminence of the second advent injecting urgency into their endeavors." He adds, "Education work and health care were not priorities for them, as the single vital task was saving souls in the brief time left."[19] Fenwick was no exception to this norm, with a premillennialist perspective driving his ministry. In addition, he adopted Gordon's concept of "faith missions" to his own ministry in Korea. This Boston Missionary Training School, with series of mergers and the efforts of Harold J. Ockenga (1905–1985) and Billy Graham (1918–2018), became in 1969 Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.[20] Having received his theological education back

15 Fenwick, *The Church of Christ in Corea*, 56–57.

16 For the extent of Gordon's influence on Fenwick, see, Heui Yeol Ahn, "The influence of the Niagara Bible Conference and Adoniram Judson Gordon on Malcolm Fenwick and Korean Baptist missions" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological S*eminary, 2002), 115–175.*

17 For Gordon's role in the shaping of late nineteenth-century North American Evangelical Protestant Christianity, see, Scott M. Gibson, *A.J. Gordon: American Premillennialist* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2001).

18 See, Willis B. Glover Jr., *Evangelical Nonconformists and Higher Criticism* (London: Independent Press, Ltd., 1954), See also, David Bebbington, *Baptists through the Centuries: A History of a Global People*, 1st ed. (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010), 103–138.

19 David W. Bebbington, *Baptists through the Centuries: A History of a Global People*, (Waco. TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 228.

20 See, Garth M. Rosell, *A Charge to Keep: Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and the Renewal of Evangelicalism* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2020), 1–33.

in America, in 1896 Fenwick returned to Korea.[21] Not only Northern Baptists shaped the early days of Baptist history in Korea, but in 1953, the Korea Baptist Seminary was founded through the efforts of Southern Baptist missionaries. Before getting into that account, however, the Japanese Occupation of Korea (1910-1945) will be an important detour to make.

In the late nineteenth century, major world powers were scrambling for colonies. In Asia, imperialist nations aimed to carve out spheres of influence for trade and pursued colonial ambitions. Korea found itself caught in rivalries between China, Russia, and Japan, each seeking to exploit its resources. By 1910, Japan had annexed Korea and occupied it until 1945. For instance, Japanese banned the teaching of the Korean language and history. Many critical and invaluable historical documents were burned at their hands. Many Korean pastors, including a Baptist pastor trained under Fenwick, were persecuted under this colonial rule. In his 1962 Th.M. thesis at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Robert Willocks, a contemporary chronicler, recounts an event involving a Baptist pastor that occurred a decade earlier. The Japanese prosecutor, familiar with Korean church hymns, interrogated Chong Kun Ee:

> "Will the whole world be unified when Jesus comes again? Will there be no more Japan?" Pastor Ee replied, "That's true." Again the interrogator asked: Will I go to Hell if I refuse to believe in Jesus?" The answer was "Yes." The third question was: "Don't you think the Japanese emperor is an exception?" Pastor Ee said, "No."[22]

This integration confirmed what the Japanize authorities had suspected from Korean hymn books and the Bible. From that point on, Pastor Ee and others were accused of "blaspheming the emperor of Japan," and thirty-two pastors were arrested for failing to pay homage to the Japanese emperor, seven of them being martyred in prison. This incident is called "the Wonsan Persecution."[23] Christian literature was burned and church buildings were either taken or destroyed. World War II ended on September 9, 1945. As the Edict of Milan (313) granted Christianity freedom of worship throughout the Roman Empire and the Act of Toleration (1689) ended persecution in England by allowing non-conformists the freedom to worship, when the US and its allies liberated Korea, they also liberated the Korean church from Japanese persecution, granting it the freedom to practice their faith. In many ways, then, modern Korean church

21 Robert M. Willocks, "Christian Mission in Korea with Special Reference to the Work of Southern Baptists" (Th.M. thesis, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, 1962), 127. See also, Yoonbae Lim, "An Analysis of Educational and Theological Identity: The Relationship of Malcolm C. Fenwick's Mission with Korean Baptist Church Growth" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021), 30–33.

22 Willocks, "Christian Mission in Korea with Special Reference to the Work of Southern Baptists," 145.

23 See, Ahn, "The Influence of the Niagara Bible Conference and Adoniram Judson Gordon on Malcolm Fenwick and Korean Baptist missions," 223. See also, Lim, "An Analysis of Educational and Theological Identity: The Relationship of Malcolm C. Fenwick's Mission with Korean Baptist Church Growth," 64.

history really began only after the series of these foreign occupations. Korea, which had been a Japanese colony for 35 years, was finally liberated and the country was divided at the 38th parallel into two separate regions (North Korea to be governed by the Soviet Union and South Korea to be governed by the United States). This, of course, led five years later to the Korean War (1950–1953).[24] Under Japanese occupation, much like for the early church, the temptation existed to compromise under persecution. Some Korean pastors participated in paying homage to the Japanese Empire and, as a result, were spared from persecution. Others, refusing to comply, faced severe punishment and even death. This period in Korean church life is reminiscent of the Donatist controversy in earlier church history.[25]

At any rate, the influence of Southern Baptists became prominent in Korean Baptist circles after World War II (1945) and more significantly after the Korean War (1953). Southern Baptists were able to make a significant contribution after the Korean War, beginning with tremendous relief programs and the pouring in of thousands of dollars to aid Christian work in Korea.[26] The war-torn country provided an opportunity for Baptists to support a more robust Baptist presence in Korea and Southern Baptists rose to the occasion.

Korean Baptists have a politically charged debate as to whether Malcolm Fenwick was truly a Baptist since he began as an independent missionary who founded the "Church of Christ" in Korea, not formally a "Baptist" denomination.[27] The issue surrounding this controversial topic

24 In 1949, the Korea Christian Baptist Convention promoted a partnership with the Southern Baptist Convention, and in 1950, they officially entered into this partnership.

25 The Donatist controversy raised the question, "What should be done about believers who lapsed?" The Donatists emerged in the early fourth century, around the time of the Roman Emperor Diocletian's persecution. They argued that sacraments performed by lapsed clergies who had betrayed their faith during persecution, but regained their positions under Constantine, were invalid.

26 Albert Walter Gammage Jr., an early Southern Baptist missionary in Korea, suggested that ministries should work together not only within their own denomination but also with other denominations.

27 Some are hesitant to recognize Fenwick as the founder of Korean Baptists because, strictly speaking, only a five-year period (1895–1901) can be considered genuine Baptist history during which the Ella Thing Memorial Mission operated in Korea. Others argue that Fenwick, who arrived to Korea on December 8, 1889—four years after Presbyterian missionary Underwood and Methodist missionary Appenzeller—was indeed the founder of the Korean Baptist Convention. Others also point out that although Fenwick arrived in Korea as an independent missionary, his followers established what is now the Korean Baptist Convention. Most Baptists maintain that Fenwick was a Baptist and the Korean Baptist Church only formally began in 1949, when the name "Baptist" was first used in Korea. My position is that Fenwick arrived in Korea as an independent missionary, but during his first furlough (1893–1895), he converted to Baptist faith and began working as a Baptist missionary. Indeed, Fenwick was ordained in 1894 by Gordon, a Baptist pastor. For a detailed argument with actual reference, see, Heui Yeol Ahn, "The influence of the Niagara Bible Conference and Adoniram Judson Gordon on Malcolm Fenwick and Korean Baptist missions" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002), 97–105.

is reminiscent of the debate over whether both John Bunyan (1628–1688) and Roger Williams (1603–1683) were truly "Baptists" in their respective British and North American settings.

Perhaps there may be merit to both viewpoints in the Korean Baptist setting as well. Without taking sides, however, it is worth noting that those who question Fenwick's Baptist credentials argue that the true beginning of Baptists in Korea really commenced with the formation of the Korea Baptist Convention (KBC) in the early 1950s, when the first Southern Baptist missionaries arrived. Consequently, the argument is made by some that it was through the mission efforts of Southern Baptists that the KBC was actually founded and Baptist work in Korea formally initiated.[28]

The Church of Christ in Korea, after having been disbanded for two years, was restored in 1946. In 1949, the Church of Christ was renamed the Korea Baptist Convention and took on the label "Baptist."[29] This change, along with modifications to its congregational polity, occurred after Korean leaders met with Baker James Cauthen, the Southern Baptist's president of the Foreign Mission Board (now the IMB) from 1953 to 1979. Although the convention adopted the name "Baptist," there has been controversy over whether it genuinely embraced Southern Baptist faith and distinctives or simply sought "financial support from a foreign mission body."[30] Yet, Korean Baptist leaders decided to change their name to the Korea Baptist Convention. From this point on, the Korea Baptist Seminary, founded by SBC missionaries in 1953, was designed to provide indigenous Baptist theological education for Koreans.[31]

Conclusion

When looking at the beginnings of Baptists in California and Korea, striking parallels exist. Both started with visionary missionaries: Osgood C. Wheeler, who aimed to go to the "darkest places on earth" in California, and Malcom Fenwick, who went to Korea, where it was believed

28 For the origins and development of the Korea Baptist Convention, see, Yoonbae Lim, "An Analysis of Educational and Theological Identity: The Relationship of Malcolm C. Fenwick's Mission with Korean Baptist Church Growth" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021), 36–42.

29 Seung Jin Kim, "A History of Southern Baptist Mission Work in Korea: Its Impact on Korean Baptist Church Growth" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1995), 84–85.

30 Seung Jin Kim, "A History of Southern Baptist Mission Work in Korea," 84–85.

31 Wan Kim has interestingly argued that indigenous Baptist theological education did not take place until 1977. This is because the first three presidents of the seminary were all Westerners, specifically Southern Baptists—John Abernathy (president from 1953–1957), Theodore Dowell (president from 1957–1965), and Albert Gamage Jr. (president from 1965–1977). The appointment of Jin Whang Jung marked the first indigenous Korean president for Korea Baptist Theological Seminary. See, Wan Kim, "The Influences of Baptist Distinctive Theologies on the Mission History of the Korea Baptist Convention." (Th.M. thesis, Torch Trinity Graduate University, 2015), 102–104.

missionaries would go to die as martyrs. Baptist education began with these courageous pioneers. In California, Baptists saw the need for native Californians to receive theological education amidst the westward expansion prompted by the Gold Rush. The dream of theological education envisioned by Wheeler, Shuck, Gilbert, and others went underground, only to resurface after the Civil War. Similarly, in Korea, there was a need for indigenous Baptist theological education to help rebuild the war-torn country after World War II and the Korean War. Both of these movements led to the establishment of Baptist theological institutions: Gateway Seminary provided indigenous theological education to train ministers for Baptists in California. The key for Korean Baptists also lay in their establishing their own indigenous theological education.

Much like the fruits that came for Baptist life in California as a consequence of the founding of Gateway Seminary in 1945, the establishment of the Korea Baptist Theological University/Seminary in 1953 marked a significant turning point for Baptist life in Korea. As David Bebbington puts it, Baptists are a "global people." Baptist beginnings in both California and Korea and, with them, the founding of Baptist theological education in each locale, constitute two stories that carry intriguing parallels that carry significant import not only for the inception but also the expansion of Christian life in the Pacific Rim. They are stories that deserve to be known, rehearsed, and celebrated.

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A DIXIE DIVINITY: JONATHAN EDWARDS AND SOUTHERN BAPTISTS SINCE 1845

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The Puritan theologian Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) lived virtually his entire life in New England. Although technically his first church was a Presbyterian congregation in New York City, he eventually took over his grandfather Solomon Stoddard's Congregationalist church in Northampton, Massachusetts, where he would pastor from 1729 to 1750.[1] The farthest south Edwards ever lived was New Jersey, where he served a very short tenure as president of the College of New Jersey (Princeton) at the end of his life before passing away of a smallpox inoculation. As a son of Puritanism, Edwards had no firsthand knowledge of the American South. And he had no affiliation with (or sympathy for) Baptists. At first glance, Jonathan Edwards and Southern Baptists don't seem to have much in common. However, amazingly, the only religious group in the entire antebellum South who seemed to collectively embrace Edwards's theology were Baptists, a people who Edwards himself never envisioned as his spiritual descendants. At the inaugural Southern Baptist Convention in Augusta, Georgia in 1845, there were more than a handful of these *Southern* Edwardseans: William B. Johnson, Basil Manly Sr., Richard Fuller, John L. Dagg, and others. Forerunners like Richard Furman, W. T. Brantly, and Jonathan Maxcy helped shape these SBC founders in their Edwardsean theology.

1 Rhys S. Bezzant explains, "The church in New York in which Edwards served as supply preacher was a small house fellowship resulting from a church split (rather than a formally instituted congregation), enabling a particularly intense experience of Christian fellowship." (Bezzant, *Jonathan Edwards and the Church* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2014], 36.)

Of course, this does not mean that Baptists in the antebellum South were the *only* group who read the works of Jonathan Edwards. But other evangelical denominations in Dixie had staunch critics of Edwards that Baptists never appeared to have. For example, Robert Lewis Dabney was a Presbyterian from Virginia who served as the chief of staff for Confederate General Stonewall Jackson (who was also a Presbyterian). Dabney had so much disdain for Edwards that, according to a fellow Southerner, "he cuts up Edwardsism by the roots." According to Dabney, *Religious Affections* was too "impractical." Its theology was "too anatomical."[2] As a whole, Dabney didn't really concern himself with the religion of the heart or the affections. Instead, he believed in order and tradition, which is why he believed in the *Westminster Confession* and chattel slavery. And Dabney wasn't the only Presbyterian to deliver these kinds of critiques against Edwards. James Henley Thornwell was a Presbyterian theologian from South Carolina who is infamous today for his published defense of slavery entitled *The Rights and Duties of Masters* in 1850. According to Thornwell, Edwards's view of original sin and continuous creation defied "the plainest intuitions of intelligence." Thornwell believed that Edwards's view of sin as the privation of good was "a mere juggle with words."[3]

In the antebellum South, vehement opposition to Edwards's theology often overlapped with very strong pro-slavery sentiment. Kentuckian Albert Taylor Bledsoe was the chief of the Confederate War Bureau and the assistant secretary of war. He was also an Episcopal priest who converted to Methodism. In 1845, the very same year of the first Southern Baptist Convention, Bledsoe published the most blistering critique of Edwards that was ever published in the South called *An Examination of President Edwards' Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will*.[4]

He essentially disagreed with Edwards's definition of freedom. It wasn't free enough. Evidenced by Dabney, Thornwell, and Bledsoe, many of the most pro-slavery voices and Confederate leaders in the South were hostile to Edwards's ideas. This wasn't completely shocking considering that Edwards's disciples, the New Divinity, were some of the most vocal anti-slavery voices in the earliest days of the republic. Although Edwards himself owned slaves, he did reject the international slave trade. And his ideas (love to being in general, disinterested benevolence, freedom of the will, etc.) seemed incompatible with slavery. Therefore, it is no coincidence that, in the Appalachian Mountains of Tennessee, where there were relatively few slaves and almost

2 Sean Michael Lucas, "'He Cuts Up Edwardsism by the Roots': Robert Lewis Dabney and the Edwardsian Legacy in the Nineteenth-Century Legacy," in D.G. Hart, Sean Michael Lucas, and Stephen J. Nichols, eds., *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards: American Religion and the Evangelical Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 200–14.

3 Cited in Lucas; James Henley Thornwell, *The Collected Writings of James Henley Thornwell*, ed. J. B. Adger, 4 vols. (1871–73; reprint, Carlisle: Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 1:350, 381–82.

4 See Michael O'Brien, *Intellectual Life and the American South, 1810–1860* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 269.

no plantations, Presbyterians Hezekiah Balch, Isaac Anderson, and Gideon Blackburn were all Edwardsean theologians.[5]

In the South, Edwardsean thought did not thrive in the Presbyterian and Methodist denominations. But it did among the Baptists. Unlike the Methodists, Baptists had just enough Calvinism to appreciate Edwards. Unlike the Presbyterians, Baptists were not strict confessionalists. In many ways, they were "moderate Calvinists" just like the New Divinity in the Northeast. These Baptists appreciated the religion of the heart, and they loved revival. Therefore, quite naturally, they relished Edwards, reading him as much as they could. In almost every corner of the antebellum South, one could find Baptists reading Edwards and the Edwardseans!

Oliver Hart, the architect of the first Baptist association in the South, the Charleston Association, relished Edwards's *A Faithful Narrative*, an account of the conversions in Northampton in 1734.[6] Richard Furman, the architect of the first Baptist state convention in South Carolina, actually recommended Edwards's works as a mean for conversion.[7] In Nashville, Tennessee, the 2nd president of the SBC, R. B. C. Howell, believed that Timothy Dwight's systematic theology text was one of the best ever written.[8] (Dwight was the grandson of Jonathan Edwards and the president at Yale.) Basil Manly Sr., the president of the University of Alabama, loved *Freedom of the Will* and actually wrote to his own son, Basil Manly Jr., about *The Nature of True Virtue*.[9] Basil Manly Jr., the author of the *Abstract of Principles* at Southern Seminary, was converted by reading Edwards's *Personal Narrative*.[10] And Baptists didn't just like devotional and spiritual and revivalist works. The longest tenured president of the SBC, Patrick Hues Mell, president of the University of Georgia, loved *The End for Which God Created the World*.[11] Baptists of the South were reading from all corners of the Edwardsean tradition.

5 E. Brooks Holifield, *Gentlemen Theologians: American Theology in Southern Culture, 1795–1860* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1978), 191. Douglas A. Sweeney, "Evangelical Tradition in America," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 228.

6 Eric Smith, "Order and Ardor: The Revival Spirituality of Regular Baptist Oliver Hart (1723–1795)," Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015, 70.

7 Obbie Tyler Todd, "The Influence of Jonathan Edwards on the Missiology and Conversionism of Richard Furman (1755–1825)," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 7, no. 1 (2017): 36–54.

8 R.B.C. Howell, *The Terms of Communion at the Lord's Table* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1846), 192.

9 Tom Nettles, *The Baptists: Key People Involved in Forming a Baptist Identity, Volume Two: Beginnings in America* (Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, 2005), 275.

10 Michael A. G. Haykin, "'Soldiers in Christ, in Truth Arrayed': The Ministry and Piety of Basil Manly Jr. (1825–1892)," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 13.1 (2009): 31.

11 P. H. Mell, *Predestination and the Saints' Perseverance: Stated and Defended from the Objections of the Arminians, in a Review of Two Sermons, Published by Rev. Russell Reneau* (Charleston: Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1858), 48.

This Baptist school of Edwardsean thought, or the "Dixie Divinity" as I've called it, was diverse just like the New Divinity movement itself. For example, Patrich Hues Mell, the president of the University of Georgia, despised the New Divinity theologians. He thought they were fake Calvinists![12] On the other hand, Jonathan Maxcy, the first president of South Carolina College, loved the New Divinity. He read from Samuel Hopkins and Jonathan Edwards Jr. and subscribed faithfully to the moral governmental theory of atonement, the signature doctrine of the New Divinity.[13] In a region of the country that Edwards never visited, in a denomination that he did not regard highly during his lifetime, his theology thrived. Even though Edwards never visited the South during his own lifetime, some of his most faithful theological successors were Baptists in the antebellum South! This seeming paradox of American religious history illustrates well the power of ideas.

There were four primary ways that Baptists in the nineteenth century were influenced by Edwards: (1) Simple Edwardseanism, (2) New Divinity Edwardseanism, (3) Fullerite Edwardseanism, and (4) Implicit Edwardseanism. These were not always hard-and-fast categories, sometimes overlapping, but these styles manifested themselves quite clearly in Baptist life. Simple Edwardseanism denotes those Baptists who just read *directly* from Edwards. For example, Basil Manly Sr., a founder of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845, did not possess any books by the New Divinity in his library. But he did have a book entitled "Edwards against Chauncy," one of Edwards's defenses of the Great Awakening. In his sermons, Manly used concepts that read almost word-for-word from the *Freedom of the Will*. Occasionally, Baptists even had *direct* family connections to Edwards. John Mason Peck was not a Southern Baptist, but he was the first home missionary of the Triennial Convention, and he served in Missouri and Southern Illinois for over 40 years. His wife, Sally Paine, was the great granddaughter of Jonathan Edwards.[14] Peck was born and converted in Litchfield County, the so-called "seedbed of the New Divinity." Edwards didn't just have a theological influence; he had a hereditary influence!

The second way Edwards influenced Baptists in the South was through New Divinity Edwardseanism. Although there were men like Jonathan Maxcy, who was a dyed-in-the-skin disciple of the New Divinity, New Divinity theology could sometimes get one in trouble. In the 1840s, Furman Academy professor James Mims, who held to the moral governmental theory of atonement, was actually tried for heresy for denying imputation. He was *not* found guilty, which should tell us something about how Southern Baptists defined the doctrine of atonement in those days.[15] You could be a college professor and keep your job and not hold to the traditional penal sub-

12 Mell, *Predestination and the Saints' Perseverance*, 27–28.

13 Jonathan Maxcy, "A Funeral Sermon Occasioned by the Death of the Rev. James Manning, D.D." in *The Literary Remains of Rev. Jonathan Maxcy, D.D.*, ed. Romeo Elton. (New Haven: 1844), 151.

14 *Life and Times of James B. Taylor*, ed. George Boardman Taylor (Philadelphia: The Bible and Publication Society, 1872), 208.

15 Michael A. G. Haykin, "Great Admirers of the Transatlantic Divinity: Some Chapters in the Story of Baptist Edwardseanism," *After Jonathan Edwards: The Courses of the New England Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 205.

stitutionary view. (FBC New York City fired a pastor for holding to New Divinity views.)[16] But he was charged by a man who admired Jonathan Edwards and loathed the New Divinity, James Reynolds. The Edwardsean tradition was so pervasive in the SBC that Edwardseans battled Edwardseans, and sometimes they both invoked Edwards in doing so. Another Edwardsean, Jesse Hartwell, who taught at what is now Samford University in Birmingham, came under suspicion for his views on imputation. He was a New Divinity Baptist.[17]

Other than Andrew Fuller (who we'll get to in a second), the Edwardsean theologian who was most influential upon Baptists in the South was Timothy Dwight, Edwards's grandson, president of Yale. In the 1830s, a Baptist church wrote to Luther Rice at the theological seminary in Prince Edward, Virginia. They were in need of a minister, and they wanted a "man of first rate talents" who "could write well" and "who could visit a good deal." They also "wanted a man of very gentlemanly deportment" but could only pay 350 dollars, maybe 400. Luther Rice responded jokingly, "they ought forthwith to make a call for old Doctor Dwight in heaven; for he did not know any one in *this world* who answered their description. And as Dr. Dwight had been living so long on spiritual food, he might not need so much for the body, and possibly he might live on four hundred dollars."[18] In other words, they wanted way too much for way too little! Evidently, the name of Timothy Dwight was held in high regard. Through his writings and systematic theology, he had a huge impact on Baptist life in the South.

The third way that Jonathan Edwards influenced early Southern Baptists was through Andrew Fuller, who corresponded with Timothy Dwight during his lifetime. Andrew Fuller was, of course, an English Baptist and the chief thinker behind the Baptist missions movement. He was a titanic influence upon Southern Baptists. In the 1850s, in Mason County, Kentucky, Baptist William Vaughn was asked by a young pastor which books he should read. His response was: "The Bible first, and then Andrew Fuller."[19] Fuller's theology was so missional in tone and put so much emphasis upon both human responsibility and divine sovereignty that Baptists gobbled up his writings. In Missouri, Baptist Alvin Peter Williams was even nicknamed "The Andrew Fuller of America."[20] In Georgia, Jesse Mercer was a huge advocate for Andrew Fuller, and in 1830,

16 Gabriel Poillon Disosway, *The Earliest Churches of New York and it Vicinity* (New York: James G. Gregory, 1865), 195.

17 Greg Wills, "The SBJT Forum: The Overlooked Shapers of Evangelicalism," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 88.

18 Robert Fleming, *Sketch of the Life of Elder Humphrey Posey, First Baptist Missionary to the Cherokee Indians, and Founder of Valley Town School, North Carolina* (Western Baptist Association of Georgia, 1852), 96–98.

19 Thomas M. Vaughn, *Memoirs of Rev. William Vaughn, D.D.* (Louisville: Caperton & Cates, 1878), 92.

20 R. S. Duncan, *A History of the Baptists in Missouri* (St. Louis: Scammell & Company Publishers, 1883), 361.

even wrote a book on unlimited atonement that quoted Fuller over a dozen times.[21] Through Andrew Fuller, Jonathan Edwards exerted his strongest influence upon Southern Baptists. Simply put, poorly educated, grassroots Baptists who would never have read from a refined Congregationalist would read from one of their own. James Madison Pendleton, who was actually a Landmark Baptist and pastored churches in Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, once said, "Eternity alone will reveal all the good accomplished, by God's blessing, from Fuller's *Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*."[22] During his life, Fuller became so famous in the states that FBC Boston offered him the pulpit (which he declined).

Fuller left his mark upon the Baptist South in more ways than one. William Staughton, who was one of the original signers of the Baptist Missionary Society in Kettering, England and was actually baptized by Samuel Pearce, eventually became one of the founders of the Triennial Convention and influenced the first SBC president William B. Johnson. Among Staughton's students were Thomas Meredith, one of the co-founders of the North Carolina state convention. There is simply no state and no region of the South where there wasn't an Edwardsean theologian who was Baptist. Most of them had read Andrew Fuller in some way. Historian A. H. Newman said that Fuller's reach in the South was "incalculable" and that was certainly a true statement.[23]

The final way that Edwards influenced Southern Baptists was implicitly. For example, revival narratives which were so prominent during that era had been popularized by Edwards, like in *Some Thoughts Concerning the Revival* (1742). Also, Edwards's *Diary of David Brainerd* (1749) was one of his most popular works, immortalizing Brainerd as a Baptist hero.[24] Baptists referenced Brainerd often. Jonathan Edwards left a giant footprint upon Baptist literary culture in ways that Baptists did not always realize.

When many Southern Baptists today think of the early SBC, they may think of James P. Boyce, the first president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Boyce obviously had a tremendous impact upon the theological direction of the Convention. Boyce studied under Charles Hodge at Princeton, who was not an Edwardsean. He was a confessional Calvinist, not a revivalist. But unlike Robert Lewis Dabney, James Henley Thornwell, or Albert Taylor Bledsoe, Boyce never delivered a scathing critique of Edwards. The reason is perhaps that Boyce was raised in

21 Peter Beck, "A Southern Exposure: The Theology of Jonathan Edwards in the Writings of Jesse Mercer," *The Journal of Baptist Studies* 1 (2007), 21.

22 J. M. Pendleton, *Life and Times of Elder Reuben Ross* (Philadelphia: Grant, Faires, & Rodgers, 1882), 281.

23 Cited in *The Baptist Story: From English Sect to Global Movement*, ed. Anthony L. Chute, Nathan A. Finn, and Michael A. G. Haykin (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015), 101.

24 George M. Marsden notes, "Although it was not as widely read as *David Brainerd* and not as appealing to as broad a range of evangelicals as *Religious Affections*, 'Edwards on the Will' became a staple of Calvinist theology." (Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003], 446.)

an Edwardsean world. Boyce's mother was converted by Basil Manly Sr., who would eventually become a mentor and father in the faith to Boyce. Boyce himself was converted by the preaching of Richard Fuller, who read Jonathan Edwards and was actually called to the ministry in Northampton, MA while a student at Harvard.[25] The first church Boyce pastored, FBC Columbia, was planted by Jonathan Maxcy and William B. Johnson, both Edwardseans. Boyce's Sunday School teacher, H. H. Tucker, was given the nickname "the Jonathan Edwards of the South."[26] And Boyce's good friend at Southern Seminary, Basil Manly Jr., was converted by reading Jonathan Edwards. The only reason Jr. attended Princeton is because it was more friendly to slave owners than Newton Theological Institute in Massachusetts, near Andover.[27] One of the systematic theology texts Boyce initially used at Southern was John Dagg's *Manual of Theology*, which is filled with Edwards's ideas like love to being in general, love of benevolence and complacence, and true virtue.[28] Almost everywhere Boyce turned, he was reminded of the influence of Jonathan Edwards. Therefore, while he inherited the intellectualist sensibilities of Princeton, he could not deny that Southern Baptists had been shaped by Edwards. After all, the very first president of the Southern Baptist Convention, William B. Johnson, held to the moral governmental theory of atonement. Johnson was one of the biggest proponents of Southern Seminary in its infancy. As a younger man, Johnson was discipled by Jonathan Maxcy at South Carolina College. He became an avid reader of both Edwards *and* Andrew Fuller. In some ways, Johnson embodied *every* strain of Edwardsean influence. Edwards's stamp upon Southern Baptist life was undeniable.

Jonathan Edwards in the 21st Century

After looking at so many strains of Edwardsean thought animating the early Southern Baptist Convention, one obvious question is: how did we get from the Southern Edwardseans of the 19th century to the Young Reformed and Restless movement of the 21st? The latter has been recognized as a resurgence of Edwardsean thought. How did we go from John Dagg to John Piper, you might say? How do we get from 1845 to having a Jonathan Edwards Center at Gateway Seminary? A key in understanding the reason Edwards has made a comeback in Baptist life is first grasping why Edwards faded from the Baptist consciousness in the late 19th century. As Southern Baptists began to write their own systematic theologies and start their own schools and establish their own theological tradition, they appealed less and less to Edwards. The Southern Baptist world at the end of the 20th century was vaguely familiar with Edwards. Instead of the theologian of revival who wrote Religious Affections, he became known as the scary Puritan

25 James Hazzard Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1878), 42.

26 Jeff Robinson, "'Our great distinguishing characteristic': H. H. Tucker and the Battle for Church Purity, Part I," *Founders Ministries*, June 5, 2015, https://founders.org/2015/06/05/our-great-distinguishing-characteristic-h-h-tucker-and-the-battle-for-church-purity-part-i/.

27 For this account, see Obbie Tyler Todd, *Southern Edwardseans: The Southern Baptist Legacy of Jonathan Edwards* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2022), 159–63.

28 See Mark E. Dever, "John L. Dagg," in *Baptist Theologians*, ed. Timothy George and David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990), 178.

who preached "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Historian Sydney Ahlstrom had this to say in 1961: "it is an outrage that Edwards should be best known throughout America as a hell-fire revivalist and by a few lines from one imprecatory sermon, delivered outside of his own parish, on 'Sinners in the hands of an Angry God.'"[29] This was largely true in the Southern Baptist Convention as well. You might say that interest in Edwards re-appeared in the same place that it had originally: New England. When Harvard scholar Perry Miller wrote his intellectual biography of Edwards in 1949, he was kind of resurrecting Edwards studies.[30] And evangelicals were a little slow to the party, especially Southern Baptists. The star-studded editorial committee for *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* included no Southern Baptists. In the 80s and 90s, Presbyterians John Gerstner and R. C. Sproul began introducing their own people to Edwards. In the Southern Baptist realm, the Founders Ministries began publishing Edwards. But it was not until John Piper that most Baptists re-discovered Jonathan Edwards. The irony is that John Piper, though not a Southern Baptist, was raised in South Carolina, which was the birthplace of Southern Edwardseanism. In their 2017 work, *A Reader's Guide to the Major Writings of Jonathan Edwards*, Southern Baptists Nathan Finn and Jeremy Kimble acknowledge their indebtedness to Piper, illustrating Piper's profound influence upon a generation of Baptists:

> Speaking of Piper, we owe him a particular debt. At the time of writing these acknowledgements, we're both in our mid-thirties. Like so many of our generational peers, our first real introduction to Jonathan Edwards – not counting high school readings of "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" – came through Piper's writings. Over the past generation, no single individual has done more than John Piper to introduce North American pastors, seminarians, and collegians to the life and thought of Jonathan Edwards. Our prayer is that this book will be a key resource that blesses students and pastors, who, like us, first heard about Edwards from Piper or another well-known Christian leader and have decided to learn more about the famed pastor-theologian for themselves. Though neither of us knows him personally, it is our joy to dedicate this book to John Piper as a way to thank him for the influence he had on our lives and ministries by putting Jonathan Edwards on our spiritual radars. Thank you, John. We trust we speak for thousands of others.[31]

As Finn and Kimble demonstrate, Piper put Jonathan Edwards on the Southern Baptist "spiritual radar," you might say, after almost a century of relative obscurity. But it was not just Piper. So did

29 Sydney Ahlstrom, "Theology in America: A Historical Survey," in *The Shaping of American Religion*, ed. James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 247.

30 According to Michael J. McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, Miller's 1949 biography of Edwards "dropped like a bombshell on the playground of the American intellectuals." (McClymond and McDermott, T*he Theology of Jonathan Edwards* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2012], 641.)

31 Nathan A. Finn and Jeremy M. Kimble, "Acknowledgements," in *A Reader's Guide to the Major Writings of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Nathan A. Finn, Jeremy M. Kimble (Wheaton: Crossway, 2017), 14.

Tom Nettles and Michael Haykin at Southern Seminary. So did Robert Caldwell at Southwestern, a former student of Doug Sweeney at Trinity. So did Chris Chun, here at Gateway Seminary. The theology of Jonathan Edwards continues to be a powerful force in the Southern Baptist Convention. And it is no coincidence that the SBC is still a denomination of "moderate Calvinists" who lean toward revivalism and emphasize the religion of the heart. These are things that Jonathan Edwards spent his life promoting. The Jonathan Edwards Center at Gateway Seminary is evidence that Edwardsean thought is still welcomed in the Southern Baptist Convention after 178 years.

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INTEGRATING *CHRISTUS VICTOR* AND *CHRISTUS DOLOR* FOR A TRULY COMPASSIONATE CHRISTOLOGY: FURTHER INSIGHTS FROM JESUS THE *ARCHĒGOS* MOTIF OF HEBREWS

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Introduction

In their book, *The Suffering and Victorious Christ: Toward a More Compassionate Christology*, Richard Mouw and Douglas Sweeney address an issue brought before them at a conference in Tokyo Christian University. The issue is western Christianity's tendency to portray a kind of triumphal Christology loosely described as *Christus victor* (the Christ of victory).[1] For it emphasizes "an unbroken Christ, a powerful, conquering Christ."[2]

In contrast, in many non-western countries, such as those in Asia or Africa, Christology is often done through the lens of a more empathetic Christology known as *Christus dolor* (the Christ of sorrows). The Japanese Christian writer Shusaku Endo, author of the novel *Silence*, observes,

> The religious mentality of the Japanese is . . . responsive to one who "suffers with us" . . . and who "allows for our weaknesses." [The Japanese, moreover,] tend to seek in their gods and buddhas a warm-hearted mother [more than a distant,] "stern father".[3]

1 Richard J. Mouw and Douglas A. Sweeney, *The Suffering and Victorious Christ: Toward a More Compassionate Christology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013).

2 Mouw and Sweeney, *Suffering*, 3.

3 Mouw and Sweeney, *Suffering*, 4.

For Endo, in order for the Japanese to hear the Christian message, "they must know that God is more than just a righteous heavenly Father who is angry over sin; God is also One who loves and draws near in times of need."[4]

From the African slave experience, James Cone expressed a Christology far different than the typical western Christology. He writes:

> The cross of Jesus reveals the extent of God's involvement in the suffering of the weak. He is not merely sympathetic with the social pain of the poor but becomes totally identified with them in their agony and pain. The pain of the oppressed is God's pain for he takes their suffering as his own, thereby freeing them from its ultimate control of their lives.[5]

Mouw and Sweeney observed that Cone's articulation of a *Christus dolor* Christology has gone beyond the preferred Christology within the African American experience and actually "has now become a global [preference of a] Christ who brings God near to everyone who suffers from oppression."[6]

With remarkable candor, Mouw and Sweeney concede that the "concerns about American Christian triumphalism are not unfounded. Theologians and other leaders in the United States had indeed called for a more masculine Jesus to bolster the nation in its time of distress before, during and after the World Wars."[7] To be more theologically precise, they claim that western Christology (especially within the Reformed tradition of which Mouw belongs) has a "habit of moving too quickly over that empathic aspect of Christ's suffering."[8] For instance, in Charles Hodge's treatment of the suffering of the Son of God, "he focuses only on the final stage of the earthly redemptive mission, emphasizing the ways in which Christ's suffering was very much unlike our own."[9] While John Calvin "regularly refers to the sufferings that the Savior experienced in years prior to the final days leading to the crucifixion," his "thoughts are never far from Jesus' triumph."[10] In Louis Berkhof's influential *Systematic Theology*, he laid out "the necessity of the Savior's lifelong suffering."[11] But "[n]ot one word here points to a desire in the Savior to empathize with—to act in solidarity with—the sufferings of human beings in general."[12]

4 Mouw and Sweeney, *Suffering*, 4.
5 Mouw and Sweeney, *Suffering*, 74.
6 Mouw and Sweeney, *Suffering*, 74.
7 Mouw and Sweeney, *Suffering*, 4.
8 Mouw and Sweeney, *Suffering*, 48.
9 Mouw and Sweeney, *Suffering*, 47.
10 Mouw and Sweeney, *Suffering*, 48.
11 Mouw and Sweeney, *Suffering*, 49.
12 Mouw and Sweeney, *Suffering*, 49.

Why does the dominant form of western Christology as exemplified, for instance, in Reformed theology fail to "linger" in their Christology on Christ's shared sufferings with humanity? Mouw and Sweeney offer this intriguing explanation:

> The Reformed [theological tradition] sees as its special obligation to keep the teachings about the incarnation within definite theological bounds. Against those theologies that want to extend the incarnation temporally and spatially, the Reformed have regularly argued that the earthly incarnation came to an end with Christ's ascension to heaven.[13]

Richard Muller explains in greater detail this way: "Reformed Christology has always insisted not only on the resurrection of Christ's body but also on the heavenly location and finitude of Christ's resurrected humanity. Christ now sits at the right hand of God and visibly rules the church triumphant."[14] Thus, the strong emphasis on *Christus victor* found in Western Christology can be traced to the underlying concern of upholding the "majesty" of Christ in His post-resurrected state, perhaps, to a fault. [15]

Whether or not one agrees with their assessment of western Christology, Mouw and Sweeney wisely call the universal church (western and non-western alike) to a more balanced Christology which would bring together *Christus victor* and *Christus dolor* into greater unity of expression so that a more orthodox compassionate Christology might indeed be presented to a world filled with pain and suffering. Their book's treatment of the issue at hand and their call are to be commended. There are many aspects of the book that demonstrate the balanced Christology they are advocating. However, as they themselves would readily admit, there is still room for improvement in the theological project, namely, integrating the two ways of understanding compassionate Christology.

In this essay, I propose to continue the noble project Mouw and Sweeney started by doing the following in order to strengthen their call for a balanced compassionate Christology: (1) The paper will provide a biblical motif of Christ that could help to integrate the concepts of *Christus victor* and *Christus dolor* when discussing contemporary Christology. (2) It will argue and point out that a holistic compassionate Christology is more than just seeing Jesus as either *Christus victor* and *Christus dolor* but also as *Christus perfector* as emphasized in the Book of Hebrews. And (3) the essay will issue its own call for a balanced and compassionate Christology along its proposed emphasis.

13 Mouw and Sweeney, *Suffering*, 50.

14 Mouw and Sweeney, *Suffering*, 50.

15 Mouw and Sweeney, *Suffering*, 50–51.

I. Jesus the A*rchēgos* in Hebrews

While the contemporary debate on *Christus victor* (found in western Christology) and *Christus dolor* (found in non-western Christology) is important, it also seems rather reductionistic. For it asks us to construct a Christology based purely on one position alone. It is safe to assume that, while western and non-western theologians may have their preferred Christological emphasis, neither side would probably want to completely dispense of the other way of articulating a Christology rooted in Scripture.

But how can balance be achieved? How can the two ways of Christology be integrated? One helpful approach is to find a biblical motif of Christ that actually incorporates both *Christus victor* and *Christus dolor*. In this way, when speaking of Christ using this biblical motif, one would naturally be mindful of the presence of these two innate emphases about Christ. And any differences in theological discussions—arguing for either *Christus victor* or *Christus dolor*—would be because a theologian thinks it appropriate to emphasize one aspect of Christology in a given situation. But both emphases remain part of a similar whole and are intended to function as one.

Is there such an incorporative or integrative biblical motif? I believe there is. I propose that the *archēgos* motif of Christ in the epistle to the Hebrews provides us with the kind of biblical integration that Mouw and Sweeney are calling for.

The title *archēgos* is used of Jesus in Hebrews twice and has this range of meaning: (1) author-source-founder, (2) leader-hero-prince, and (3) pathfinder-pioneer-trailblazer.[16] The two passages where Jesus is called *archēgos* is first found in Hebrews 2:10 where it says, "For it was fitting for Him [God the Father], for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect [Jesus] the author [*archēgos*] of their salvation through sufferings." Second, the writer to the Hebrews said this of Jesus in Hebrews 12:2: "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author [*archēgos*] and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

In most cases, an interpreter should choose just one definition in a given term of a Scriptural passage to work with. In this case however, the term *archēgos* seems to defy a simple definition. Homer Kent, Jr. helpfully described the complexity of the term this way:

16 Kenneth Chadwell, "*Archēgos*: Jesus Our Pioneer" in *A Heart to Study and Teach the Law of the Lord*, ed. Dale W. Manor (Henderson, Tennessee: Freed-Hardeman University, 2000), 170. Donald A. Hagner puts it slightly differently in the following: "The word *archēgos* has two related meanings: (1) leader, ruler, prince, and (2) originator, founder. "Pathfinder" or "trailblazer" are sometimes suggested as distilling the meaning of the word. See *Hebrews: A Good News Commentary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1983), 29.

> To call Christ the *archēgos* of salvation was to employ a term which sometimes meant originator (Heb. 12:2) and sometimes leader or pioneer (Acts 5:31). At times these meanings may coalesce, and this may be the case here [in Heb. 2:10]. Christ is the one who by his death obtained our salvation, and he has also led the way as our forerunner into heaven (Hebrews 6:20).[17]

Paul Muller expands on Kent's point by saying, "The results of semasiological and lexigraphical investigation of secular Greek indicate an extremely polyvalent spectrum of meaning for the word [*archēgos*]."[18] The only thing that is clear is that the word refers to "he who is first, who stands at the head of, who leads."[19]

The interpretive history of how the term *archēgos* was applied to Jesus in Hebrews shows a tendency to gravitate to just one of the above definitions. Often, it tilts either toward the "leader-hero-prince" sense, or toward the "author-source-founder" nuance of the word.[20] But, as Julius Scott has argued, this has led to "too rigid a distinction" of *archēgos* in view of the richness of what Christ has done in salvation history.[21] Indeed, George Johnston went so far as to say that "[t]here seems to be no virtue in consistency"[22] of meaning to this term since the term is "extremely polyvalent"[23] in the New Testament mindset. So insisting, therefore, on a single consistent definition is not beneficial to a proper understanding of *archēgos*.

Thus, Paul Muller counsels that as an interpretive "corrective, we should pay greater attention on "the continuity of the OT and Jewish theme of Yahweh's leading in the course of salvation history."[24] When we do, the multi-faceted nature of the title *archēgos* will naturally come to the fore. We will see the term as applied to Christ in its most expansive range of meanings possible, that is, as encompassing all three definitions of *archēgos*. Rather humorously, Julius Scott said that Jesus the *archēgos* should be translated Jesus "the pioneer-founder-victor-leader-ruler-hero"[25] of the faith. Admittedly, he knows that this is too cumbersome a title. But it illustrates how we are to see the richness of this term when applied to Christ in Hebrews and, indeed, in the rest of the New Testament.

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17 Homer A. Kent, Jr., *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972), 56.

18 Paul Muller, "*archēgos*" in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. H. Balz and G. Schneider (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 1:163.

19 Muller, "*archēgos,*" 163.

20 Muller, "*archēgos,*" 163.

21 J. Julius Scott, Jr. "*Archēgos* in the Salvation History of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 29, no. 1 (March 1986): 51.

22 George Johnston, "Christ as *Archēgos,*" *New Testament Studies* 27 (1981): 382.

23 Muller, "*archēgos,*" 163.

24 Muller, "*archēgos,*" 163.

25 Scott, "*Archēgos,*" 53–54.

Jesus the *Archēgos* as *Christus Victor* and *Christus Dolor* in Hebrews

If we take seriously the polyvalent nature of *archēgos* as applied to Jesus in Hebrews, then a biblical integration of the theologies found in *Christus victor* and *Christus dolor* is possible**.** We can speak of Christ's compassion for the world in a balanced, biblical manner without fear of tilting either too much on the *Christus victor* side or too excessively on the *Christus dolor* side. For Jesus as *archēgos* naturally embodies both imageries and emphases.

Regarding *Christus victor*, Jesus the *archēgos* is shown in Hebrews as the "author-source-founder" because He underwrote or secured the redemption of fallen humanity so that they might have a right standing and relationship with God, which is at the heart of His compassion for mankind. Without their fully knowing it, mankind's greatest need is really a right relationship with God in the midst of their misery.

In Hebrews 2:9, the epistle says, "But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, *namely*, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone." In His incarnation and atonement Christ rendered "powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" and set "free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives (Hebrews 2:14–15)." Within this understanding of *archēgos*, we see that Christ is indeed "author-source-founder." He made possible what fallen humanity could not achieve on their own. He is *Christus victor* for us.

Regarding *Christus dolor*, Jesus the *archēgos* in Hebrews is shown as "leader-hero-prince." For He empathizes with fallen humanity despite His high stature as the Son who is "over [God's] house" (3:6) and is the "appointed heir over all things, through whom also [God] made the world" (1:2). His act of empathy is seen in that "since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same [human nature] (2:14). Again, Jesus allowed Himself to be "tempted in that which He has suffered" so that "He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted (2:8)." Within this description of *archēgos*, we see a Christ who is not an aloof "founder or source" but the kind of "leader or prince" who acts heroically for the sake of His people. Therein lies the empathy and passion on behalf of His people. He is thus *Christus dolor* with us.

It is evident, therefore, that from the title *archēgos*, the dual concepts of *Christus victor* and *Christus dolor* come together in the person and work of Christ. Archegos makes possible the point of integration that Mouw and Sweeney propose. If successful, western and non-western Christological portrayals would benefit from a balanced, compassionate Christ. In mining and expounding on Jesus as *archēgos*, Christian theologians will be within the control of Scripture in their emphasis between *Christus victor* and *Christus dolor*.

II. Jesus the *Archēgos* as *Christus Perfector* in Hebrews

Despite the usefulness of the *archēgos* metaphor in Hebrews, we have not fully exhausted its Christological benefits. One aspect worth mentioning remains that has not yet been discussed by Mouw and Sweeney. While *archēgos* in Hebrews can mean either (1) "author-source-founder" or (2) "leader-hero-prince", there is a third valid definition that we must also account for in relation to His compassion toward humanity. It is Jesus the *archēgos* as "pathfinder-pioneer-trailblazer".

The concept of Jesus the *archēgos* as "pathfinder" fits within the overall discussion of Christ in Hebrews where in 6:19–20, Jesus is described as our "forerunner [*podromos*]" to whom we must follow into God's holy presence. Unlike the high priesthood of Jesus Christ, Brian Small observes that the Old Testament high priest was not a forerunner [*podromos*] to whom we could follow into God's presence. Citing Fred Craddock, Small says, "No others, not even priests, followed him [that is, the Old Testament high priest] into the holy of holies; he went alone. By contrast, Christ . . . was a forerunner; that is, he prepared for others to follow."[26] This is what makes Christ superior to the Old Testament high priests. It is this kind of high priesthood to which New Testament believers are called to follow. And it is this understanding of Christ that strengthens the case that His being called the *archēgos* also includes the idea that He is "pathfinder-pioneer-trailblazer." To further reinforce the imagery of Jesus as pathfinder, Hebrews deliberately makes allusion to Israel in the exodus and makes the correlation that just as Israel had to obey their God appointed pathfinders in order to reach the Promised Land (i.e., Moses and Joshua), New Testament believers must obey God's ultimate pathfinder in the person of Jesus the *archēgos*.[27]

When it comes to Jesus the *archēgos* as "pathfinder-pioneer-trailblazer," N. T. Wright has a colorful description of what the word means. Wright asks us to:

> Imagine an explorer cutting his way deep into the jungle. Nobody has been this way before; there are no paths, no trails, no signs that it's possible to go this way. Yet on he goes, forging his way through impossible terrain, until he reaches the goal. Once he's done that, others can follow.
>
> Explorers do that sort of thing for various reasons: fame, fortune, sheer curiosity. Jesus did it out of love. [But in Jesus' case, He did it out of compassion.] The jungle was the whole world of suffering, pain, sin and death. Nobody had ever gone through there before and come out the other side. When he did it, he opened the way into God's new world, like our explorer coming through the jungle and out

26 Brian Small, *The Characterization of Jesus in the Book of Hebrews* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 193.

27 See also Bryan J. Whitfield, "Pioneer and Perfecter: Joshua Traditions and the Christology of Hebrews" in *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Theology of Hebrews in Its Ancient Contexts*, eds. Richard Bauckham, Daniel Driver, Trevor Hart, and Nathan MacDonald (London: T & T Clark, 2008).

> onto the sunlit uplands of the country beyond. And in leaving the jungle behind, and in doing so on behalf of all those who will follow him, he gets rid of the world of sins and pollution that otherwise clings to the fallen human race.[28]

This picture of Jesus the *archēgos* as "pathfinder-pioneer-trailblazer" not only gives us a graphic picture of His person but, perhaps, more importantly, it shows us His important work of compassion.

Given humanity's helpless condition, we see here that Christ wants to transform them. He wants to mature them. He wants to perfect them in the exact manner that God the Father has perfected Him in His incarnation. Hebrews 2:10 says, that "in bringing many sons to glory," God made Jesus "perfect" (e.g., "fitting") to be our *archēgos* or "pathfinder" through the means of "sufferings" so that by the same means believers might be perfected by God through the path that Christ paved for them.

In His role as *archēgos*, Jesus is not just *Christus victor* and *Christus dolor* but also *Christus perfector*. As author or founder, Jesus the *archēgos* not only secures our redemption, but He leads us down the path of perfection and maturity that, comes through suffering. Thus, Christ's compassion toward fallen humanity in Hebrews cannot be seen and discussed simply through the lens of *Christus victor* and *Christus dolor* but also through *Christus perfector*.

In his landmark study, *Hebrews and Perfection*, David Peterson posed the query in the beginning of his book: "How rigorously is the parallelism between the perfecting of Christ and the perfecting of believers pursued [in Hebrews]?"[29] His answer at the end of his study is:

> The perfecting of Christ "through suffering" provides a pattern for Christian discipleship. Christians share to a certain extent in the same struggle or contest that Christ endured and, because he pioneered the way, they have the prospect of enjoying his victory if they share his faith and manifest the same sort of perseverance in the face of hostility and suffering.
>
> The teaching about the perfecting of Christ and the perfecting of believers is clearly *more central to the argument of Hebrews than many commentators have allowed it* . . . It is central to his exhortation for a group of Christians in danger of growing weary and fainthearted in the journey of faith.[30]

28 Tom Wright, *Hebrews for Everyone* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 19–20.

29 David Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection: An Examination of the Concept of Perfection in the "Epistle to the Hebrews"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 20.

30 Peterson, *Hebrews*, 187.

James Thompson echoes the same sentiment, adding:

> For a community that is now being put to the test, the theme of the pioneer [or pathfinder] who proceeded from suffering to glory is an encouragement to endure alienation . . . Those who face the crisis caused by suffering can change their perspective, knowing that they follow the one whose suffering ended in glory.[31]

It is then no wonder that, in Hebrews, there is a special exhortation and emphasis for believers to follow or obey Christ in the way He is leading them as *archēgos*. Note the importance of the believers' responsibility to obey to Jesus in Hebrews 5:9. It says: "And having been made perfect, He [Jesus] became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation . . ." The benediction at the end of the epistle in 13:20–21 invokes the blessing of obedience to Jesus their *archēgos*: "Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, *even* Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen." It is their willingness and trust to follow Jesus the *archēgos* that leads them to the perfecting work that God wants to accomplish in them which is the expression of Christ's compassion for them.

In a world of pain and suffering, the Christian gospel holds out the portrait of a Savior who will not only empathize with us and accomplish the work of reconciliation but also beckon us to follow Him in path He has trodden. This last aspect of Christ the *archēgos* if neglected gives an incomplete picture of Christ and leaves believers dissatisfied and disillusioned with the reality of the compassionate Savior portrayed in Scripture.

Another way of putting it is that Christ not only suffered *for* us *(Christus victor)* and suffered *with* us *(Christus dolor)* but also suffered *before* us *(Christus perfector)*. He leads us to participate in the suffering He has trail-blazed for us to follow in this fallen world so that we, along with our suffering, might be "perfected." It is as we enter into His suffering that we experience a truly more compassionate, orthodox Christology. For in the *Christus perfector* motif, Christ compassionately injects redemptive significance into our suffering—meaningless as suffering appears at times—by incorporating believers into His own glorious suffering, resulting in the real divine transformation of our suffering—in the present and in the eschaton.

III. A More Biblical and Compassionate Christology Based on Christ as *Archēgos* Motif

Rachel Denhollander was a member of the USA Women's Gymnastics team and suffered sexual abuse at the hands of the team doctor, Larry Nassar. In 2018, she made a public statement that

31 James W. Thompson, *Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2008), 73–74.

shocked many. In an interview with *Christianity Today*, she said that the church is one of the "worst places to go for help" for a victim of sexual assault because the church's teachings can sometimes be used to "mitigate or minimize" victims' suffering.[32] She said:

> [Christians] can tend to gloss over the devastation of any kind of suffering but especially sexual assault, with Christian platitudes like God works all things together for good or God is sovereign . . . Those are very good and glorious biblical truths, but when they are misapplied in a way to dampen the horror of evil, they ultimately dampen the goodness of God.[33]

In short, she attributes "poor theology and a poor understanding of grace and repentance" as the reason why the church is one of the "worst places to go for help" for victims of sexual assault.[34]

In view of our present discussion, one cannot help but wonder if the "poor theology" Rachel Denhollander referred to might not be the result of an imbalanced Christology that Mouw and Sweeney identified: a one-sided emphasis on *Christus victor* or a one-sided emphasis on *Christus dolor* as it relates to either the victim or the perpetrator. In any case, what we know for sure is that, in order for a Christology to truly be orthodox and compassionate, *Christus victor* and *Christus dolor* must be properly integrated. Moreover, it has to be integrated with the additional theological metaphor of *Christus perfector* as shown in the biblical teaching of Jesus the *archēgos* in the epistle to the Hebrews.

At the end of the day, all three nuances of Jesus the *archēgos* found in Hebrews—(1) author-source-founder, (2) leader-hero-prince, and (3) pathfinder-pioneer-trailblazer—must somehow be integrated to inform a person's understanding of Christ for it to be a truly compassionate, orthodox Christology.

In making my case above, I readily admit that the mere integration of our Christology will not automatically ensure its appropriate application. Other factors also come into play. For instance, it would still require wisdom or *phronesis*[35] to know which Christological motifs should be applied or emphasized in a given situation. There is, therefore, much work for theologians and pastors to do in this area. But the integrated Christology as seen in Jesus the *archēgos* found in Hebrews is a good place to begin the work of proper application for a truly, holistic compassionate biblical Christology.

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32 Morgan Lee, "My Larry Nasser Testimony Went Viral. But There's More to the Gospel Than Forgiveness," *Christianity Today*, January 31, 2018, http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2018/january-web-only/rachael-denhollander-larry-nassar-forgiveness-gospel.html.

33 Lee, "Larry Nasser."

34 Lee, "Larry Nasser."

35 For a more detailed discussion of biblical phronesis, see Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).

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WHO IS THE ANGEL OF THE LORD?

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I remember clearly back in Bible School when one of my teachers explained to me that the Angel of the LORD was a Christophany. Initially, I needed to look it up to see what the word *Christophany* meant, but once understood, I wondered how a Christophany was possible. I was further surprised to discover just how much disagreement over the identity of the Angel of the LORD in the OT there was throughout church history. Some interpreters considered the Angel of the Lord to be the preincarnate Christ, others a theophany, and still others merely an angel. When I was asked to write a paper on this topic, I figured it was time to look into this issue again.

The phrase "the angel of the LORD" occurs fifty-six times in the OT[1] and one time in the NT.[2] But without the article it occurs eleven more times in the NT.[3] The phrase "the angel of God" occurs only ten times in the OT[4] and only two times in the NT each time without the article.[5] "The angel of the LORD" is always singular, but the phrase "the angels of God" occurs twice in the OT (Gen 28:12; 32:2).

The most common interpretations for the identity of "the angel of the LORD" are: (1) God or a self-manifestation of God; (2) The pre-incarnate Christ; and (3) an angel with a special commission from God.[6] Each view has some significant strengthens and weaknesses and at present

1 Gen. 16:7, 9–11; 18:1–33; 21:17; 22:11–18; 24:7, 40; 31:11; 32:24–32; 48:15–16; Exod. 3:2–4:17; 23:20–23; 32:34–35; 33:2; Num. 22:21–35; Josh. 5:13–6:5; Judg. 2:1–5; 5:23; 6:11–24; 13:3–23; 2 Sam. 14:17, 20; 24:15–17; 2 Kgs. 19:35; 1 Chr. 21:15–27; Isa. 63:9; Zech. 1:10–21; 3:1–10; 12:8.

2 Matt. 1:24.

3 Matt. 1:20; 2:13, 19; 28:2; Luke 1:11 (Gabriel); 2:9; Acts 5:19; 8:26; 12:23; 27:23; Gal. 4:14.

4 Gen. 21:17; 31:11; Exod. 14:19; Judg. 6:20; 13;6, 9; 29:9; 1 Sam. 29:9; 2 Sam. 14:17, 20; 19:27.

5 Acts 10:3; Gal. 4:14.

6 Some scholars suggest an "interpolation theory" where the concept of the angel of the LORD was a later development to counter an overly anthropomorphic view of Yahweh (H. Gunkel, *Genesis*, trans. M. Biddle [Macon GA: Mercer University Press, 1997], 186; W. Baumgartner, "Zum Problem des Yahwe-engels," *STU* 14 [1944]: 97–102; C. Newsom, ABD, "Angels"). I have also included a summary table [Appendix I] of the major positions including: explanation of, evidence for, and problems with each position.

there is no consensus on this topic,[7] but I will try to highlight the evidence for each view and then provide what I believe is the strongest view:

God Himself (Identity Theory)[8] or The Self-Manifestation of God (Hypostasis Theory)[9]

1. The Evidence

God can appear in a number of ways in the OT, for example: Adam walks with God in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3); Moses talks with God in the burning bush (Exod. 3); God appears as a pillar of fire and smoke to lead the Israelites through the wilderness wanderings (Exod. 13:21); He appears as a thick cloud on Mount Sinai (Exod. 19:9, 18); He allows Moses to see his glory (Exod. 33); and God's hand writes on the wall of the palace for Belshazzar (Dan. 5). Each of these was an intentional, self-manifestation of God, and the people involved saw some physical image or likeness of God or his glory—and the angel of the LORD may be similar to these. However, some have argued that since Jesus is the only part of the Trinity who appears visually, the angel of the LORD must be Jesus in the OT. Yet, it seems very likely that God can cause himself or his glory to be visible which is certainly what appears to have happened in Exodus 33.

One of the strongest evidences for the angel of the LORD being God is that he can speak in first person as if he is God (Gen. 16:10–11; 22:11–12, 15–16; etc.); and sometime is equated with or said to be the LORD (Gen. 31:11–13; Judg. 2:1–4; 6:11–16). A clear example is Genesis 22:11–12: "But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven . . . He said, 'Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you indeed fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.'"

Some of these passages clearly say that the person in the narrative believes that they have seen God (Gen. 16:13; Judg. 6:22–23; etc.) and the narrator does not correct them. Umberto Cassuto

7 James C. Moyer, "Theophany," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 1087.

8 These terms go back to W. G. Heidt, *Angelology of the Old Testament* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1949); P. R. Carrel, *Jesus and the Angels* (SNTSMS 95; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 27–28; and others. Sometimes the distinction between these two views is not clear, but the following scholars appear to hold this view: G. von Rad, "It is God himself appearing to human beings in human form," (*Old Testament Theology*, trans. D. Stalker, 2 vols. [London: SCM, 1975] 1:287); W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testamen*t, trans. J. A. Baker; OTL; 2 Vols. (London: SCM, 1961-7) 2:26–29; T. R. Ashley, *The Book of Numbers*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 455; R. Hess, *Joshua. An Introduction and Commentary,* TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 127.

9 These views are similar, but in the Identity Theory it is God himself appearing and in the second theory it is a manifestation of himself (M. Erickson, "God himself temporarily visible in a humanlike form" (*Christian Theology* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985], 443); W. Propp, *Exodus 1-18,* AB 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 198 ("a visible manifestation of God").

believes that the phrase "the angel of the LORD" is just another way of speaking about God and thus describes the angel in Exodus 23:20–33 as follows:

> The initial words, *Behold I send an angel before you*, do not imply a being distinct from God. In ancient thought-processes the line of demarcation between the sender and the sent is liable easily to be blurred; in the final analysis the angel of God is simply God's action. From another part of the Bible we learn what is meant by an angel of the Lord being sent before one. In Gen. xxiv 7 Abraham says to his servant: "The Lord, the God of heaven . . . He will send His angel before you," but in the continuation of the narrative there is not the slightest reference to an actual angel accompanying the servant; it is only related that the Lord prospered his way; and the servant says (ibid., v. 27): "As for me, the Lord has led me in the way." Compare also *ibid*., vv. 40, 48, 56. It is clear from that passage, therefore, that the angel stands only for the guidance and help of the Lord.[10]

I believe it is unlikely that God would refer to himself as "the angel/messenger of the LORD," but I agree with Cassuto that at times the line between the sender and the sent may be blurred since the messenger carries the authority of the sender. The messenger only has authority because of the sender and thus a very similar outcome would occur if God sends a messenger or angel with his authority (i.e., "my name is in him") without making the unlikely mistake of equating God with the messenger.

This idea is seen much more clearly in passages that make a distinction between the angel of the LORD and God (Gen. 16:11; 21:17; 24:7, 40; Exod. 23:20–23; etc.). For example, see:

> Genesis 16:11 which says, "Then angel of the LORD said to her, 'Behold, you are pregnant and you are about to bear a son; and you shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has heard about your affliction.'" (Notice it says "the LORD" and not "I".)
>
> Zechariah 1:12 which says, "Then the angel of the LORD said, 'O LORD of hosts, how long will you not have compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which you have been indignant these seventy years?'"

This last passage is extremely important since it depicts the angel of the LORD speaking directly to the LORD of Hosts, and thus it seems unlikely that they are the same person.

Douglas Stuart has argued that the construct phrase "the angel of the LORD" is used appositionally and should be translated "the angel that is Yahweh,"[11] but this is a very rare usage of

10 U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2008, repr. 1967 ed.), 305–6.

11 *Exodus* (NAC 2; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 110–11 (see Bibliography on p. 111, n. 17

the construct relationship. Generally, when a noun is found in a construct relationship with the name "LORD," the possessive genitive is much more common.[12] See the following chart for some of the numerous examples:

GENITIVE PHRASE (Suggesting Possession)	PASSAGES
"presence of the LORD"	Gen. 13:4; 27:7; Lev. 10:2; 16:1
"name of the LORD"	Gen. 4:26; 12:8; 13:4; 16:13; 21:33; 26:25
"eyes of the LORD"	Gen. 6:8
"sight of the LORD"	Lev. 10:19
"ears of the LORD"	Num. 11:18
"garden of the LORD"	Gen. 13:10
"word(s) of the LORD"	Gen. 15:1, 4; Exod 4:28; 9:20–21
"way of the LORD"	Gen. 18:19
"compassion of the LORD"	Gen. 19:16
"mount of the LORD"	Gen. 22:14
"sight of the LORD"	Gen. 38:7, 10
"hand of the LORD"	Exod. 9:3
"voice of the LORD"	Exod. 15:26
"power of the LORD"	Num. 14:17

Thus, why prefer a rare usage of the construct chain over the common usage unless there is a very significant reason for doing so? Also, the appositional usage would not work in passages where the LORD and the angel are mentioned together (see esp. Zech. 1:12 where "the angel of the LORD" speaks directly to "the LORD of hosts").

2. Weaknesses

One of the weaknesses of this view is that John 1:18 states that "no one has ever seen God," and thus it begs the question of whether one can make a distinction between God and his manifestation. The answer must be "yes" since very few scholars have ever argued that the "pillar of fire" was actually God and in Exodus 33 God allows Moses to see his glory even after saying that no one can see God and live. Thus there must be some type of distinction between God's glory or his appearance as a pillar of fire and his essence which is spirit that cannot be seen.

for this usage). See also GKC, 423–24, §151; *William's Hebrew Grammar,* §42a.

12 GKC, 416, §128g; *William's Hebrew Grammar,* 14, §39; etc. Meier argues that it is a genitive construct suggesting a relationship of subordination ("Angel of Yahweh," 96).

Zechariah 1:12 speaks most directly against this view since there the angel of the LORD speaks to the LORD of Hosts himself—in essence God would be speaking to his own manifestation which seems unlikely (see similar issues in 2 Sam. 24:15–17 and 2 Chron. 21:15–16). Another potential problem passage for this view is Judges 13:16, when Manoah offers a young goat to the angel of the LORD, but instead the angel responds that instead he should offer it to the LORD. The Hebrew phrase is likely in emphatic order and should be translated as "if you make a burnt offering, to the LORD offer it" and seems to imply "and not to me." The כִּי kî clause in v. 16b most likely gives a reason for what preceded.[13] Thus the clarifying phrase in v. 16b should read something like: "then offer the burnt offering to the LORD, for Manoah did not know that this was the angel of the LORD." Yet it is difficult to see how this כִּי kî clause provides the rationale for the preceding phrase unless it is clarifying that the one speaking to him is the angel of the LORD and not the LORD himself; thus he should not offer the burnt offering to him. This interpretation would provide serious problems for those that understand the angel of the LORD as a self-manifestation of God or a Christophany since then there would be little reason for the angel of the LORD to hesitate to accept the sacrifice from Manoah since as divinity they could accept divine worship.

It is possible to argue that the angel of the LORD wanted to clarify that the goat should be used to honor the LORD and not just as a meal, but there is still the problem of why the angel of the LORD says to offer the sacrifice to the LORD and does not say to offer it "to me." Later, Manoah and his wife finally realize that it was the angel of the LORD speaking to them (v. 21) and Manoah believes that they will die because they have seen God (v. 22) which suggests that he knew about God's words to Moses in Exodus 33:20. However, his wife wonders why the LORD would kill them after accepting the offerings and communicating these amazing promises. Thus, at least in her mind, there are some doubts about whether they actually saw the face of God or about God's words to Moses. The former seems more plausible.

3. Summary:

From the evidence given above, there are several things that can be gained concerning the identity of the angel of the LORD: (1) there is a close connection between God and the angel of the LORD as pointed out by the significant amount of passages that seem to equate them (e.g., Gen. 22:11–12; 31:11–13); (2) it is less likely that the angel of the LORD is God himself (i.e., the identity theory) for it seems unlikely that God would call himself an angel (e.g., Exod. 23:20–23; 33:1–3) or talk to himself (e.g., 1 Chron. 21:15–16; Zech. 1:12); (3) there are several passages that appear to distinguish between the angel of the LORD and God suggesting that they are not the same person (e.g., Gen. 21:17; Zech. 1:10–21); and (4) the grammatical relationship in the construct phrase "the angel of the LORD" is most likely suggesting "possession" than appositional.

Given the preceding evidence, it is still plausible that "the angel of the LORD" could be understood as a manifestation of the LORD, but some passages appear to argue against this inter-

13 GKC § 158b; Williams §444.

pretation: (1) it is unlikely that God would call himself an angel (Exod. 23:20–23); (2) God would be speaking to his manifestation in some passages (e.g., 2 Sam. 24:15–17; 2 Chron. 21:15–16; Zech. 1:12); and (3) Judges 13:16 seems to go against this interpretation.

The Pre-incarnate Christ (Divine Logos Theory)[14]

1. Evidence

There are passages in the NT that suggest that the Son was active in the OT, such as: (1) John 1:3 suggests that Jesus was the "Logos" (word) and claims that all things came into being through him; (2) Jude 5 implies that the Lord (Jesus) led Israel out of Egypt, but punished their disobedience in the wilderness; (3) 1 Corinthians 10:1–10 argues that Christ was the spiritual rock that followed Israel in the wilderness; (4) John 5:56–59 says that Abraham rejoiced to see Jesus's day; and (5) John 12:41 says Isaiah saw the glory of the Son and spoke of him. The concept of the Trinity demands that when the eternal God is active in the OT, so is the Son; and when God does things in the OT, in fact, the Son is also doing those things. But this does not demand that the Son must appear in the OT to be active, nor that every time the word LORD appears that this is referring to the Son. Abraham and Isaiah can look forward to the day that the Son will be revealed without totally understanding how God will actually work it out. The NT authors can help clarify God's future deliverance that these OT saints were looking forward to even though they would not have understood the person or the times that these saints longed for (cf. 1 Pet. 1:10–11).

As noted above, one of the primary arguments for the angel of the LORD being Christ is that he is the only part of the God-head that can be seen and therefore this fits Jesus' role in the God-head. But as has already been pointed out, God does indeed manifest himself or his glory to people throughout the OT. Still, the view of the angel of the LORD being a pre-incarnate Christ is bolstered by the verses above that have the angel speaking in first person literally saying the divine message himself (see above); or that he is sometimes equated with or said to be the LORD (see above). Some scholars take this argument further and argue that the article on the word "angel," suggested by the construct phrase, demands that this is a specific angel set off from others of its class and not just any angel. A clear example of this is in Exodus 3:2 which

14 This view goes back at least as far as Justin Martyr (*Dial.* 61.1; 127.4; also see D. C. Trakatellis, *The Pre-existence of Christ in the Writings of Justin Martyr*, HDR 6 [Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976] and modern theologians today (W. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 199], 401. Many others have held this view: G. Juncker, "Christ as Angel: The Reclamation of a Primitive Title," *TJ* 15 (1994): 221–50 (see his history of this interpretation); A. R. Johnson, *The One and the Many in Israelite Conception of God* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1961), 30–31; Richard N. Longnecker, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity* (SBT 2/17; Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1970), 19; James A. Borland, *Christ in the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Fearn: Mentor, 1999); Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., et al., *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996), 191–92; and more. For an interesting nuanced view, see D. Howard, *Joshua,* NAC 5 (Louisville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 159–60.

says that the angel of the LORD appeared to Moses in the burning bush, but two verses later it says that the LORD saw him and God called to him from the bush. This connection between the angel of the LORD and the LORD can easily be explained by this angel being the Son who is commonly called Lord in the NT. However, Stephen clearly says that this is an angel (ἄγγελος) that appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Acts 7:30, 35).

Another interesting passage is Genesis 32:30 where a "man" wrestles with Jacob and Jacob claims that it is God: "So Jacob named the place Peniel, for, 'I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved.'" I would argue that Jacob was wrong for many theological reasons, but most of all because it contradicts what God says in Exodus 33:20. Also Hosea 12:4 describes this passage and confirms that it was indeed an angel that wrestled with Jacob: "He wrestled with the angel and prevailed; he wept and sought favor from him. He found Him at Bethel and there He spoke with us."

Some scholars have argued that the angel of the LORD possesses similar attributes as God, for example omniscience by prophesying future events (Judg. 6:14–16), omnipresence because he can be present on earth and yet speak from heaven (Gen. 22:11, 15), and acceptance of worship by consuming the sacrifice (Judg. 6:21). First, realize that in Judges 6 it is an offering (מִנְחָה) and not a sacrifice, but more importantly, all of these things could be said just as properly of an angel or messenger sent from God with his authority, and thus it does not prove either view.[15]

Another argument for the angel of the LORD being Christ is that the angel of the LORD never appeared after Christ was born.[16] There is at least one occurrence of the phrase "the angel of the LORD" after Christ's birth (Matt. 1:24), but this is likely "the article of previous reference" in that the angel had already been mentioned in v. 20.[17] Some scholars have argued that "an angel of the LORD" in the NT is none other than "the angel of the LORD" in the OT.[18] While this is possible there may be other possible suggestions for this lack of the phrase after Christ's birth: (1) A special messenger from God may no longer be needed since Jesus comes to be God's final revelation (according to Hebrews 1:2); (2) it may be merely a grammatical issue in that the Greek grammar makes it easier to say "an angel of the LORD" (ἄγγελος κυρίου [Matt 1:24]) than the construct form in Hebrew which makes the whole construct chain definite (מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה "the angel of the LORD");[19]

15 See also López, "The angel of the LORD," 11.

16 Andrew S. Malone, "Distinguishing the Angel of the Lord," *BBR* 21.3 (2011): 311–12; Borland, *Christ in the Old Testament*, 29; Daniel Finestone, "Is the Angel of Jehovah in the Old Testament the Lord Jesus Christ?" *BibSac* 95/379 (Jul–Sep 1938): 372–77.

17 Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 217–18.

18 Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of the New Testament Greek,* vol. 3 *Syntax*, ed. James Hope Moulton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), 180; Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 252.

19 Some scholars have suggested that the usage of this phrase in the LXX confirms this idea. The Septuagint has a variety of ways to express "the angel of the LORD" in Greek a few of them are noted in the following chart:

or (3) the culture, may have changed and the messenger formula was no longer a common format. It is even possible that all of these issues had a part in the change of the usage of the angel of the LORD from the OT to the NT.

A stronger argument for the view that the angel is the pre-incarnate Christ is that the angel of the LORD can receive divine honor (Josh. 5:15) and possibly sacrifices were offered to him (Judg. 13:16), as pointed out above. This first passage is interesting for it is said to be the "commander of the hosts of the LORD" (שַׂר־צְבָא יְהוָֹה) and not "the angel of the LORD" that receives divine honor. Whoever this person is, he receives honor just like "the angel of the LORD" did at the burning bush (Exod. 3:5) and this is why some have suggested it is the LORD. There is some question as to who controls God's hosts and suggestions have ranged from angels like Gabriel, or Michael, to Jesus himself. However, Acts 7:30 and 35 say it was an angel that spoke to Moses in the burning bush and thus it appears that at least the NT authors believed that angels could receive honor.

The second passage (Judg. 13) may favor the concept of an angel with a special commission from God (see earlier argument). But notice the angel of the LORD does not say "offer the sacrifice to me," and earlier in the passage Manoah's wife describes him in v. 6 as a "man" (אִישׁ) of God, but then explains him as different than other men for he was like "the angel of God," very "awesome."

Daniel 3:25 seems to be the clincher, for Nebuchadnezzar clearly says that the fourth person in the fiery furnace looks like "a son of the gods" (KJV has "the Son of God"). But Nebuchadnezzar is a pagan, and most likely what he really means is that it looks like a divine being to him (along with all his other gods).

Greek Phrase	Meaning	Passages
ἄγγελος κυρίου (or some slight variant)	Lit. "an (the) angel of the LORD"	Gen. 16:7; 22:11, 15; Exod. 3:2; Judg. 2:1; Matt. 1:20; 2:13; Luke 1:11; etc.
ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου (or some variant)	Lit. "the angel of the LORD"	Gen. 16:9, 10, 11; Num. 22:31, 34; Judg. 2:4; 6:12, 21 (2x); Matt. 1:24; etc.
ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ κυρίου (or some slight variant)	Lit. "the angel of the LORD"	No occurrences
ἄγγελος θεοῦ (or some slight variant)	Lit. "an (the) angel of God"	Judg. 13:6; 2 Sam. 14:17; Gal. 4:14
ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ (or some variation of this)	Lit. "the (an) angel of (the) God"	Gen. 21:17; 2 Sam. 14:20; 19:27; Acts 10:3
ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ θεου (or some variation of this)	Lit. "the angel of (the) God"	Gen. 31:11; Exod. 14:19; Num. 22:22, 23

Most of the occurrences appear to merely mirror the inarticulate form of the Hebrew or sometimes when the angel has already been mentioned it uses an article (Gen. 16:9, 10, 11; Judg. 2:1–4; etc.), but some just seem to be inconsistent [see Gen. 22:11, 15 (no article in v. 15); Num. 22:22–35 (article on each of them); Judg. 6:11–22 (no article in v. 11 and 22, but is one on v. 12)].

2. Weaknesses

The first weakness for this view is that most of its evidence can be answered in other ways and as mentioned above it seems unlikely that God would introduce the second person of the Trinity when polytheism was such a problem. W. G. MacDonald argues that John 1:14 which states that "the word became flesh and dwelt among us" would lose much of its meaning if Jesus had already taken on flesh in the OT.[20] This argument has some validity, but Jesus's appearances in the OT would be only temporary manifestations of his taking on flesh, while the physical birth and incarnation were something totally different. An angel can do the first (e.g., Matt. 1:20; 2:13), but none of these would be compared to what happened in the incarnation where Jesus was born in the flesh.

Second, MacDonald also states that, "if Jesus' human history did not originate when he was 'born of woman,' then the docetists [people who believe that Jesus just took on a human form, but was not really God] win the day."[21] Once again his argument has some validity, but because Jesus's incarnation was something totally different than just taking on flesh, it would not seem to rule out this interpretation.

Third, Christ is clearly said to be superior to the angels in Hebrews 1:4–14 and thus picturing Jesus as an angel is at least confusing and at worst blasphemous. Hebrews 1:14 clarifies that angels are merely "ministering spirits" sent out to "render service to those who are about to inherit salvation." This explanation would also fit well with the job of angels in the OT.

Fourth, several NT passages explain the angel of the LORD as merely an angel. As pointed out above, Stephen explains the appearance of the angel of the LORD at the burning bush (Exod. 3:2) as merely an angel (Acts 7:30; see also v. 35). Later in Stephen's sermon, he mentions that an angel met with Moses on Mount Sinai (7:38), and we suppose this interpretation came from passages that said that God will send an angel before the children of Israel to guide them into the Promised Land (cf. Exod. 14:19; 23:20–23; 32:34; 33:2; Num. 20:16).

3. Summary

This view contains several positive elements, for example it makes very good sense why the angel of the LORD can receive honor and be equated with God. But there are several significant arguments against it: (1) as pointed out above the Judges 13 passage seems to argue against this view, since a Christophany could have received the offering in God's name and also the purpose for the explanatory phrase at the end; (2) there are several other passages that seem to be a problem—for example—why would Moses ask to see God's glory (Exod. 33:18) if he had already

20 W. G. MacDonald, "Christology and 'The Angel of the Lord,'" in *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation: Studies in Honor of Merrill C. Tenney Presented by His Former Students*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 324–35.

21 MacDonald, "Christology and 'The Angel of the Lord,'" 325.

seen Christ in the angel of the LORD? Jesus himself tells us that if you have seen him you have seen the father (John 14:9), and other places say that Jesus is the exact image of God (Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3). Still Moses longed to see God; (3) there are also several NT passages that explain the angel of the LORD as being merely an angel (Acts 7:30, 35, 38), and it seems odd that God would use that term for his Son given what is said about angels in Hebrews 1:4–12. Also the most common usage of the construct form would suggest that the phrase refers to an angel/messenger belonging to the LORD; (4) if the scholars that see the angel of the LORD in the OT as similar to "an angel of the LORD" in the NT are correct, then it is most likely that it is just an angel; and (5) the idea of Jesus taking on flesh multiple times in the OT weakens the idea of Hebrews 1:1–2, but it is likely that MacDonald overstates the case that this would mean that the docetists were correct. While this view is possible, it appears to have significant evidence against it.

An Angel with a Special Commission from God (Representation Theory)[22]

1. Evidence

The word "angel" in both Hebrew (מַלְאָךְ) and Greek (ἄγγελος) means "messenger," and this encapsulates a crucial element of their purpose. Throughout the OT (and even into the New) God sent angels at certain times to accomplish things (2 Kings 19:35; 2 Chron. 32:21; Dan. 3:28; etc.) or to announce messages for him (1 Kingss 13:18; 19:5; Zech. 1:9; etc.). Even as early as Genesis 3, God sends cherubim (possibly more than one), to guard the way to the tree of life (Gen. 3:24). Later in Genesis 18–19, there were at least two angels that go to Sodom and Gomorrah to bring Lot and his family out of the city. Abraham also sends out his servant with the promise that God would send his angel before him on his search for a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24:7, 40), and later Jacob wrestles with an angel (Gen. 32:24–31). Hebrews 1:14 summarizes the role of the angels well: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to serve those about to inherit salvation?"

All of these passages demonstrate God's use of angels in the Bible, and thus it is no surprise that in Exodus 3 the angel of the LORD (v. 2) appears to Moses in the burning bush to inform him

22 See the rabbinic axiom "A man's agent is as himself" (m. Ber. 5:5). See also: b. B. Meṣi'a 96a; b. Ḥag 109b; b. Menaḥ 93b; b. Naz 12b; b. Qidd 42b, 43c. M. Kalisch argues that the messenger of Exodus 23:20–23 is Moses (*Exodus* [London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1855], 356). The view of the angel of the LORD is an actual angel goes back as far as Stephen (Acts 7), and Augustine appears to have taught it (Augustine, *On the Trinity*, 3.21–22; 2.23). See also: TDNT 1:414–20; NIDNTT 1:127–28; Ficker, "671 ",מַלְאַךְ; B. S. Childs, *Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1974), 487; M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1988), 239; C. Meyers and E. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1987), 114, 183; R. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, NAC (Louisville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 478; R. Boling, *Joshua: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary,* AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982), 198; J. M. Wilson, "Angel," in ISBE 1:134; B. K. Waltke and C. Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 602, n. 34.

of his mission. However, the interesting thing about this angel is that in v. 4 he appears to be equated with both the LORD and God. There is no doubt that the angel of the LORD and the LORD are strongly associated, but are they the same person? In verse 6, it says that Moses hid his face for he was afraid to look at God, but later in Exodus 33, Moses is told that no one can look at God's face and live. Still Moses longed to see God's glory and God agrees to show him the back of his glory. Because of God's response in this passage, López believes that Moses (and others that thought they saw God) must have been mistaken since they lived. But he also argues:

> One might respond by suggesting that the messenger came in veiled form (not in full splendor), like Jesus in the NT. But if seeing this angel was tantamount to seeing God—just as Jesus himself testified that to see him was tantamount to seeing the Father (John 14:9b), then why did Moses ask to see God's glory, when the angel of the Lord had appeared to him numerous times before especially at the burning bush? Moreover, if this angel was the anonymous preincarnate Christ, who then would be more suited to reveal God's glory?[23]

This is plausible, but Stephen clearly states that this was "an angel" at the burning bush (Acts 7:30, 35) and later he mentions that "an angel" appeared to Moses on Mt. Sinai (Acts 7:38). It is interesting that Stephen did not seem to have a problem with this angel speaking the word of God (vv. 31–34). Also there are other passages that equate "an angel" with "the angel of the LORD" (2 Sam. 24:16–17; 1 Kings 19:5–7; 1 Chron. 21:15–16, 18–20, 27–30) suggesting they are equivalent terms. This is also suggested in 2 Chronicles 32:21 which refers to "an angel" striking down the Assyrian army, but its parallel passage in 2 Kings 19:35 refers to him as the angel of the LORD.

When God sends a message through an angel, he expects the person receiving the angel and his message to obey as though God was speaking the message, and especially when the angel has "God's name" upon him. The classic passage is Exodus 23:20–23 where God says:

> 20 "Behold, I am sending *an angel* before you to guard you on the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared.
> 21 Be careful before him and obey his voice; do not cause him to be bitter, for he will not forgive your transgression, *since My name is in him*.
> 22 But if you indeed obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.
> 23 For *my angel* will go before you and bring you in to [the land of] the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will wipe them out." (emphasis added)

This passage clearly explains God's use of angels to do his work, and the second verse explains that when an angel is standing as God's representative he bears God's authority (or literally, "my

23 López, "Angel of the LORD," 11.

name is in him"). The last verse makes it clear that the angel will lead them to the land, but it will be God that wipes out the Canaanites. Other passages confirm that God will send an angel ahead of them into the Promised Land (Exod. 32:34; 33:2) and Numbers 20:16 also confirms that God's angel will bring them out of Egypt. Thus it is clear from both testaments that God uses angels to communicate with humans and also to accomplish tasks for him.

This seems to be very similar to how messengers were used in the OT: (1) David sends greetings through his messengers to Hanun, but when they were humiliated it was tantamount to declaring war (2 Sam. 10:1–7); (2) Jezebel sent a death sentence to Elijah through a messenger, and he fled for his life (1 Kings 19:2–3); (3) God sent a prophet to pronounce judgment on Ahab, and he went to his house sullen and vexed (1 Kings 20:43); or (4) Elijah sent his servant to heal a sick child, and the servant was to follow his instructions precisely (2 Kings 4:29–31). God even says that he sent prophets and seers to the nation of Israel expecting them to listen, but they did not (2 Kings 17:13). R. Ficker summarizes well the OT understanding of messengers:

> The *mal'ākîm* stand in close relationship to their employers. They are authorized by them to speak or act in their names; through them the employer himself speaks or acts. Consequently, *mal'ākîm* can be identified with him and addressed as if they were the employer himself (Judg. 11:13; 2 Sam. 3:12f.; 1 Kings 20:2ff.); and affront to the *mal'ākîm* is an affront to the employer (1 Sam. 25:14ff.). The employer can also be held accountable for the actions of his *mal'ākîm* (2 Kings 19:23) . . .[24]

Ficker's work deals specifically with messengers in general in the biblical text, but there is no reason to think that it would be any different with Yahweh's messengers.

Meier highlights Ugaritic materials to show that the deities in the ANE have lower-ranking deities to do their bidding, and then he states: "These messenger deities function primarily as links between gods and not between gods and humans; when a major god wishes to communicate with a human, he or she can be expected to make a personal appearance."[25] Therefore Meier argues that the evidence from the ANE does not correspond to the angel of the LORD in the biblical text, but we wonder if Meier is cutting the distinction too fine since the biblical text did not have an equivalent to lower deities and this may be why many of the people who saw the angel of the LORD thought that they had seen God.[26]

Since the word מַלְאַךְ "angel" can also mean "messenger," it is permissible for it to refer also to humans that speak for God, for example, the prophet Haggai (1:13; מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה [LXX ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου]);

24 Ficker, "מַלְאַךְ," 668.

25 Meier, "Angel of Yahweh," 53.

26 Another interesting thing that Meier points out is that in the ANE it is common for the messengers to be named ("Angel of Yahweh," 96–97), but the biblical text may be careful not to record them so that they are not worshipped, as appears to be a problem when angels appear.

priests (Mal. 2:17); and Malachi's name, which means "my messenger." This idea may also be highlighted in the NT for Matthew 8:6–9 records the centurion asking Jesus to heal his servant, and the parallel passage in Luke 7:3–8 says it was the messengers from the centurion that ask Jesus.

There are passages from the ANE[27] and from the biblical text where a prophet or messenger is speaking for their God in first person as if their God was speaking. In the following passage, Isaiah appears to be talking but is giving God's message:

> 8 "But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, offspring of Abraham my beloved,
> 9 You whom I have grasped from the ends of the earth, and called from its corners and said to you, 'You are my servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you.'
> 10 Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. . . .
> 14 Do not fear, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel; I myself will help you," declares the LORD, "and your Redeemer (is) the Holy One of Israel." (Isa. 41:8–14)

That Isaiah is declaring God's message finally becomes clear in v. 14 where it says, "declares the LORD." Micah 6:9–11 is similar where Micah is clearly speaking God's word, but in v. 11 first person speech from God is recorded:

> 9 "The voice of the LORD will call to the city, and sound wisdom (is) to fear your name: 'Hear, O tribe. Who has appointed its time?
> 10 Is there yet a man in the wicked house, (along with) treasures of wickedness and a short measure (that is) cursed?
> 11 Can I justify wicked scales and a bag of deceptive weights?'" (Mic. 6:9–11)

Thus the prophet's words appear to be God's words and if this is the case then it is entirely possible that the angel of the LORD could speak God's words and yet not be God.[28] This would explain those passages where "the angel of the LORD" speaks in first person as though he is the LORD (Gen. 16:10–11; 22:11–12, etc.) and those that even appear to equate them (Gen. 31:11–13; Judg. 2:1–4; 6:11–16), while at the same time, explaining the passages that clearly distinguished them from one another (Exod. 23:20–23; 2 Chron. 32:21; Zech. 1:9–14).

27 See the Akkadian prophecies translated by Robert H. Pfeiffer concerning Esarhaddon where the prophets speak as if their God is speaking (ANET, 449–50). See especially page 450 lines 13–39.

28 See also Micah 1:6-8. James F. Ross argues that a messenger's authority depends upon the one who sent him ("The Prophet as Yahweh's Messenger," in *Prophecy in Israel: Search for an Identity* [ed. David L. Peterson; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987], 114).

If "the angel of the LORD" is an angel with a special commission from God, then those passages that have the angel of the LORD speaking to the LORD make perfect sense (1 Chron. 21:15 and Zech. 1:9–14). If both humans and angels can be messengers for God to speak his authoritative messages, then this would be similar to modern ambassadors that speak or act on the authority of someone else. Ficker believes this explanation: "best accounts for the function of the m.y. as one commissioned to speak and act for God. The difficulty that Yahweh and his mal'āk are sometimes identified no longer exists when one considered that mal'āk can generally be identified with his employer."[29]

This interpretation may also be suggested by the Hebrew grammar. As pointed out above, the most common use of the construct chain is to demonstrate a genitive relationship, but there is some question as to whether the construct chain demands that this phrase be translated as "the angel of the LORD" or "an angel of the LORD." It is most common that the first word (or nomen regens) gets its definiteness from the following word (or the genitive) in a construct chain.[30] However, there are some examples, primarily where the final word is a proper noun, that this may not be the case: Gen. 46:34 "an abomination before the Egyptians;" Deut. 7:25 "an abomination before the LORD"; Deut. 22:19 "a virgin of Israel;" 1 Sam. 4:12 "a man of Benjamin;" etc.[31] Given the LXX translates this phrase 24 times out of 34 without the article may help confirm this interpretation. If this phrase may be indefinite then it is very similar to its counterpart in the NT and generally scholars do not argue that angels in the NT are either Christophanies or Theophanies. It is interesting that "the angel of the LORD" in the OT and "an angel of the Lord" in the NT display similar actions:

OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
1. Proclaim a divine message (Gen. 16:9–11; 22:11–18; Exod. 3:2–22; etc.)	1. Proclaim a divine message (Matt. 1:20; 2:13, 19; Acts 8:26; etc.)
2. Punish for disobedience (Num. 22:22–35; Judg. 5:23; 1 Chron. 21:12–30)	2. Punish for disobedience (Acts 12:23)
3. Do miracles (Judg. 6:21; 13:19–20)	3. Do miracles (John 5:4; Acts 5:19; 12:7)

2. Weaknesses

The primary weakness with this view are passages that seem to equate "the angel of the LORD" with the LORD, but Exodus 23:30–33 may help us understand this issue. It is reasonable that God intended to teach the people that they needed to listen to these messengers as though

29 Ficker, "מַלְאַךְ," 671.

30 GKC, 410–414; *Williams' Hebrew Grammar,* 8, n. 37; etc.

31 GKC, 412 §127.3; Joüon, §139ac. See also: MacDonald, "Christology and 'The Angel of the Lord,'" 330; López, "Identifying the 'Angel of the LORD,'" 2.

God were speaking with them. As sin created a barrier between God and man so that he no longer walked among them and in time they no longer had a prophet par excellence like Moses that heard God speak to him, God needed to make sure that God's people knew when he communicated to them. The angel of the LORD became this means of communication and he needed to make sure that they would listen to him. Thus Exodus 23:30–33 taught them that when this angel spoke, it was tantamount to having God speak to them because he carried God's authority (i.e., "my name is within him"). This idea is enhanced by those passages that seem to equate the angel of the LORD and the LORD—so that the very words that the angel spoke were God's words. This message came through loud and clear as demonstrated by those that claim that they were going to die because they had seen God even though it was merely God's representative. Initially, these messages came through the angel of the LORD, but later they came through God's prophets—either way, the people needed to listen to them as though God was speaking with them.

Conclusions

In the Garden of Eden it does not appear to be a problem for Adam and Eve to see God's image in their unfallen state, namely God's glory would not be detrimental to them. However, this does not appear to be the case after the fall and so Moses was warned that no one could look at God's face and live (Exod. 33:20). Thus angels or "the angel of the LORD" appear to be the new means of communication.

As noted above, each of the main views have strengths and weaknesses, but some passages argue fairly strongly against certain views. The angel of the LORD's response in Judges 13:16 where he refuses the offering but clearly says to offer it "to the LORD" appears to be explained by phrase "for Manoah did not know it was the angel of the LORD." My understanding is that the angel cannot accept an offering intended for the LORD; but if the angel was a self-manifestation of God or an appearance of the pre-incarnate Christ, then there would be little reason why he could not accept it. Also I believe that Exodus 23:20–23 provides the logic as to why an angel can receive the same honor as God since he is standing in the place for God. Thus any disobedience on Israel's part can be punished by him since he is God's representative. This explanation also maintains the one-God framework in the Old Testament for he is God's messenger and not God himself. For these reasons and others noted in the paper I believe that the explanation of an angel with a special commission from God makes the most sense.

The most important lesson to learn from this study is that when God sends a message to someone, whether it be by an angel, a prophet, or even the angel of the LORD, they had better honor and obey that messenger, for God's authority is in them. In the NT, God sent his Holy Spirit to live within us so that we would know when God spoke to us—our job is to listen and obey him for he is the very voice of God speaking into our lives.

Appendix I – Summary of Major Positions

A Self-Manifestation of God	The Pre-incarnate Christ	An Angel with a Special Commission from God
Explanation: God can appear in any number of ways and thus an angel may be another of them.	The only part of the God-head that can be seen is the Son and therefore this may be him.	Possibly in the OT an angel could be sent with a specific message, hence "the angel of the Lord."
Evidence: 1. The angel speaks in first person as if he is God (Gen. 16:10; 18:17–21; 22:12, 15–18; 31:11–13; Judg. 2:1–5; 6:12–16) and is said to be the LORD (Gen. 18:17–21; 31:13; 32:28). 2. The "angel of the Lord" is equated with the "Lord" (Gen. 18:1, 17; 22:15–16; 31:3, 11, 13; 48:15–16; Exod. 3:2, 4; Josh. 5:13–6:2; 6:11–23) or God (Gen. 22:1, 11; 31:13; 32:28). 3. God can manifest himself in many ways: burning bush (Exod. 3:2); a pillar of fire and smoke (Exod. 13:21); a thick cloud (Exod. 19:9, 18). Why not also as "the angel of the Lord"?	1. The angel speaks in first person as if he is God (Gen. 16:10; 18:17–19; 22:12; Judg. 2:1–5) and is called "God" in Gen. 32:28. 2. The angel is called "Lord" (Gen. 16:18; 22:15–16; Exod. 3:2–4; Judg. 6:14, 16, 23) and Christ is the bodily manifestation of God (Jon. 1:18; 14:8–11). 3. 1 Cor. 10:2–4 implies that Christ was in the OT (metaphor). 4. The angel of the Lord never appeared after Christ was born. 5. Divine honor (Josh. 5:15) and possibly sacrifice (Judg. 13:16) were offered him.	1. Exod. 23:20–21 speaks of an angel going before Israel and "my name is in him" (probably meaning "he has my authority"). 2. Some passages appear to make a distinction between God and the angel of the Lord (Gen. 21:12, 17; 24:7, 40; Exod.23:20–23; 32:44–45; 33:2; Num. 22:22; 2 Sam. 24:15–17; 2 Chron. 21:15–27; Zech. 1:10–21). 3. No man has seen God at any time (Jon. 1:18). 4. If the messenger stands in the place and authority of God, he may legitimately use the first person and be referred to as God. 5. NT usages of "the angel of the Lord" appear to indicate angels.

Problems: 1. No man has seen God at any time (Jon. 1:18); however, people have seen God's image or glory (Exod. 33:18–23). 2. Some passages appear to make a distinction between God and "the angel of the Lord" (Gen. 21:12, 17; 24:7, 40; Exod. 23:20–23; 32:44–45; 33:2; Num. 22:22; 2 Sam. 24:15–17; 2 Chron. 21:15–27; Zech. 1:10–21). Is it possible for there to be a distinction between God and his manifestation?	1. Jn. 1:1 says that "the word became flesh," but this phrase would loose most of its significance if Christ already had flesh in the OT. 2. There is no mention or indication that Christ appeared in the OT, which would seem to make his appearance in the NT less significant (Heb. 1:1–2). 3. W. G. MacDonald says, "If Jesus' human history did not originate when he was 'born of woman,' then the docetists [people who believe that Jesus just took on a human form, but was not really God] win the day" (p. 325). 4. Christ is clearly said to be superior to the angels in Heb. 1:4–14, thus the angel of Exod. 32:24–32 must not be Christ. 5. The angel of the Lord may occur in the NT after Christ's birth (Matt. 2:13, 19; 28:2; Luke 2:9; Acts 5:19; 8:26; 12:23; 27:23). The problem with this argument is that the Greek form "an angel of the Lord" may not be equivalent to the Hebrew phrase "the angel of the Lord."	1. The only problem is that the angel of the Lord being called "Lord" or "God," but the messenger formula may take care of it. 2. It is possible that the phrase "the angel of the Lord" does not occur in the N.T. because the messenger formula is no longer prevalent.

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ONE OF THESE KINGS IS NOT LIKE THE OTHER: ECHOES OF GENESIS 14 IN JOSHUA 10

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1. Introduction

Joshua 10:1–15 is famous for its puzzling description of the sun and moon standing still while Israel destroyed their enemies (Josh. 10:12–13). Trying to understand these strange astronomical events has captivated the attention of commentators for good reason.[1] But perhaps fixation on this cosmological quandary has kept interpreters from sufficiently exploring other avenues of interpretation in Joshua 10. In this article, I will explore one of those avenues.[2] I will argue that Joshua 10 echoes Genesis 14—a literary connection, in my view, that has been underappreci-

1 See for example, Daniel Vainstub, Hezi Yizhaq, and Uzi Avner, "The Miracle of the Sun and Moon in Joshua 10 as a Solar Eclipse," *Vetus Testamentum* 70 (220 AD): 722–51; Gordon Oeste, "'A Day Like No Other' In The Context Of Yahweh War: Joshua 10:14 And The Characterization Of Joshua," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 57, no. 4 (2014): 689–702; Bill Tackmier, "A Theological, Literary, and Historical Analysis of Joshua 10:1-14," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 114, no. 2 (2017): 83–92; R.D. Wilson, "Understanding 'the Sun Stood Still,'" in *Classical Evangelical Essays in Old Testament Interpretation*, ed. Walter C. Kaiser (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972), 61–65; John S. Holladay, "The Day(s) the Moon Stood Still," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 87, no. 2 (1968): 166–78; Baruch Margalit, "The Day the Sun Did Not Stand Still: A New Look at Joshua X 8–15," *Vetus Testamentum* 42, no. 4 (1992): 466–91.

2 While my purpose is not to focus on the details about the sun and moon standing still, I will briefly suggest how my argument helps inform the meaning of Joshua 10:12–14 in the course of this article. For historical and geographical analysis of Joshua 10, see John D. Currid, "Echoes of Egypt and the Exodus in the Battle of the Five Kings (Joshua 10:10–15)," in *The Law, The Prophets, and The Writings: Studies in Evangelical Old Testament Hermeneutics in Honor of Duane A. Garrett*, ed. Andrew M. King, Joshua M. Philpot, and William R. Osborne (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2021), 172–76.

ated in commentaries and scholarly literature.[3] More specifically, I contend that Joshua's war with Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem, and his coalition of kings echoes the narrative of Genesis 14 which describes Abraham's[4] war with kings and his encounter with Melchizedek, king of Salem.[5] In arguing for this literary connection, I am not denying that Joshua 10 (and Joshua as a whole) depends more heavily on the story of the Exodus where Yahweh fights on Israel's behalf to deliver them from bondage (Exod. 14:14).[6] Yet even Yahweh's overthrow of Pharaoh and his armies is an instantiation of a theme that began with Melchizedek's commentary on Abraham's military success: God Most High delivered Abraham's enemies into his hand (Gen. 14:20).

Scholars have recognized some level of connection between Joshua 10 and Genesis 14, though most simply point out the similarities between the names and jurisdictions of Melchizedek king of Salem and Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem.[7] But should we limit the literary connection

3 Beale notes that some scholars distinguish between echoes and allusions suggesting an echo is not as clear a reference to an earlier text as an allusion. I have chosen to use the word "echo" to acknowledge that Joshua 10's dependence on Genesis 14 is not as clear as some other allusions in the Bible. Beale, however, observes that the distinction between "echo" and "allusion" may not be that helpful. See G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 32. I will use terms like "echo," "evoke," and "allude" in this paper to indicate that some of the narrative details of Joshua 10 intentionally call to mind the narrative events of Genesis 14 for theological purposes. The points of contact between Joshua 10 and Genesis 14 that I present below are enough to satisfy—to varying degrees—Richard Hays' criteria for validating the presence of an allusion (he prefers the term "echo"). Hays discusses these criteria with regard to the NT use of the OT, but the principles are the same for the OT use of the OT. See Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 29–32. Bryan Estelle has a helpful discussion for determining literary connections in Bryan D. Estelle, *Echoes of Exodus: Tracing a Biblical Motif* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 28–30.

4 In Genesis 14, Abraham is still referred to as Abram. For the sake of simplicity, I will use the name Abraham throughout this article unless quoting directly from Genesis 14 or another scholar.

5 Though Melchizedek's name appears only in Genesis 14:18 and Psalm 110:4, I agree with Joshua Mathews who has written, "Psalm 110 is not the only place beyond the Pentateuch where we find verbal echoes of Melchizedek and his royal priestly order. It just happens to be the only place where he is mentioned by name." Joshua G. Mathews, *Melchizedek's Alternative Priestly Order: A Compositional Analysis of Genesis 14:18-20 and Its Echoes throughout the Tanak*, Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplements, vol. 8 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 121.

6 Currid says, "The dependence of the book of Joshua on the book of Exodus is obvious, and it occurs on many levels. The reliance is structural, thematic, and linguistic. In particular, the account of the Exodus out of Egypt simply reverberates into the conquest narratives; it is what Robert Alter calls 'a kind of recurrent stammer in the process of transmission.'" Currid, "Echoes of Egypt and the Exodus in the Battle of the Five Kings (Joshua 10:10–15)," 185. For a brief discussion of the new Exodus theme in Joshua, see Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2003), 127–28.

7 The following resources acknowledge Joshua 10 has some level of connection to Melchizedek and Genesis 14: Tackmier, "A Theological, Literary, and Historical Analysis of Joshua 10," 83; Mathews, *Melchizedek's Alternative Priestly Order*, 117; A. Graeme Auld, *Joshua: Jesus Son of Nauē in Codex Vaticanus*, Septuagint Commentary Series (Boston: Brill, 2005), 159; Thomas B. Dozeman, *Joshua 1-12:*

between these two chapters to the similar names of two kings ruling the same territory? Is this merely a historical coincidence? Or do these two kings and their respective jurisdictions signal to the reader that Joshua 10 intends to situate Joshua's battles within the larger framework of God's covenant promises to Abraham, and if so, how does it shape our understanding not only of Joshua 10, but the theology of the conquest narrative as a whole?

Some critical approaches to Joshua suppose the reference to Adoni-zedek in Joshua 10 intends to contest the positive view of Jerusalem's non-Israelite origin that we find in Genesis 14:17–20 and Psalm 110. Dozeman, in his commentary, appeals to Knauf's suggestion that "the MT of Josh 10 reflects an anti-Jerusalem point of view by fashioning a polemical story against the royal theology associated with Melchizedek."[8] In other words, Genesis 14 is pro-Jerusalem while Joshua 10 intends to undermine Jerusalem and its political monarchy. Instead of assuming that Joshua 10 and Genesis 14 present competing perspectives on Jerusalem and its political landscape, my analysis will follow a redemptive-historical line of interpretation that assumes the biblical authors crafted their narratives to develop the theological themes in earlier biblical texts in a way that is consistent with the intentions of those earlier biblical texts.

My thesis is that Joshua 10:1–15 evokes Genesis 14 to reinforce the legitimacy of Joshua's holy war against Canaan as the outworking of God's covenant promises to Abraham, and in so doing heightens the expectation that the blessing of Abraham will come through the conquest of kings and rulers of the earth. To defend this thesis, I will first give a brief interpretation of Genesis 14 in its own context. Second, I will establish the theological and textual warrant for reading Joshua 10 in light of Genesis 14. Third, I will explain the interpretive significance of this study for understanding Joshua 10 and larger themes in the book of Joshua. Lastly, I will consider Psalm 110 to demonstrate how David may have read Genesis 14 and Joshua in tandem to articulate his own messianic expectation.

2. Genesis 14: Abraham's War with Kings and Encounter with Melchizedek

Genesis 14 begins with a description of a battle between two coalitions of kings (Gen. 14:1–12). Chedorlaomer king of Elam ruled over five kings for 12 years, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled against Chedorlaomer causing Chedorlaomer to form an alliance with three other kings to overpower the rebellion—four kings led by Chedorlaomer against five kings (Gen. 14:9).

A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, vol. 6b, The Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 428, 448; Richard D. Nelson, *Joshua: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 140; J. Gordon McConville and Stephen N. Williams, *Joshua*, The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 51–52.

8 Dozeman, *Joshua 1-12*, 6b:448.

Chedorlaomer and his army sweep through the land, crush the rebellion, and conquer the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah taking Abraham's nephew Lot captive (Gen. 14:12). While dwelling among the Amorites, Abraham learns of his nephew's captivity, prompting him to lead 318 of his trained men in a rescue operation. Abraham divided his forces by night, defeated Chedorlaomer's armies, and rescued Lot and the other captives.

The second half of Genesis 14 records Abraham's encounter with two different kings representing two different types of kingdoms. Abraham first meets Melchizedek, king of Salem, who blesses Abraham by God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth and acknowledges that Abraham's victory came from God (Gen. 14:19–20). Melchizedekian kingship is servant-kingship, grounded in the sovereignty of God as the creator of heaven and earth. Melchizedek gives Abraham bread and wine, and Abraham pays Melchizedek a tithe (Gen. 14:18, 20).

Abraham's next encounter is with the king of Sodom who meets Abraham not with a blessing but with a bargain. The King of Sodom offers Abraham the spoils of war but wants the persons for himself. Sodom's king represents worldly kingship that clamors for power at the expense of others. Abraham refuses the King of Sodom's request and instead aligns himself with Jerusalem's king Melchizedek and with Melchizedek's God (Gen. 14:22).

The lengthy description of the battle between kings of ancient city-states may seem unnecessary and even out of place in the Genesis narrative, but the discussion of these political and military activities in Genesis 14:1–11 sets up the significance of Abraham's actions in the rest of the chapter. Abraham's defeat of Chedorlaomer's alliance means that Abraham is, as Alexander writes, "no ordinary semi-pastoralist. His military exploits place him on par with kings."[9] At a time when Abraham could have used his political and military momentum to create alliances with rulers of Canaanite city-states and thereby obtain possessions and land, he refused the offer from the king of Sodom. By rejecting any alliance with the king of Sodom, Abraham indicated, according to Alexander, "his own commitment to be a righteous priest-king."[10] Abraham's statement of faith in the God of Melchizedek—God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth—revealed Abraham's resolve to receive the covenant promises by faith (Gen. 14:22–23; cf. Gen. 15:1).[11]

9 T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2009), 82. Wenham similarly writes, "In these scenes Abram is portrayed not merely as the archetypal Israelite who has faith in God, but as a conquering king who has been promised victory over his foes and a great territory." Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, ed. John D. W. Watts, vol. 1, WBC (Waco: TX: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 335.

10 Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 82.

11 McConville helpfully summarizes the meaning of Abraham's actions: "In the gift and the polite refusal, therefore, Abram shows how he will possess the land; he will receive it as a gift. . . . Perhaps we can say that Abram learns this, or relearns it, in the encounter with Melchizedek, for this is implied in the suggestion that the one encounter bears upon the other. Yet he is not a bland receiver of the doctrine, for in assimilating it he re-expresses, now for the benefit of the King of Sodom (v. 22), his own faith in the God, Yahweh, who has promised him land and posterity. The priest-king

A handful of these themes will prove significant in the interpretation of Joshua 10 below. First, Genesis 14 implies that the blessing of Abraham will come to pass in a fallen world through the conquest of kings opposed to God's redemptive purposes. There are Pharaohs in Egypt and there are Chedorlaomer-like kings from the east invading Canaan. The city of man opposes the city of God. If Abraham's offspring is to inherit the land of Canaan, they will first need to cleanse the land of forces of evil. God's redemptive purpose will happen through a holy war. Those associated with Abraham, like Lot, will experience God's blessing; those who oppose Abraham will be cursed (Gen. 12:3).

Second, Melchizedek's blessing clearly identifies the source of Abraham's military success: God Most High gave Abraham the victory in battle. Abraham and his seed must look to God for help when their enemies oppose them. God is a warrior; he fights for his people; he gives their enemies into their hands (Gen. 14:20; Josh. 10:8).

Third, as early as Genesis 14 in the biblical narrative, we learn what kind of kingship should characterize Jerusalem's throne. Melchizedek's kingship harkens back to God's original design for Adam to be a priest-king in the garden.[12] Alexander refers to Melchizedek's kingship as "divinely instituted" in that "it seeks to re-establish God's sovereignty on the earth in line with the divine mandate given to human beings when first created."[13] Jerusalem's royal theology in the days of Abraham also anticipates the kind of kingship that would characterize the Davidic monarchy (cf. Ps. 110).

Lastly, Abraham lived in Canaan during a time when evil was present, but not yet ripe enough to uproot. Abraham dwelt peacefully among the Amorites, and a righteous priest-king ruled the Canaanite city of Salem. After Abraham's military success, God informed Abraham that his descendants would possess the land only when the iniquity of the Amorites was complete (Gen. 15:13–16). If Genesis 14 implies that Abraham could have led his own conquest to take the promised land, Genesis 15 clarifies the reason for the delay. God will first bring Abraham's descendants to Egypt, lead them out in the fourth generation, and bring them back to the land when the iniquity of the Amorites warrants their expulsion (cf. Deut. 9:4–5).[14]

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of Salem knows that it is the Most High, the Maker of heaven and earth, who alone can give; but Abram knows that this is none other than Yahweh." J. Gordon McConville, "Abram and Melchizedek: Horizons in Genesis 14," in *He Swore an Oath: Biblical Themes from Genesis 12–50*, ed. R. S. Hess, G. J. Wenham, and P. E. Satterthwaite (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1994), 115. Alexander draws a similar conclusion: "Abraham will not inherit the earth through the use of aggressive military power, although clearly his defeat of the eastern kings indicates he has the capacity to do so. Rather, he looks to God to provide for his future well-being." Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 82.

12 See my discussion in Matthew H. Emadi, *The Royal Priest: Psalm 110 in Biblical Theology*, ed. D. A. Carson, New Studies in Biblical Theology 61 (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2022), 43–49.

13 Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 82.

14 Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 160.

Textual Warrant for Reading Joshua 10 in Light of Genesis 14

Joshua and the Abrahamic Covenant

Before looking at the thematic and linguistic points of contact between Joshua 10 and Genesis 14, it is important to note that the book of Joshua presents Joshua's conquest of Canaan as the fulfillment of the land promise to Abraham.[15] The book opens with the Lord commanding Joshua to go into the land promised to Moses (Josh. 1:3) and to the patriarchs (Josh. 1:6), shaping the rest of the narrative against the backdrop of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:18–20; 17:8; 22:17).[16] Koorevar has shown that the structure of the whole book depends on four prominent verbs describing Israel's occupation of the land:[17]

1. In Joshua 1–5, Israel must "pass over" (עָבַר) the Jordan to enter the land.
2. In Joshua 6–11, Israel must "take" (לָקַח) the land.
3. In Joshua 12–12, the land is "divided" (חָלַק)
4. In Joshua 23–24, Israel must "serve" (עָבַד) Yahweh in the land.

Other aspects of God's promises to Abraham surface in the narrative including God's promise to bless those who bless Abraham and curse those who curse him. Rahab, a Canaanite prostitute, and her household receive Joshua's salvation because she hid the spies and aligned herself with Israel (Josh. 2:1–24; 6:25).[18] Evil kings, on the other hand, are placed under a curse symbolically portrayed at various points in the narrative when Joshua hangs their dead bodies on trees (Josh 8:29; 10:26; cf. Deut. 21:22–23). Even the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant occupies a pivotal point in the narrative when Israel is about to cross over the Jordan to enter the land. Before they can cross over, the Lord first commands Joshua to have all the men of Israel circumcised (Josh. 5:1–8). If they are going to receive the promises of the Abrahamic covenant, they must possess the sign of the Abrahamic covenant (cf. Gen. 17:11). What God promised to Abraham and the patriarchs, he fulfilled through Joshua, a point made emphatically clear in Joshua 21:43–45:

Thus the Lord gave to Israel all the land *that he swore to give to their fathers*. And they took possession of it, and they settled there. And the Lord gave them rest on every side *just as he*

15 Schreiner says that the book of Joshua describes how the land promise to Abraham is fulfilled. See Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 107. See also Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 244; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 127.

16 The description of the land in Joshua 1:4 alludes to God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:18 (cf. Exod. 23:31).

17 Hendrik Koorevaar, *De Opbouw van Het Boek Jozua* (Heverlee: Centrum voor Bijbelse Vorming Beljie, 1990). See also J. Gordon McConville, *Grace in the End: A Study in Deuteronomic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 1993), 101–102; See also Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty*, 107.

18 The Gibeonites receive similar blessing because of the covenant they make with Israel.

had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the Lord had given all their enemies into their hands. Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass. (Joshua 21:43–45, ESV, emphasis mine)

If the Abrahamic covenant is, in part, the "interpretive and theological grid" through which we are to read Joshua, then it seems likely that the author of Joshua would allude to the one narrative in Genesis where Abraham conquers kings, thereby reinforcing the legitimacy of Israel's holy war and further situating the conquest in its covenantal and redemptive context.[19]

Textual Evidence for Historical Correspondence Between Joshua 10 and Genesis 14

My analysis in this section follows Hamilton's definition of typological interpretation:

> "Typological Interpretation establishes historical correspondence on the basis of linguistic points of contact (i.e., the re-use of significant terms), quotations, repeated sequence of events, and similarities in salvation historical significance and covenantal context. As these features are discerned in the text, interpreters detect author-intended parallels between people, events, and institutions, and they have textual warrant to perceive a growing significance in the repeated patterns."[20]

Using Hamilton's criteria for establishing historical correspondence, the following seven points of contact between Joshua 10 and Genesis 14 seem sufficient to demonstrate that Joshua's battle with Adoni-zedek echoes the narrative of Genesis 14.[21]

19 Sam Emadi helpfully comments on the importance of covenants for understanding OT historical narratives: "Readers often understand the full significance of a character's actions only in the light of covenant stipulations and promises laid out elsewhere in the Old Testament. Covenants, thus, provide the inner-biblical interpretive and theological grid needed to evaluate historical narratives. Reading Old Testament history according to covenantal unfolding and context reveals the deeper, theological significance that often goes unstated in narrative." Samuel Emadi, *From Prisoner to Prince: The Joseph Story in Biblical Theology*, ed. D. A. Carson, vol. 59, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2022), 28.

20 James M. Hamilton Jr., *Typology-Understanding the Bible's Promise-Shaped Patterns: How Old Testament Expectations Are Fulfilled in Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2022), 27. He also writes, "Later biblical authors assume earlier Scripture as the wider context against which they intended their writings to be understood." Hamilton Jr., 18–19.

21 In addition to the data presented in this section, it is possible that other points of contact exist between the two chapters. In particular, after Abraham's successful defeat of the kings, the Lord summons Abraham to forsake any fear of retribution from his enemies. With the possibility that the powerful Eastern kings might reform their army and come after Abraham, God tells Abraham in Genesis 15:1, "Do not fear" (אַל־תִּירָא) because the Lord himself promises to be Abraham's shield and to give him great reward (Gen. 15:1). On the cusp of battle with the five kings of the Amorites, the Lord commands Joshua, "Do not fear (אַל־תִּירָא) them, for I have given them into your hands" (Josh. 10:8, ESV). Furthermore, after Abraham rescues Lot, the text say that Abraham "returned" (שׁוּב) all the possessions and also Lot his kinsman (Gen. 14:16). After Joshua's victory over the Amorite kings, he "returned" (שׁוּב) with all of Israel to the camp at Gilgal (Josh 10:15). In both cases, the main character

First, Joshua 10:1 introduces Adoni-zedek (אֲדֹנִי־צֶדֶק), king of Jerusalem (מֶלֶךְ יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ִם).[22] As already mentioned, Adoni-zedek's name and kingship over Jerusalem recalls Melchizedek (מַלְכִּי־צֶדֶק), the king of Salem (מֶלֶךְ שָׁלֵם) (Gen. 14:18).

Genesis 14:18: מַלְכִּי־צֶדֶק מֶלֶךְ שָׁלֵם

Joshua 10:1: אֲדֹנִי־צֶדֶק מֶלֶךְ יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ִם

Adoni-zedek's name is, as Mathews observes, "identical in its construction to Melchizedek's."[23] Both are kings of "righteousness" by name, though only one is righteous in practice.

Second, both kings—Adoni-zedek and Melchizedek—governed the same city, or at least two cities that were clearly linked in the biblical record.[24] Psalm 76:2 (MT 76:3) identifies Salem with Zion (Jerusalem), the city of the Davidic king:

> His abode has been established in Salem,
> his dwelling place in Zion. (Ps. 72:6, ESV)

Placing them in poetic parallel structure, Psalm 72:6 equates Salem with Zion. Even though Joshua 10:1 is the first mention of Jerusalem in the Old Testament, its appearance in connection with a king having צֶדֶק in his name draws the reader's mind back to Genesis 14 and Melchizedek's city of Salem. Melchizedek's (Jeru)Salem is Adoni-zedek's Jerusalem.

Third, the name "Salem" (שָׁלֵם) in Hebrew means peace. Melchizedek is, as the author of Hebrews says, the "king of peace" (Heb. 7:2). Peace plays a defining role in Adoni-zedek's kingship as well. Adoni-zedek, however, is not at peace with Israel. His military exploits against Gibeon were due to the fact Israel made "peace" (שָׁלֵם) with Gibeon—a fact repeated twice in the first four verses of Joshua 10 (Josh. 10:1, 4). Adoni-zedek is an anti-Melchizedek in the narrative. As we will see below, the nature of Adoni-zedek's kingship is not the kind of kingship that should characterize Jerusalem's throne.

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returns from war with his kinfolk in victory.

22 The LXX has Αδωνιβεζεκ (Adoni-bezek) rather than Adoni-zedek. The LXX was likely assimilating to Judges 1:7, though scholars debate the issue. Dozeman's comment is helpful with respect to the thesis of this paper: "Whether original or not, the MT version recalls the priest of El-Elyon, Melchizedek of Salem, who blesses Abram (Gen 14:17–20) and reappears in a royal psalm of David in which the king receives the divine oath, 'You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek' (Ps 110:4)." Dozeman, *Joshua 1-12*, 6b:448. I do not think Joshua 10:1–15 and Judges 1:1–10 refer to the same battle because Judges 1:1 indicates that the events of Judges 1:1ff took place after the death of Joshua.

23 Mathews, *Melchizedek's Alternative Priestly Order*, 117.

24 Mathews suggests that the association between Salem and Jerusalem "does not depend on a geographical identification of Salem with Jerusalem. Rather, what can be affirmed is that there is at least a verbal link between the two names." Mathews, 117.

Fourth, when Adoni-zedek hears about Joshua's defeat of Ai and Israel's covenant with Gibeon, he forms an alliance with four other Amorite kings to attack Gibeon (Josh. 10:3–5), prompting Joshua to come to the defense of the Gibeonites.[25] Joshua's war against these "five kings of the Amorites" recalls the events of Genesis 14 where Chedorlaomer formed an alliance with three kings from the East to fight against five kings (Gen. 14:9). Prior to the book of Joshua, Genesis 14 is the only narrative that describes a holy war against a coalition of kings. The fact that the events of Joshua 10 specifically involve five kings, a numeric detail mentioned five times in the narrative (Josh. 10:5, 16, 17, 22, 23), makes the allusion to Genesis 14 more likely (cf. Gen. 14:9).

Fifth, the descriptions of the military campaigns in Genesis 14 and Joshua 10 share some similarities. Abraham divided his forces at "night" (לַיְלָה) and "struck" (נָכָה) Lot's captors and "pursued" (רָדַף) them (Gen. 14:15). Joshua attacked his enemies after they went up "all night" (כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה) from Gilgal (Josh. 10:9). During the battle, the Lord threw Israel's enemies into a panic and then "struck" (נָכָה) them at Gibeon, and "pursued" (רָדַף) them, and "struck" (נָכָה) them again as far as Azekah and Makkedah (Josh. 10:10).[26] What Abraham did to his enemies in Genesis 14:14–15, the Lord did to Joshua's in Joshua 10:10.

Sixth, at a thematic level, Abraham's war with kings and Joshua's war with Adoni-zedek's unholy alliance both began as an effort to help a third party. In Genesis 14, Abraham springs into action against Chedorlaomer's army on behalf of his nephew Lot. Abraham's war is a rescue operation. Similarly, Joshua wages war against Adoni-zedek's forces on behalf of the Gibeonites.[27] In Genesis 14, the promise to Abraham that he would be a blessing began to work itself out in Abraham's rescue of Lot. In Joshua 10, the Canaanite Gibeonites appeal to an offspring of Abraham for their salvation. The Abrahamic promise is at work in both narratives: Abraham's kinsman Lot and the nations (Gibeonites) are blessed through Abraham and his offspring.

25 McConville and Williams note that "kings find new prominence" in Joshua 10. McConville and Williams, *Joshua*, 51. On the identification of the Amorites, Tackmier suggests that "Amorite" was sometimes used in a broad sense to refer to Canaanites in general and sometimes used in a narrow sense to refer to the Canaanites living in the hill country. Tackmier, "A Theological, Literary, and Historical Analysis of Joshua 10," 85.

26 Yahweh is the subject of the third person masculine singular verbs, not Israel. For a defense of this reading, see David M. Howard Jr., *Joshua: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, vol. 5, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 237; Dale Ralph Davis, *Joshua: No Falling Words*, Focus on the Bible (United Kingdom: Christian Focus, 2000), 87.

27 The Gibeonites originally deceived Joshua and Israel by bringing old bread and empty wineskins to convince Joshua that they had been on a lengthy journey. Their deception works as Joshua makes peace with them and a covenant with them (Josh 9:11–15). Though their elements of bread and wineskins are used for deception, they may serve as another subtle echo to the Melchizedek narrative. Melchizedek, the king of peace, brought bread and wine to Abraham after his victory over the kings. The Gibeonites come to Joshua with similar elements and receive peace from Abraham's offspring.

Lastly, the Lord's promise to defeat Joshua's enemies recalls Melchizedek's ascription of praise to God for giving Abraham victory in battle:

Genesis 14:20a: And blessed be God Most High who has delivered (מִגֵּן) your enemies into your hand (בְּיָדֶךָ)

Joshua 10:8a: And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have given them (נְתַתִּים) into your hand (בְּיָדֶךָ)."

Yahweh's promise to Joshua functions as the answer to the Gibeonites appeal for help in verse 6: "Do not loosen your hand (יָדֶיךָ) from your servants!" Joshua later reaffirms the Lord's promise to the people in Joshua 10:19 "for Yahweh your God has given them (נְתָנָם) into your hand (בְּיֶדְכֶם)." Melchizedek's statement in Genesis 14:20 is the first time the Old Testament explicitly attributes military victory to God—a theme that gets developed in the Exodus and the conquest.

Parallels between Genesis 14 and Joshua 10

Genesis 14	**Joshua 10**
Melchizedek (מַלְכִּי־צֶדֶק)	Adoni-zedek (אֲדֹנִי־צֶדֶק)
Melchizedek is "king of Salem" (מֶלֶךְ שָׁלֵם)	Adoni-zedek is "king of Jerusalem" (מֶלֶךְ יְרוּ־שָׁלַ֫͏ִם)
Melchizedek is king of peace (שָׁלֵם) who blesses Abraham	Adoni-zedek is afraid because Gibeon made peace (שָׁלֵם) with Israel (Josh. 10:1, 4)
A battle of four kings against five kings and Abraham's defeat of four kings who conquered the Amorites (Gen. 14:1–16)	Joshua's war with "five kings" of the Amorites (Josh. 10:5, 16, 17, 22, 23)
Abraham divided his forces by "night" (לַיְלָה) and "struck" (נָכָה) his enemies and "pursued" (רָדַף) them (Gen. 14:15).	Joshua travels all night (כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה) and the Lord "struck" (נָכָה, x2) Israel's enemies and "pursued" (רָדַף) them (Josh 10:10).
Abraham goes to war to rescue his nephew Lot (Gen. 14:12–16)	Joshua goes to war to rescue Gibeon (Josh. 10:1–15)
God gave Abraham's enemies into his hand (Gen. 14:20)	God promised to deliver Joshua's enemies into his hand (Josh. 10:8)

The points of contact between Joshua 10 and Genesis 14 seem strong enough to suggest that Joshua 10 intentionally evokes the narrative of Genesis 14 in its description of Joshua's defeat of Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem, and his coalition of Amorite kings. But what exactly is the interpretive payoff?

Interpretive Significance

Reading Joshua 10 in light of Genesis 14 adds a level of theological depth and covenantal context to the interpretation of Joshua's war with Jerusalem's king and his unholy alliance. First, by evoking Abraham's war with kings and his encounter with Melchizedek, Joshua 10 functions as an apologetic for Joshua's holy war against the people of Canaan. It is not just God's promise to the patriarchs that gives Joshua the right to conquer the Canaanites, it is the fact that the iniquity of Canaanites has matured making them the objects of God's just judgment. Part of Adoni-zedek's role in the narrative is to show the reader the moral degradation of the Canaanite civilization since the days of Abraham. When Joshua moved his army south, he encountered Adoni-zedek, a man opposed to the true and living God despite the fact that his name means "my lord is righteous."[28] Unlike Abraham, Joshua was not greeted by a righteous king from Jerusalem. There is no Melchizedek-like king to offer Israel a covenant meal around a table of peace, but an evil counterpart named Adoni-zedek who opposes peace and opposes Israel.

Adoni-zedek's coalition of Amorite kings is a stark contrast to the friendly alliance Abraham once enjoyed with the Amorite people (Gen. 14:13, 24). The Amorites are no longer friendly to Abraham, instead they are at war with his seed. Abraham went to war with Chedorlaomer who conquered both Amalekites and Amorites (Gen. 14:7). Joshua, however, fought with the kings of the Amorites led by Jerusalem's Adoni-zedek. Old alliances are dead. Jerusalem's king in Joshua 10 is more like Chedorlaomer than Melchizedek. Israel's archenemy is not outside of Jerusalem but within. What once delayed the fulfillment of the land promise—the incompleteness of the iniquity of the Amorites (Gen. 15:16)—no longer stands in the way. Their iniquity is now complete.[29]

Second, as already noted, both Abraham's rescue of Lot and Joshua's rescue of the Gibeonites are the outworking of the Abrahamic promise (cf. Gen. 12:3). Whether or not the Gibeonites are brought fully into the covenant community of Israel is up for debate, but regardless, their deliverance is a picture of the kind of blessing that comes to those who seek salvation in Abraham's seed. Their cry for help is quite explicit: "Come up to us in haste! Save us and help us!" (Josh. 10:6b). Salvation is what every nation loyal to the offspring of Abraham will receive. Just as Abraham rescued Lot and crushed worldly powers; so too does Joshua save Gibeonite Canaanites from an equally threatening army by executing judgment on evil kings and rulers of the earth. Genesis 14 and Joshua 10 together contribute a level of nuance to the nature of the blessing of Abraham. God's blessing to the nations will require the conquest of evil.

28 Tackmier suggests Adoni-zedek's name probably refers to Baal or El, the supreme deity of the Canaanites. Tackmier, "A Theological, Literary, and Historical Analysis of Joshua 10," 83.

29 Warren Gage writes, "Such was the measure of Joshua's justice for the Canaanite royalty, once the cup of the iniquity of the Amorite was full (Gen 15:16)." Warren Austin Gage, *Gospel Typology in Joshua and Revelation: A Whore and Her Scarlet, Seven Trumpets Sound, A Great City Falls* (Fort Lauderdale, FL: St. Andrews House, 2013). Exported from Logos Bible Software May 22, 2023.

Third, Genesis 14 and Joshua 10 identify God as the source of military success. Genesis 14 is the first mention of war (מִלְחָמָה) in the biblical storyline.[30] In a Genesis 3 world, nations rage against each other and against God's people. God's solution to the curse of Genesis 3 and the hostility of warring kings is his promise to Abraham.[31] Abraham defeated his enemies even when the odds were stacked against him (Abraham had only 318 men for battle). Melchizedek's blessing revealed how Abraham achieved such an unlikely victory: "And blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand" (Gen. 14:20, ESV). Melchizedek's blessing is the theological interpretation of the Bible's first recorded battle and sets a trajectory for what will become repeated pattern in Israel's history—God fights for his people (Exod. 14:14; Deut. 1:30; 3:22; 20:4; 2 Chron. 20:15, 29; Neh. 4:20).

Joshua 10 illustrates the truth of Melchizedek's blessing and the divine warrior theme prominent in the book of Exodus. Joshua 10:10–14 describes the battle with terminology that evokes the book of Exodus.[32] "Panic" (הָמַם), "struck" (נָכָה), "pursue" (רָדַף), "fled" (נוּס), and "hurl" (שָׁלַךְ) are all significant terms in the Exodus narrative.[33] The stones from heaven echo the seventh plague where God rained down hail on Egypt striking down everything in the field, including both man and beast (Exod. 9:25). The description of the sun standing still is probably part of this Exodus pattern as well. The sun stood still not to prolong daylight, but to extend the darkness echoing God's ninth plague on Egypt when he blotted out the light of the sun (Exod. 10:21–29).[34] My point here is that Abraham's holy war in Genesis 14 is an initial manifestation of the divine warrior theme that gets developed in the Exodus, the conquest, and later revelation—"Yahweh is a man of war, Yahweh is his name" (Exod. 15:3; cf. Exod. 14:14).

Lastly, the similarities between Joshua and Abraham and their respective battles invite the reader to draw comparisons between these two significant figures. Joshua's military victories over the kings in Canaan, like Abraham's before him, place him on par with kings. The five kings of the Amorites in Joshua 10 flee from Joshua and hide themselves in a cave at Makkedah (Josh. 10:16). After removing them from the cave, Joshua summoned Israel's leaders to stomp the necks

30 Matthew Albanese pointed out this interesting observation in a personal conversation.

31 Hamilton has argued that the promises given to Abraham in Genesis 12:1–3 answer the curses of Genesis 3:14–19. James M. Hamilton, "The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham," *Tyn-Bul* 58, no. 2 (2007): 253–73.

32 See Currid, "Echoes of Egypt and the Exodus in the Battle of the Five Kings (Joshua 10:10–15)," 177–85.

33 Exod. 1:22; 3:20; 4:3; 7:9, 10, 12, 17; 8:12; 12:29; 14:8, 9, 23, 24, 25, 27; 15:9; 23:27.

34 For arguments that Joshua 10:12–13 refers to prolonging darkness, see Davis, *Joshua*, 88–90. For a brief survey of various interpretations of the sun standing still see Richard S. Hess, *Joshua: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 6, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008), 216–18; Kenneth A. Mathews, *Joshua*, Teach the Text Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016), 92–95.

of their enemies (Josh. 10:24), a graphic illustration of the promise of Genesis 3:15 and an echo to Jacob's prophecy about the future king from Judah's line:[35]

Genesis 3:15	Genesis 49:8	Joshua 10:24b
I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. (ESV)	Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck (עֹרֶף) of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you. (ESV)	"Come near; put your feet on the necks of these kings." Then they came near and put their feet on their necks (צַוָּאר). (ESV)

Though Joshua does not hold the office of kingship, his leadership, actions, and responsibilities depict him as a kind of kingly figure leading Israel's armies.[36] His success is, in fact, contingent on meditation on Torah, and obeying Torah (Josh. 1:7–8), the same duties Moses prescribed for Israel's future king in Deuteronomy 17:18–20.

Like Abraham, Joshua also takes on the role of a *priestly* ruler. In the narrative flow from Genesis to the book of Joshua, the conquest of Canaan is a type of re-entry into Eden.[37] Before the battle of Jericho, Joshua encounters an angel wielding a sword (Josh. 5:13–15)—a clear allusion to the fiery sword that barred access to Eden after Adam's sin (Gen. 3:24).[38] Like Moses at the burning bush, Joshua removes his sandals because the ground is holy (Josh. 5:15; cf. Exod. 3:1–5). Joshua's commission, in part, is to lead Israel back into sacred space, the place where God will dwell with his people (cf. Josh. 18:1).

If Adoni-zedek functions as a literary foil to Melchizedek (Jerusalem's priest-king), then perhaps the narrative of Joshua 10 insinuates that Jerusalem in Joshua's day needed the kind of

35 Not all echoes require the use of the same terms. Different terms for "neck" are used in Gen. 49:8 and Josh. 10:24.

36 Hamilton suggests that Joshua led the people in "royal ways." He writes, "Joshua is not a king, but kings are interpreted in light of what he did and presented in terms that recall the way he led Israel." Hamilton continues with this quote from Dale Allison: "Allison comments, 'if, as appears, Joshua himself is intended to be 'the prototype of the ideal king of Israel,' . . . , it follows that Moses is, so to speak, the model for the model of the king. That is, Moses, as Joshua's type, is implicitly the prototype of Israel's (or Judah's) ruler. The author of Joshua made his hero the standard of kingship by, among other things, indelibly stamping Moses' shape upon him.'" Hamilton Jr., *Typology-Understanding the Bible's Promise-Shaped Patterns*, 119. See Dale C. Allison Jr., *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 127.

37 Dempster says the land is a new Eden, "the place from which a new restoration of the pristine conditions of the entire creation can commence." Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 127–28. Mathews similarly says that Eden is the "theological prototype" for the land of Canaan. Mathews, *Joshua*, 6.

38 Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 128.

kingship it had during the reign of Melchizedek—righteous kingship that is subservient to God and blesses the offspring of Abraham. The irony inherent in Adoni-zedek's name as the ruler of Jerusalem is surely significant. As McConville and Williams comment:

The assertion contained in the name Adonizedek is ultimately true of Yahweh according to the narrative, and that narrative is leading us to a time when Yahweh would be recognized as God in Jerusalem and when he would call kings to act righteously there (cf. 2 Sam. 8:15). Adonizedek, therefore, points to a goal of the story well beyond himself, while in the meantime he stands in defiant opposition to it. The irony points up well the nature of the conflict: who has the right to claim the mantle of righteousness, and who rules truly in the land?"[39]

Righteousness and peace characterized (Jeru)Salem's throne when Abraham conquered kings and rescued lot (cf. Heb. 7:2). Righteousness and peace are qualities that would later define Davidic kingship (Ps. 72:7; Isa. 9:7; 48:18–19).[40] Between Melchizedek's reign in Salem and David's monarchy in Jerusalem stands Joshua, a priestly ruler cleansing Jerusalem of its uncleanness, granting rest to Abraham's offspring, leading them into the sacred space of a New Eden, and even interceding on their behalf (Josh. 10:12–14). Joshua 10, then, would support the idea that Joshua himself is a model for Israel's future kings.

Psalm 110: Melchizedek, Holy War, And Joshua-Like Conquest of Kings

The argument of this paper will have greater merit if later biblical authors give any evidence of reading Joshua 10 in light of Genesis 14. Psalm 110 may provide one such example. I have argued elsewhere that Psalm 110 is result of David's meditations on Genesis 14, the promises of the Davidic covenant, and the patterns of David's own life.[41] Verse 4 stands at the center of its chiastic structure: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."[42] On both sides of verse 4 are descriptions of the Messiah's holy war. He is a priest after the Melchizedekian order whose ministry resembles not the Levitical sacrifices, but Abraham's war with kings in Genesis 14 and Joshua's conquest of the promised land.

Psalm 110 begins with a declaration of Yahweh to David's Lord, the Messiah: "Sit at my right hand until I make (שִׁית) your enemies (אֹיְבֶ) a footstool for your feet (רַגְלֶ)." The imagery of Psalm

39 McConville and Williams, *Joshua*, 52.

40 See Hamilton, "Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham," Tyndale Bulletin 269.

41 Emadi, *The Royal Priest*.

42 James M. Hamilton Jr., *Psalms Volume II: Psalms 73–150*, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2021), 290; Scott Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 185; Robert L Alden, "Chiastic Psalms (III): A Study in the Mechanics of Semitic Poetry in Psalms 101–150," *JETS* 21, no. 3 (1978): 204.

110:1 echoes Adam's original commission as described in Psalm 8:6: "You have placed (שִׁית) all things under his feet" (רֶגֶל; cf. Gen. 1:26–28). David's Lord will "rule" (רָדָה) as king (Ps. 110:2).[43] He will fulfill the Adamic commission in a fallen world where enemies pose a significant threat to the people of God. Prior to Psalm 110, Joshua 10:24 provides the most literal example of Israel placing their enemies under their feet.[44] After Joshua defeated the armies of the five kings, he brought the kings out before all the men of Israel and summoned the chiefs and the men of war to put their feet (רֶגֶל) on the necks of the kings (Josh. 10:24). The object lesson was to show Israel what God would do to all their enemies (אֹיֵב, Josh. 10:25)—they will effectively become footstools for their feet. Psalm 110:6 depicts the Messiah's enemy as the "head" (רֹאשׁ).[45] The רֹאשׁ is not only a clear allusion to Genesis 3:15 and Numbers 24:17, it is also probably David's way of recasting Chedorlaomer as the eschatological enemy of God—a serpentine foe ruling not just in Canaan but over the earth.[46] All enemies, including spiritual forces of evil, will be subjected to the reign of the Messiah.

Kings are the objects of the Messiah's righteous indignation in Psalm 110:5. Having just referenced Melchizedek in verse 4, Psalm 110:5 is part of David's sustained mediation on Abraham's war with kings and encounter with Melchizedek as described in Genesis 14. Like Abraham, David's Lord will smash "kings" (מְלָכִים) on the day of his wrath (Ps. 110:5). Outside of Genesis 14, the book of Joshua most heavily records and emphasizes the subjugation of earthly kings. The word מֶלֶךְ (king) appears 109 times in the book of Joshua. Almost every occurrence refers to the targets of Joshua's military campaign. Joshua 12:7–24 lists 31 kings Joshua conquered during his battles in Canaan. As David reflected on Genesis 14, it seems reasonable to conclude that he would have noticed the parallels between Abraham's conquest of kings and Joshua's military campaign against Canaanite kings, especially since Joshua 10 and Genesis 14 specifically share so many parallels.

If Psalm 110 also represents David's reflections on the promises of God's covenant with him (2 Samuel 7:1–16), David would have expected the Messiah (his greater son) to give people the rest that Joshua ultimately did not. God promised to bring Israel to a place where "sons of injustice" would no longer afflict them "as they did in former times" when judges ruled over the people (2

43 Dempster says that the imperative "Rule!" in Psalm 110:2 "powerfully echoes" the creation mandate. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 60.

44 Dozeman notes the royal imagery in this scene and its parallel to Psalm 110:1. See Dozeman, *Joshua 1-12*, 6b:454.

45 Though Numbers 24:17 uses "forehead" (פֵּאָה) instead of "head" (רֹאשׁ), it uses the same verb "shatter" (מָחַץ) found in Psalm 110:6 and makes the same theological point—a messianic figure will crush the heads of God's enemies. For a biblical-theological treatment of the promise of Genesis 3:15, see James M. Hamilton, "The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15," *SBJT* 10, no. 2 (2006): 30–54.

46 Chedorlaomer is the most powerful of kings in Genesis 14, he is the king of kings until he meets Abraham. Chedorlaomer's military exploits gain him power over a broad land before being defeated by Abraham.

Sam. 7:10–11). The book of Judges describes Israel's problems with these "sons of injustice" that Israel did not drive out under Joshua's leadership (Josh. 13:13; 15:63; 16:10; 17:12–13; 23:13). Judges 2:21–23 refers to the nations that were not given "into the hand of Joshua." The people had rest under Joshua's leadership (Josh. 21:4; 22:3; 23:1), but it was not permanent. God promised David that their final rest would come through a Davidic son who would finish Joshua's original assignment.

Perhaps, then, Psalm 110 indicates that Genesis 14 and the book of Joshua—with its emphasis on conquest of kings—are two streams flowing into the ocean of David's messianic theology. Abraham's war with kings, and Joshua's conquest of kings together seem to form a pattern that escalates in the Messiah's eschatological conquest of the earth. David's Lord will conquer the kings of nations on the eschatological day (Ps. 110:5–6). The Messiah's "promised land" is the entire earth. What Joshua did not complete in Canaan, the Messiah will finish on a greater scale—he will fill the nations with corpses (Ps. 110:6).

The data presented above suggests that Psalm 110 was influenced by the story of Joshua as a whole. David may have made connections between Genesis 14 and Joshua 10 in particular, but the evidence from Psalm 110 is insufficient to yield absolute certainty. Nevertheless, Psalm 110 establishes a broader connection between Genesis 14, Joshua's conquest of kings in the promised land, and the Messiah's ministry of holy war across the earth.

Conclusion

I suggested that the influence of Genesis 14 on Joshua 10 is underappreciated and underdeveloped in the scholarly literature. Recognizing that some inner-biblical echoes and allusions are easier to substantiate than others, I have tried to demonstrate that there are enough points of contact between Joshua 10 and Genesis 14 to conclude that Joshua 10:1–15 evokes Genesis 14 for apologetic and theological reasons. Contrary to critical proposals that interpret Jerusalem's two kings—Melchizedek in Genesis 14 and Adoni-zedek in Joshua 10—as part of two competing perspectives on Jerusalem and its political monarchy, Adoni-zedek's malice actually reveals Jerusalem's need for the kind of kingship it had in the days of Abraham under the reign of Melchizedek. One of these kings is indeed not like the other. Joshua 10 is not anti-Jerusalem; it is anti-Adoni-zedek. His presence in Jerusalem further justifies Joshua's takeover of Canaan. Evil was rampant in Joshua's day, even in what was once Melchizedek's city.

At a theological level, Abraham's redemptive holy war in Genesis 14 sets a trajectory that escalates in the Exodus and Joshua's conquest of the land. The pattern creates an increased expectation that a final seed of Abraham will execute a similar kind of judgment on kings of the earth. David believed as much about the Messiah in Psalm 110. The blessing of Abraham to all the peoples of the earth (typified by Lot and the Gibeonites) will come through the destruction of kings and rulers that rage against the LORD and his Anointed (Ps. 2:1–2; cf. Ps. 110:5).

The hope of the church today is that Jesus will one day come again to vanquish evil and make all his enemies a footstool for his feet. The apostle John fortified his readers to endure persecution by reminding them of the coming conquest of a better Joshua (Ἰησοῦς).[47] Jesus is the "ruler of kings on earth" (Rev. 1:5). His second coming will strike fear into the hearts of ungodly rulers who oppose the church. Five kings once hid from Joshua in a cave to escape his justice. John says that a day is coming when the kings of the earth will hide themselves in caves among the rocks of the mountains to escape the face of the one seated on the throne and the wrath of the lamb (Rev. 6:15–17). History repeats itself. Powerful forces of evil will not endure. Jesus will shatter kings on the day of his wrath to make way for Abraham's children to receive the promised land of a new heavens and new earth.

47 The names "Joshua" and "Jesus" are the same in Greek. For a discussion of Joshua typology in the New Testament, see Richard Ounsworth, *Joshua Typology in the New Testament*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 328 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012).

THE GATEWAY JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

GOG, MAGOG, AND THE FINAL BATTLE: HERMENEUTICAL OBSERVATIONS ON JOHN'S USE OF JOEL 2:28–3:21 AND EZEKIEL 38–39 IN REVELATION

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The short account of the final defeat of Satan in Rev 20:7–10 raises many difficult interpretive questions.[1] First, how does this battle relate to earlier visions of battle and warfare? Are they the same battle or does John envision multiple final battles?[2] This is perhaps the key question in the pre-millennial verses amillennial debate.[3] Second and related, how does the reference to Gog

1 The only major monograph on the topic of Gog and Magog in Revelation focused on Rev 19:17–21 and 20:7–10 is S. Bøe, *Gog and Magog: Ezekiel 38–39 as Pre-Text for Revelation 19, 17–21 and 20, 7–10*, WUNT 2.135 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001). Other important studies include J. P. Ruiz, *Ezekiel in the Apocalypse: The Transformation of Prophetic Language in Revelation 16,17–19,10*, Europäische Hochschulschriften Series 23, Theologie 376 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989); Beate Kowalski, *Die Rezeption des Propheten Ezechiel in der Offenbarung des Johannes*, SBB 52 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2004); Beate Kowalski, "Transformation of Ezekiel in John's Revelation," in *Transforming Visions: Transformations of Text, Traditions, and Theology in Ezekiel*, eds. W. A. Tooman and M. A. Lyons (Cambridge: James Clark, 2010), 279–311; J. Webb Mealy, *After the Thousand Years: Resurrection and Judgment in Revelation 20*, JSNTSup 70 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992); Wei Lo, "Ezekiel in Revelation: Literary and Hermeneutic Aspects" (Ph.D. Dissertation at the University of Edinburgh, 1999).

2 In general, Craig R. Koester's suggestion of a "forward-moving spiral" seems to capture the unique blend of visionary repetition and narrative progression: "Vision cycles both overlap and progress, with individual sections tracing the movement from conflict to victory that shapes the book as a whole" (*Revelation*, The Anchor Yale Bible 38A [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014], 115). This recognition of general repetition does not definitively answer the particular question of the relationship of John's various descriptions of and references to a final battle.

3 This article will not engage with New Creation Millennialism although I intend to publish a response and likely endorsement of New Creation Millennialism in the near future. I need to weigh further how the conclusions of this article related to the position before articulating a response. New Creation Millennialism is an approach to the millennium that seeks to bridge the gap between pre-millennial and amillennial positions by integrating the strongest exegetical arguments from each approach. Key advocates include Mealy (*After the Thousand Years*) and now Eckhard Schnabel ("The Viability of Premillennialsim and the Text of Revelation 20," *JETS* 64 [2021]: 785–795) and Thomas R. Schreiner (*Revelation*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023], 677–682).

and Magog, set in apposition to the nations in Rev. 20:8, relate to the eschatological antagonists described in these other battle visions in Revelation (the beast, the second beast/false prophet, the ten kings, the kings of the earth)? Finally, how does John's use of Ezekiel 38–39 and other prophetic oracles throughout Revelation inform our understanding of the hermeneutical practices employed by John in the use of prior Scriptural traditions? This article will explore these questions in reverse order, starting with hermeneutical observations on John's use of prior texts and traditions.

Hermeneutical Observations

This section will consider two case studies in order to make three hermeneutical observations. First, clusters of allusions to a specific pre-text increases the probability of John's conscious engagement with that text.[4] Second, John combines and synthesizes various OT texts with similar themes.[5] Third, John freely applies details from particular pre-texts across his various visions in similar patterns. This would suggest that either he viewed a particular prophetic oracle as being fulfilled in multiple different future events or, more likely, his various visions all describe the single future fulfillment of the prophetic oracle. The comparison of John's use of Joel 2:28–3:21 (3:1–4:21 LXX) and Ezekiel 38–39 below will demonstrate that John synthesizes the general plot from both of these prophets and applies the material from both in similar ways in his own visions. The general guidelines for identifying intertextual echoes proposed by Hays (availability, volume, recurrence, thematic coherence, historical plausibility, history of interpretation, and satisfaction) are utilized by many interpreters and are generally helpful; they guide assessments of probability but cannot be determinative or final.[6]

Joel 3:3–4:21 LXX

Revelation contains repeated allusions to the oracles regarding the judgment of the nations leading to the restoration of Jerusalem in Joel 2:28–3:21 (3:1–4:21 LXX).[7]

4 Bøe, *Gog and Magog*, 347, 349.

5 J. Fekkes, *Isaiah and the Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation: Visionary Antecedents and Their Developments*, JSNTSup 93 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 71–101. Fekkes develops this insight with reference to several themes.

6 Richard B. Hays, E*choes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 28–32. Michelle Fletcher has recently argued that John's allusive use of the Old Testament can best be described as pastiche (*Reading Revelation as Pastiche: Imitating the Past*, LNTS 571 [London: T & T Clark, 2017]). "Pastiche is a specific practice of imitation and combination that sits somewhere between original and copy, parody and homage, and collage and mosaic" (p. 48). This designation seems appropriate to John's diverse use of the Old Testament, but Fletcher's resultant methodology is "fluid and flexible" (p. 63) and does not easily support historical inquiry. For Fletcher, pastiche leads to a reading strategy that does not seek to find a single determinative meaning or the author's intention (p. 67, 71).

7 There are also many allusions in Revelation to the first half of Joel, but the focus here will be on the oracles that begin with "And it shall come to pass afterward" (2:28/3:1 LXX, Καὶ ἔσται μετὰ ταῦτα).

Cosmic Darkness Rev. 6:12–13 "and the sun (ὁ ἥλιος) became black as sackcloth, the full moon (ἡ σελήνη) became like blood (αἷμα) and the stars (οἱ ἀστέρες) of the sky fell to the earth" Rev. 6:17 "for the great day of their wrath has come (ἦλθεν ἡ ἡμέρα ἡ μεγάλη)" Rev. 8:12 "and a third of the sun (ἡλίου) was struck, and a third of the moon (σελήνης), and a third of the stars (ἀστέρων), so that a third of their light might be darkened (σκοτισθῇ)" Cf. Rev. 9:2 "and the sun (ὁ ἥλιος) and the air were darkened (ἐσκοτώθη) with the smoke from the shaft" Cf. Rev. 16:10 "and its kingdom was plunged into darkness (ἐσκοτωμένη)"	**Cosmic Darkness** Joel 2:31 (3:4 LXX) "The sun (ὁ ἥλιος) shall be turned to darkness (σκότος), and the moon (ἡ σελήνη) to blood (αἷμα), before the great (μεγάλην) and awesome day of the Lord comes (ἐλθεῖν ἡμέραν)" Joel 3:15 (4:15 LXX) "The sun and the moon are darkened (ὁ ἥλιος καὶ ἡ σελήνη συσκοτάσουσιν), and the stars (οἱ ἀστέρες) withdraw their shining" Cf. Joel 3:14 (4:14 LXX) "the day (ἡμέρα) of the Lord is near"
Gathering of the Nations for Judgment Rev. 16:14 "to assemble (συναγαγεῖν) them for battle"[8] Rev. 16:16 "And they assembled (συνήγαγεν) them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon" Rev. 19:19 "And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered (συνηγμένα) to make war" Rev. 20:8 " and will come out to deceive the nations (τὰ ἔθνη) that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather (συναγαγεῖν) them for battle"	**Gathering of the Nations for Judgment** Joel 3:2 (4:2 LXX) "I will gather (συνάξω) all the nations (τὰ ἔθνη) and . . . enter into judgment with them there"

On the structure of Joel see Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 39–43.

8 Note below the use of συνάγω in Ezekiel 38–39. Even more than Joel or Ezekiel, the closest parallel with Revelation at this point is Zech. 14:2 ("I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle" καὶ ἐπισυνάξω πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐπὶ Ιερουσαλημ εἰς πόλεμον).

Judgment Imagery of Sickles, Vintage, Winepress, and Trampling Rev. 14:15 "Put in your sickle (Πέμψον τὸ δρέπανόν), and reap" Rev. 14:18–20 "'Put in your sickle (Πέμψον σου τὸ δρέπανον) and gather (τρύγησον) the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe.' So the angel swung his sickle (δρέπανον) across the earth and gathered (ἐτρύγησεν) the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress (ληνὸν) of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden (ἐπατήθη ἡ ληνὸς) outside the city" Rev. 19:15 "He will tread the winepress (πατεῖ τὴν ληνὸν) of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty"	**Judgment Imagery of Sickles, Vintage, Winepress, and Trampling** Joel 4:13 "Put in the sickle (ἐξαποστείλατε δρέπανα), for the harvest (τρύγητος) is ripe. Go in, tread (πατεῖτε), for the winepress (ἡ ληνός) is full. The vats overflow, for their evil is great"[9]
Shaking of Heaven and Earth Rev. 6:12 (cf. 11:13; 16:18) "there was a great earthquake (σεισμὸς)" Rev. 20:11 "Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky (ἡ γῆ καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς) fled away, and no place was found for them"	**Shaking of Heaven and Earth** Joel 3:16 (4:16 LXX) "and the heavens and the earth quake (καὶ σεισθήσεται ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ)"
God Dwelling in Holy City Jerusalem Rev. 21:2 "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem (τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν Ἰερουσαλὴμ)" Rev. 21:3 "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell (σκηνώσει) with them" Rev. 21:10 "showed me the holy city Jerusalem (τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν Ἰερουσαλὴμ)" Cf. Rev. 22:3–4	**God Dwelling in Holy City Jerusalem** Joel 3:17 (4:17 LXX) "So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who dwells (ὁ κατασκηνῶν) in Zion, my holy mountain. And Jerusalem shall be holy (ἔσται Ιερουσαλημ πόλις ἁγία), and strangers shall never again pass through it"[10] Joel 3:21 (4:21 LXX) "for the Lord dwells (κατασκηνώσει) in Zion"

9 Joel 4:13 LXX describes God's judgment of the nations as both harvesting with a sickle and treading the winepress. This could suggest both a grain and a grape harvest as parallel images of judgment since a δρέπανον would presumably go with grain and not grapes, but John also uses a δρέπανον in his description of the vintage which would suggest that he was following the LXX which translates קָצִיר (harvest) with τρύγητος (vintage). This could suggest that only a vintage is in view in Joel 4:13 LXX, and John read it as such.

10 Joel visualizes the exclusion of foreigners from the holy city; this could be compared and

Water from House of the Lord Rev. 7:17 "and he will guide them to springs (πηγὰς) of living water" Rev. 21:6 "To the thirsty I will give from the spring (πηγῆς) of the water of life without payment" Cf. Rev. 22:1 "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb"	**Water from House of the Lord** Joel 3:18 (4:18 LXX) "and a fountain (πηγὴ) shall come forth from the house of the Lord"
The Shedding of Innocent Blood Rev. 16:6 "For they have shed (ἐξέχεαν) the blood (αἷμα) of saints and prophets" Rev. 17:6 "And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood (αἵματος) of the saints, the blood (αἵματος) of the martyrs of Jesus" Rev. 18:24 "And in her was found the blood (αἷμα) of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth"	**The Shedding of Innocent Blood** Joel 3:19 (4:19 LXX) "they have shed innocent blood (ἐξέχεαν αἷμα δίκαιον) in their land"
Divine Avenging of Innocent Blood Rev. 6:10 "how long before you will judge and avenge our blood (ἐκδικεῖς τὸ αἷμα ἡμῶν) on those who dwell on the earth?" Rev. 19:2 "and has avenged (ἐξεδίκησεν) on her the blood (τὸ αἷμα) of his servants"	**Divine Avenging of Innocent Blood** Joel 3:21 (4:21 LXX) "I will avenge their blood (ἐκδικήσω τὸ αἷμα αὐτῶν)"[11]

John alludes to these oracles in Joel throughout his book. These allusions are present in striking clusters of words and ideas (the trampling of the winepress), references to general prophetic themes (diminishment of heavenly light, cosmic shaking, the pouring out and avenging of innocent blood, the gathering of the nations for judgment, God dwelling with his people in Jerusalem, water from God's house), and the general narrative and thematic progression from the judgment of the nations to the restoration of Jerusalem. The book of Joel ends as does the final vision of Revelation with a vision of God dwelling in Zion (Joel 3:21 [4:21 LXX]: "for the Lord dwells in Zion" [κύριος κατασκηνώσει ἐν Σιων]). As in Revelation, Joel blends battle imagery with judicial action when describing God's judgment of the nations (war/πόλεμος [Joel 3:9/4:9 LXX],

contrasted with John's exclusion of the unclean (Rev. 21:8, 27; 22:15) but inclusion of foreigners who meet the holiness criteria (Rev. 21:24).

11 On divine vengeance for shed blood (ἐκδικήσω τὸ αἷμα) see also Hos. 1:4.

gather/συνάγω [Joel 3:11/4:11 LXX], "I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations"/καθιῶ τοῦ διακρῖναι πάντα τὰ ἔθνη κυκλόθεν [Joel 3:12/4:12 LXX], justice/δίκη [Joel 3:14/4:14 LXX]).

In regard to judgment, allusions to these oracles in Joel can be discerned with various degrees of volume in the fifth seal, sixth seal, fourth trumpet, fifth trumpet, the harvest of the earth, the third bowl, the fifth bowl, the judgment of Babylon, the rider's judgment, and the judgment of Gog and Magog. Allusions to restoration in Joel can be found in Revelation 7, 21, and 22.

This network of allusions in Revelation to Joel 3:3–4:21 LXX along with widespread prophetic themes could structurally suggest that the vision of judgment in Rev. 14:17–20 (the cluster of allusions with the loudest volume) is parallel to the day of the Lord in the sixth seal, the gathering of the nations in the sixth bowl judgment, the judgment of Babylon, the rider's trampling of the vintage, and the gathering of the nations for battle after the millennium. John alludes in all of these visions to this single prophetic oracle in Joel.

Ezekiel 38–39

A careful analysis of the Gog and Magog oracles in Ezekiel 38-39 produces some similar observations. The following chart builds upon prior lists by Kowalski and Lust but is focused on Ezekiel 38–39 and is expanded in various ways.[12]

A Great Earthquake Rev. 6:12 (cf. 8:5; 11:13; 16:18) "there was a great earthquake (σεισμὸς μέγας)"	**A Great Earthquake** Ezek. 38:19 "On that day there shall be a great earthquake (σεισμὸς μέγας) in the land of Israel"
Fire as Judgment Rev. 8:5 "Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire (πυρὸς) from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake"	**Fire as Judgment** Ezek. 38:22 "I will rain upon him . . . fire and sulfur (πῦρ καὶ θεῖον)" Ezek. 39:6 "I will send fire (πῦρ) on Magog"

12 Kowalski, "Transformation of Ezekiel," 303–306; J. Lust, "The Order of the Final Events in Revelation and in Ezekiel," in *L'Apocalypse johannique et L'Apocalyptique dans le Nouveau Testament*, ed. J. Lambrecht, BETL 53 (Leuven: University Press, 1980), 179–183, 180.

Hail, Fire, and Blood as Judgment Rev. 8:7 “and there followed hail (χάλαζα) and fire (πῦρ), mixed with blood (αἵματι), and these were thrown upon the earth”	**Hail, Fire, and Blood as Judgment** Ezek. 38:22 “With pestilence and bloodshed (αἵματι) I will enter into judgment with him, and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples who are with him torrential rains and hailstones (χαλάζης), fire (πῦρ) and sulfur”
Fire and Sulfur as Judgment Rev. 9:17 “and fire (πῦρ) and smoke and sulfur (θεῖον) came out of their mouths”[13] (cf. fire and smoke and sulfur [πυρὸς καὶ τοῦ καπνοῦ καὶ τοῦ θείου, 9:18]; he will be tormented with fire and sulfur [πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ, 14:10]; These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur [πυρὸς τῆς καιομένης ἐν θείῳ, 19:20]; “the lake of fire and sulfur” [λίμνην τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ θείου, 20:10]; “in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur” [πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ, 21:8])	**Fire and Sulfur as Judgment** Ezek. 38:22 “With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him, and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples who are with him torrential rains and hailstones, fire (πῦρ) and sulfur (θεῖον)”
Servant Prophets Rev. 10:7 “just as he announced to his servants the prophets (δούλους τοὺς προφήτας)” Cf. Rev. 11:18 “and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints (τοῖς δούλοις σου τοῖς προφήταις)”[14]	**Servant Prophets** Ezek. 38:17 “Are you he of whom I spoke in former days by my servants the prophets (τῶν δούλων μου προφητῶν) of Israel”

13 Other notable combinations of fire with sulfur can be found in Gen. 19:24 (“Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire [θεῖον καὶ πῦρ] from the Lord out of heaven”) and Ps. 11:6 (“Let him rain coals on the wicked; fire and sulfur [πῦρ καὶ θεῖον] and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup”). Cf. πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ in 3 Macc. 2:5.

14 The direct connection of δοῦλος and προφήτης can also be found in 4 Kingdoms 17:13, 23; 21:10; 24:2; Esdras B 9:11; Amos 3:7; Zech. 1:6; Jer. 7:25; 25:4. The most significant parallel to Revelation in this regard is found in 4 Kingdoms 9:7/2 Kings 9:7 which includes many words which are significant for John (ἐκδίκησις [see ἐκδικέω in Rev. 6:10; 19:2], αἷμα, δοῦλος, προφήτης, and Ιεζαβελ): “And you shall strike down the house of Ahab your master, so that I may avenge on Jezebel the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord” (καὶ ἐξολεθρεύσεις τὸν οἶκον Αχααβ τοῦ κυρίου σου ἐκ προσώπου μου καὶ ἐκδικήσεις τὰ αἵματα τῶν δούλων μου τῶν προφητῶν καὶ τὰ αἵματα πάντων τῶν δούλων κυρίου ἐκ χειρὸς Ιεζαβελ).

Prophesying against Rev. 10:11 " You must again prophesy about (προφητεῦσαι ἐπὶ) many peoples and nations and languages and kings"[15]	**Prophesying against** Ezek. 38:2 "prophesy against (προφήτευσον ἐπ') him" Ezek. 39:1 "prophesy against (προφήτευσον ἐπὶ) Gog"
Earthquake and Giving Glory Rev. 11:13 "And at that hour there was a great earthquake (σεισμὸς μέγας) . . . and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God (ἔδωκαν δόξαν τῷ θεῷ) of heaven" (cf. 6:12; 16:18)	**Earthquake and Giving Glory** Ezek. 38:19, 23 "On that day there shall be a great earthquake (σεισμὸς μέγας) in the land of Israel . . . So I will show my greatness and my holiness (the LXX here adds καὶ ἐνδοξασθήσομαι, words absent from the MT) and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord"
Pouring Out of Wrath Rev. 16:1 "pour out (ἐκχέετε) on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath (τοῦ θυμοῦ) of God"[16]	**Pouring Out of Wrath** Ezek. 39:29 "when I pour out my Spirit (LXX has "wrath": ἐξέχεα τὸν θυμόν) upon the house of Israel"
Gathering for War Rev. 16:14 "to assemble (συναγαγεῖν) them for battle"[17] Rev. 16:16 "And they assembled (συνήγαγεν) them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon" Rev. 19:19 "gathered (συνηγμένα) to make war" Rev. 20:8 "to gather (συναγαγεῖν) them for battle"	**Gathering for War** Ezek. 38:4 ("And I will turn you about [καὶ συνάξω σε]"), 7 ("all your hosts that are assembled about you [οἱ συνηγμένοι μετὰ σοῦ]"), 13 ("Have you assembled your hosts [συνήγαγες συναγωγήν σου]"), 15 ("a great host [συναγωγὴ μεγάλη]")

15 The use of ἐπί after προφητεύω is common in the Hebrew prophets and not distinctive to Ezekiel.

16 On the pouring out of wrath (ἐκχέω and θυμός) also see: Ps. 68:25; Sir. 36:6; 39:28; Zeph. 3:8; Jer. 10:25; Lam. 2:4; 4:11; Ezek. 7:5; 9:8; 14:19; 20:8, 13, 21; 22:22, 31; 30:15; 36:18. Although the motif occurs elsewhere, there is a strong concentration of occurrences in Ezekiel.

17 Although Rev. 16:14 shares the verb συνάγω with Ezekiel 38, the closer parallel is with Zech. 14:2 ("I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle" [καὶ ἐπισυνάξω πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐπὶ Ιερουσαλημ εἰς πόλεμον]). It is important, however, to note that all five uses of συνάγω in Revelation occur in contexts filled with multiple other allusions to Ezekiel 38–39 (Rev. 16:14, 16; 19:17, 19; 20:8; cf. Bøe, *Gog and Magog*, 279–280).

Divine Wrath and Judgment Rev. 16:18–21 Note the combination of "great earthquake" (σεισμὸς) . . . (μέγας), "the cities of the nations fell" (ἔπεσαν), "fury of his wrath" (θυμοῦ τῆς ὀργῆς), "mountains" (ὄρη), and "hail" (χάλαζα) in divine judgment.[18]	**Divine Wrath and Judgment** Ezek. 38:18–23 "wrath" (θυμός) . . . "anger" (τῆς ὀργῆς) . . . "great earthquake" (σεισμὸς μέγας) . . . "mountains" (ὄρη) . . . "every wall shall tumble (πεσεῖται) to the ground" . . . "hailstones" (χαλάζης)
A Feast for Birds Rev. 19:17–18 "Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly (λέγων πᾶσιν τοῖς ὀρνέοις τοῖς πετομένοις) directly overhead, 'Come, gather (συνάχθητε) for the great (μέγα) supper of God, to eat (φάγητε) the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses (ἵππων) and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great"[19]	**A Feast for Birds** Ezek. 39:4 "I will give you to birds of prey (ὀρνέων) of every sort (παντὶ) and to the beasts of the field to be devoured" Ezek. 39:17–20 "As for you, son of man, thus says the Lord God: Speak to the birds of every sort (Εἰπὸν παντὶ ὀρνέῳ πετεινῷ) and to all beasts of the field: 'Assemble (Συνάχθητε) and come, gather (συνάχθητε) from all around to the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you, a great (μεγάλην) sacrificial feast on the mountains of Israel, and you shall eat (φάγεσθε) flesh and drink blood. You shall eat (φάγεσθε) the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth—of rams, of lambs, and of he-goats, of bulls, all of them fat beasts of Bashan. And you shall eat (φάγεσθε) fat till you are filled, and drink blood till you are drunk, at the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you. And you shall be filled at my table with horses (ἵππον) and charioteers, with mighty men and all kinds of warriors,' declares the Lord God"

18 Ruiz argues, "The far more literally explicit use of Ezek 38 in Sib Or 3, 669–694; the reference to Rome in Tg. Neb. Ezek 39,16; the citation of Ezek 38, 17.22 in Pesiq. R. 17,8, and the use of the stereotyped expression, 'resoundings and thunder and lightning' in Jub 2,2 suggests that Rev 16, 17–21 participates in a tradition in which the Exodus plagues and the Sinai tradition were combined and projected into eschatological time. Rev 16,17–21 represents an original crystallization of this material, reappropriating the Exodus plagues, the Sinai theophany and its tradition, and the Gog of Magog oracles from Ezekiel" (*Ezekiel in the Apocalypse*, 264).

19 In addition to the words in parentheses, synonymous expressions would include Δεῦτε for ἔρχεσθε, δεῖπνον for θυσίαν and τραπέζης, σάρκας for κρέα, βασιλέων for γιγάντων, χιλιάρχων for ἀρχόντων, τῶν καθημένων ἐπ' αὐτῶν for ἀναβάτην. This volume of synonyms confirms the allusion, but suggests paraphrase from memory, translation directly from the Hebrew, or dependence on a different Greek translation.

The Bird's Feast Rev. 19:21 "And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all (πάντα) the birds (ὄρνεα) were gorged with their flesh"	**The Bird's Feast** Ezek. 39:4 "I will give you to birds of prey (ὀρνέων) of every sort (παντὶ) and to the beasts of the field to be devoured" (cf. 39:17).
Coming to life Rev. 20:4 "They came to life (καὶ ἔζησαν) and reigned with Christ for a thousand years"	**Coming to life** Ezek. 37:10 "and they lived (καὶ ἔζησαν) and stood on their feet"
Gog and Magog Rev. 20:8 "the nations (ἔθνη) that are at the four (τέσσαρσιν) corners of the earth (τέσσαρσιν γωνίαις τῆς γῆς),[20] Gog and Magog (τὸν Γὼγ καὶ Μαγώγ) to gather (συναγαγεῖν) them for battle"	**Gog and Magog** Ezek. 38:6, 8, 9, 12, 15, 16, 22, 23; 39:4, 7, 21, 23, 27, 28 "nations" (ἔθνη) Ezek. 7:2 "the four corners of the land (τέσσαρας πτέρυγας τῆς γῆς)" Ezek. 38:2 "Gog (Γωγ), of the land of Magog (Μαγωγ)" (cf. Ezek. 38:4, 7, 13, 15 regarding Gog's host) Ezek. 38:4 ("And I will turn you about [καὶ συνάξω σε]"), 7 ("all your hosts that are assembled about you [οἱ συνηγμένοι μετὰ σοῦ]"), 13 ("Have you assembled your hosts [συνήγαγες συναγωγήν σου]"), 15 ("a great host [συναγωγὴ μεγάλη]")

20 Cf. τὰς τέσσαρας γωνίας τῆς γῆς (Rev. 7:1).

Destruction of Gog and Magog with Fire	**Destruction of Gog and Magog with Fire**
Rev. 20:9 " And they marched up over (ἀνέβησαν ἐπὶ) the broad plain of the earth (γῆς) and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire (πῦρ) came down from heaven and consumed them"[21]	Ezek. 38:9 "You will advance (ἀναβήσῃ), coming on like a storm" Ezek. 38:11 "I will go up against the land (Ἀναβήσομαι ἐπὶ γῆν)" Ezek. 38:16 "You will come up (ἀναβήσῃ) against my people Israel" Ezek. 38:22 "I will rain upon him . . . fire (πῦρ) and sulfur" Ezek. 39:6 "I will send fire (πῦρ) on Magog"

These allusions are present in striking clusters of words and ideas (various combinations of hail, fire, blood, and sulfur, the feast for birds, reference to Gog and Magog and their gathering, ascent, and destruction by fire from heaven). There are also many allusions to general prophetic themes (a great earthquake, judgment by fire, prophets as God's slaves, the pouring out of wrath, the gathering of the nations for a battle of judgment, and, considering Ezekiel 40–48, the restoration of Jerusalem, God dwelling with his people in Jerusalem, water from the temple to restore the land), and the general narrative and thematic progression from resurrection to the judgment of the nations to the restoration of Jerusalem that can be observed from Ezekiel 37–48.

Explicit allusions to Ezekiel's Gog and Magog oracles can be discerned in the reference to Gog and Magog (Rev. 20:8–9), the sixth and seventh bowls (Rev. 16:14–21), and the feast of the birds after the coming of the rider (Rev. 19:17–18, 21). Allusions with lesser degrees of volume can be discerned in the sixth seal, seventh seal, first trumpet, sixth trumpet, the narrative of the two witnesses, and descriptions of the lake of fire and sulfur.

John's use of the Gog and Magog oracles compared with his use of Joel 3:3–4:21 LXX, support the hermeneutical observations made earlier. First, clusters of allusions to a specific pre-text increases the probability of John's conscious engagement with that text.[22] Second, John com-

21 The expression "Then fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty" (καὶ κατέβη πῦρ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ κατέφαγεν αὐτὸν καὶ τοὺς πεντήκοντα αὐτοῦ) occurs in 2 Kings 1:10, 12 when fire comes down from heaven to consume two separate groups of a captain with fifty men who had been sent to capture Elijah. This more closely matches John's language but the use of fire to destroy Gog in Ezek. 38:22; 39:6 is still relevant. Fire frequently occurs in contexts of judgment; the most important of which for Revelation probably include Gen. 19:24; 1 Kings 18:38; 4 Ezra 13:10–11, 37–38. Elsewhere in Revelation, fire destroys Babylon (Rev. 18:8–9), destroys the enemies of the two witnesses (Rev. 11:5), is produced by the second beast to deceive (Rev. 13:13), and occurs throughout the trumpet and bowl judgments.

22 Bøe, *Gog and Magog*, 347.

bines and synthesizes various OT texts with similar themes.[23] In this regard, John is following Ezekiel's lead in the way that Ezekiel synthesized prior traditions regarding the foe from the north.[24] Third, John freely applies details from particular pre-texts across his various visions in similar patterns. John draws from both prophets (and others, of course, such as Isaiah 24–27[25]) in describing specific visions, particularly the fifth seal, sixth bowl, the coming of the Rider, and Gog and Magog. This would suggest that John synthesized oracles from various Hebrew prophets into the general timeline of the judgment of the nations leading to the restoration of Jerusalem. This synthesized prophetic eschatological timeline is used as a resource of words, ideas, and images in various visions following a similar trajectory of judgment leading to restoration.

John's communication of the results of this synthesized reading of OT prophecies of the judgment of the nations and restoration of Jerusalem produces some consistent alterations. John downplays elements of the prophecies that are historically limiting (i.e. the reference to Tyre, Sidon, Philistia (Galilaia LXX), Egypt and Edom in Joel 4:4, 19) or ethnocentrically focused on ethnic Israelites (i.e. the exclusion of foreigners from Jerusalem in Joel 4:17). John also ignores Ezekiel's concern with the burial of dead soldiers and the purity of the physical land (Ezek 39:11–16)[26] and goes beyond Ezekiel in shifting from particularism to universalism in regard to the ethnic constitution of the people of God.[27] John adds additional characters to Ezekiel's vision such as the rider, the beasts, and the dragon.[28] This reflects a Christologically additive interpretation of the Gog and Magog oracles.

23 J. Fekkes, *Isaiah and the Prophetic Traditions*, 71–101. Fekkes develops this insight with reference to several themes.

24 Lo, "Ezekiel in Revelation," 96. Lo notes Ezekiel's synthesizing of this tradition found in Isaiah 5:26-30; 10:4; 24:32; Hab. 1:5-11; Jer. 1:13-15; 4:5-8, 11-17, 19-21, 23-26, 29-31; 5:15-17; 6:1-5, 22-26; 8:16). Ezekiel introduces some differences. Pre-exilic usage of the foe-from-the-north traditions describe the near future while Ezekiel sets Gog's assault in the distant future (Lo, 100). The Gog assault is on a much larger scale than the foe-from-the-north traditions and envisions "a battle between the entire world and the restored Israel" (Lo, 101). Finally, the foe-from-the-north traditions focused on the doom of the one being attacked, the Gog oracles focus on the doom of the invader (Lo, 103).

25 Fekkes, *Isaiah and the Prophetic Traditions*, 226; Mealy, *After the Thousand Years*, 99–101, 133–135, 137–138, 142 (references from Bøe, *Gog and Magog*, 355).

26 Bøe, *Gog and Magog*, 380.

27 Bøe, *Gog and Magog*, 351. Bøe notes that in Revelation, "Gog's attack is not directed against Israel, and it does not take place 'on Israel's mountains', as in Ezekiel 38–39. The bird's supper is not said to take place 'on the mountains of Israel', as in Ezek 39,17. Neither are the soldiers compared to 'the fatlings of Bashan', as in Ezek 39,18" (380). In addition, he notes universal elements of Revelation's account. "Gog and Magog are said to come from 'the four corners of the earth' (20,8). Instead of 'the mountains of Israel' (Ezek 39,4) John speaks of 'the breadth of the earth' (Rev 20,9). The shift from singular to plural in the noun 'peoples' in Rev 21,3 (cf. Ezek 37,27) probably points to the multi national background of God's redeemed people" (380).

28 Lo notes, "Surely his adding the new element to the tradition, i.e., Christ, and his transformation of the foe into a Satanic force give the tradition a new look, but the way he reinterprets the Gog oracle is in fact paralleled to what the prophet has done to the foe-from-the-north tradition" ("Ezekiel in Revelation," 119).

John's use of the same Hebrew prophetic oracles to shape the events of multiple different visions suggests that John's visions are largely repetitive and not chronologically progressive.[29] For example, John's use of Joel and Ezekiel suggest that he likely expected one final battle and not four (Rev 16:12–21; 17:14; 19:11–21; 20:8–10).[30] This conclusion cannot be determined with certainty, but seems to be the implication of John's diffused hermeneutical use of prior prophetic oracles about God's judgment of the nations and restoration of Jerusalem.

If John's use of the same prophetic sources and traditions to shape his various visionary narrative accounts of the single final battle is correct, we can make some observations of the identity and narrative function of Gog and Magog.

References to the Final Battle				
	Rev. 16:12–21	**Rev. 17:14**	**Rev. 19:11–21**	**Rev. 20:8–10**
Supernatural Antagonists	The Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet (13)	The beast (12–13)	The Beast and False Prophet (19–20)	Satan, the Dragon (2, 7)
Deceived Human Antagonists	Kings form the east (13), from the whole inhabited earth (14)	Ten kings (12)	The kings of the earth and their armies (19)	Gog and Magog, the nations from the four corners of the earth (8)
Fate of Human Antagonists	Greatest earthquake ever (18), breaking up of the city (19), falling of the cities of the nations (19), removal of islands and mountains (20), great hail (21)	Defeated by the lamb (14)	Slain with Sword from the mouth of the one rider; corpses eaten by birds (21)	Consumed with fire from heaven (9)
Fate of Supernatural Antagonists	Not stated	Defeated by the lamb (14)	Thrown into lake of fire (20)	Thrown into lake of fire (10)

29 Bøe cautions that "the double use of one pre-text or motif is by itself not decisive" (*Gog and Magog*, 376). He takes the double use of Ezekiel's measuring of the temple in Rev 11:1–2 and 21:10–27 to indicate that the double use of a theme does not require that both accounts refer to the same action (378–279).

30 This is the main conclusion of this study that would push against New Creation Millennialism and is an area of further research.

Despite much popular speculation, Gog and Magog, rather mundanely, are parallel to the kings of the nations and their followers in the other accounts of the final battle. John references Gog and Magog, not to be mysterious or enigmatic, but as a way to explicitly claim that his vision of this final battle is the same as Ezekiel's vision of Gog and Magog in Ezek 38–39.

Conclusion

The two case studies considered above (Joel 2:28–3:21/3:3–4:21 LXX and Ezekiel 38–39) demonstrate not just that John was heavily influenced by the Old Testament, but that particular prophetic oracles exerted disproportionate influence and were more central to John's eschatological timeline than others. These oracles were synthesized by John and are alluded to by him in many different visions throughout Revelation, likely suggesting that Revelation's visions, despite different details, involve significant repetition of the same basic plot points. The alternative but less likely conclusion is that John broke up these original prophetic oracles and parceled out their fulfilment in a convoluted and complicated series of different future events. The simpler conclusion seems to be that John synthesized the prior prophetic oracles into a single eschatological timeline which involved the judgment of the nations and restoration of Jerusalem, and that the visions in Revelation provide diverse snapshots of this timeline updated and expanded by his Christological convictions.

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WINNING THE WEST: SOUTHERN BAPTIST SURPRISES IN UTAH AND CALIFORNIA

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In 1835, the Connecticut Congregationalist pastor Lyman Beecher (1775–1863), patriarch of one of the most illustrious families in American history wrote in *A Plea for the West* that "… the religious and political destiny of our nation is to be decided in the west."[1] Beecher predicted that the vast western territory would produce wealth, precipitate population growth and in time, increase political power. Conscious of Roman Catholic presence and influence in the region since the 16th century, Beecher framed his proposal in terms of striking contrasts.

It is equally clear, that the conflict which is to decide the destiny of the West, will be a conflict of institutions for the education of her sons, for purposes of superstition, or evangelical light; of despotism or liberty.[2]

Strangely enough, in the nearly two centuries since he wrote his *Plea*, all Beecher's hopes and fears have come true. Unforeseen development would certainly puzzle the author. For example, Catholicism is the largest denomination in United States and has been since the mid-nineteenth century, yet few would seriously question American Catholics' loyalty to the Republic.[3] Concerning the presence of "evangelical light" in California, the picture is a bit more complicated. If his hope was of Yankee Congregationalist hegemony in western garb, these dreams have not

1 *A Plea for the West* (Cincinnati: Truman & Smith, 1835), 11.

2 *A Plea*, 12.

3 Vatican II (1962–1965) judged Catholicism to be compatible with democracy and religious liberty, a striking contrast to the previous encyclicals that strongly opposed democratic governance.

proven true. Beecher explained that "civil and religious prosperity" required "universal education, and moral culture, and institutions commensurate to that result-the-all-pervading influence of schools, and colleges, of seminaries, and pastors and churches."[4] An ambitious project by any rubric, the meager footprint of Congregationalism in the West suggests failure. A more generous assessment is possible, however, when we consider Beecher the *evangelical* Congregationalist. Whatever Beecher would think of churches that employ the adjective "evangelical" were he alive today, the West does not lack evangelical light. California is unique in its own right, yet the West as a whole has experienced sudden movements of growth. In addition to the Golden State, Southern Baptist churches in Utah have produced—and are presently pursuing—the coveted ideal in which theological institutions serve the church and visa versa, where churches provide colleges and seminaries with students that maintain doctrinal fidelity and serve as ministers in the regions where they were trained.

California: Surprises in the Far West

California's Gold Rush, which began in 1849, made famous the phrase "boom or bust." The state's history has, in fact, been punctuated by sudden and unanticipated change. Like the startling bipolarity of its precipitation patterns–a single wet winter can eradicate a multi-year drought–the Golden State is a place where surprise of the serendipitous sort defies expectations.

The history of evangelical Christianity in California begins with Methodist missionaries, whose presence in the state began in the 1840's. In Catholic hands from the earliest days of colonization—Franciscan Junipero Sera remains the state's most iconic missionary—Protestant settlers and evangelists were making their influence felt by mid-century. In 1845, a young Irish priest, Eugene McNamara, appealed to the president of Mexico to allow two thousand Irish Catholics to settle in California as a means to combat "Methodist wolves."[5] Whether the Methodists were ravenous predators or not—a theological rather than historical judgment—Anglo-Protestants from the east were coming to California to stay, and bringing their religion with them. What kind of Christians could draw the ire of a man like McNamara?

With his characteristic insight into Christianity's influence in local communities, John Steinbeck described the impact of evangelical sects on the ethos of Salinas Valley. Their hardy preachers, he wrote,

> . . . fought the devil, no holds barred, boots and eye-gouging permitted. You might get the idea that they howled truth and beauty the way a seal bites out

4 *A Plea*, 13.

5 Kevin Starr, *California: A History* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 62.

> the National Anthem on a row of circus horns. But some of the truth and beauty remained, and the anthem was recognizable.[6]

Methodist churches, many built in the characteristic New England style, dot the Bay Area.[7] In Sonoma, the original structure of the building that was the first Protestant church North of San Francisco, still stands.[8] The original pastor of the Methodist congregation is buried in Sonoma's Valley Cemetery, his name faintly visible on a modest, weather-beaten gravestone.

Further south, the Reverend Timothy Dwight Hunt—a name of auspicious evangelical connotations—pastor of the First Congregationalist Church of San Francisco, claimed on December 22, 1852, that, "No higher ambition could urge us to noble deeds than, on the basis of the colony of Plymouth, to make California the Massachusetts of the Pacific."[9] Though incoming residents to California possessed ambition, many lacked the piety requisite for the "noble deeds" of a William Bradford or Edward Winslow. Reverend Hunt, along with other clergymen such as Henry Durant, certainly hoped to shape their generation and beyond.[10] California, however, did not have the social and religious cohesion of a 17th century New England community. It is in San Francisco, where Elam Harnish, Jack London's prospector-turned-investor, boasted, "I'm Burning Daylight . . . Ain't afraid of God, devil, death, nor destruction."[11]

From its earliest days, the city earned the reputation as a haunt for infidels and libertines. Pious easterners, if they understood the missionary directive of the New Testament, and even raised financial support to send church planters westward, often did so with trepidation. On November 1, 1848, Osgood Wheeler, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Jersey City, New Jersey was solicited by the American Baptist Home Mission Society to serve as pioneer missionary to California. S. H. Cone, pastor of the First Baptist Church of New York City, who after voting in support of sending Wheeler, queried:

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6 John Steinbeck, *East of Eden* (New York: Penguin, 1952), 216.

7 The same year, Wesleyans founded University of the Pacific in San Jose. Methodists also founded the University of Southern California in 1880.

8 Presently First Baptist Church, the structure was built in 1852 with redwood beams from the mill owned by the general and statesman Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo (1807–1890).

9 Kevin Starr, *California*, 109.

10 Durant founded Contra Costa Academy in 1853, which in 1855 became the College of California. He intended the nondenominational institution—presently that University of California at Berkeley—to "furnish the means of a thorough and comprehensive education of the pervading spirit and influence of the Christian religion." Cited in Jason Sexton, "Can Theology Engage with California's Culture," in *Theology and California: Theological Refractions on California's Culture* Jason Sexton and Fred Sanders, eds. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 41. Sexton notes that Berkeley faculty taught natural theology courses as late as 1871 and moral philosophy until 1879.

11 Jack London, *Burning Daylight* (Los Angeles: Aegypan Press), 114. The novel, written in 1910, was the most popular of London's writings during his lifetime.

> But do you know where you are going, my brother? I would rather go as a missionary to China or Cochin China than to San Francisco. Don't you stir a step, my brother, unless you are prepared to go to the darkest spot on earth."[12]

Cone's forebodings, notwithstanding, Wheeler headed west and arrived in San Francisco on February 28, 1849. First Baptist Church's inaugural Sunday School, in which six adults and one child were present, met on May 27. Four weeks later, the class grew to forty persons.[13] Despite promising beginnings, Baptist growth in California did not match the meteoric population increase. J. Lewis Shuck (1812–1863), the first missionary commissioned by the Southern Baptist Convention, lamented that California was filled "with feeble Baptist Churches, most of them without pastors."[14]

Despite the fracture over slavery that, in 1845, split Northern and Southern Baptists, Harvey Gilbert, a Baptist layman and native of Winchester, New York was asked to be the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Oakland in 1859. Gilbert proposed establishing a seminary in Marin County, which was founded as "The San Rafael Institute and Boarding School" on March 23, 1861.[15] In a fateful turn of events, Confederates fired the first shots on Fort Sumter less than three weeks later. Shuck soon departed for South Carolina. Harvey Gilbert lost not only a mentor, but a crucial benefactor. Though he remained in San Rafael, the Institute folded prior to the War's ending. Southern Baptist investment in California would not recommence until the 1920's.

Harold Graves, who served as Golden Gate Seminary's third president, traces the earliest Southern Baptist presence in California during the 20th century to 1925, when Marvin Mouser and

12 See Harold K. Graves, *Into the Wind: Personal Reflections on the Early Years of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary* (Nashville: Broadman, 1983), 15–16; Chris Chun and John Shouse, *Golden Gate to Gateway: A History* (Nashville: B&H, 2019), 5–6. See O. C, Wheeler and California Baptist Historical Society. The Story of Early Baptist History in California: Prepared at the Request of California Baptist Historical Society, 1888, and Read Before the Society at Sacramento, April 13, 1889. California: publisher not identified, 1889. In *Visions From San Francisco Bay* trans., Richard Lourie (New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 1982), the Polish poet Czeslaw Milocsz, reflecting 120-years after Cone penned the following: "Call it a delusion, but a demonic presence can be felt on this continent whose apparent concern is that Christian man see his own nature revealed and that he unleash all his brutality," 40.

13 Chun and Shouse, *Golden Gate to Gateway*, 7. On Shuck's life, see Thelma Wolfe Hall, *I Give Myself: The Story of J. Lewis Shuck and His Mission to the Chinese* (Richmond, Va.: Thelma Wolfe Hall, 1983).

14 Quoted in Sam Harvey, "The Southern Baptist Contribution to Baptist Cause in California Prior to 1890" (ThM Thesis, GGBTS, 1958), 24. Cited in *Golden Gate to Gateway*, 9. Shuck, who served as a missionary to China prior to coming to California helped found a black Baptist church in Sacramento in 1857. On Shuck's life see Margaret Morgan Thomas, "Strangers in the House: J. Lewis Shuck and Issachar Roberts, First American Baptist Missionaries to China." Doctoral Dissertation, University of Virginia, 1972. On Shuck's wife, Henrietta, see Thomas Sanford Dunway, *Pioneering for Jesus: The Story of Henrietta Hall Shuck*. Nashville.: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1930.

15 Chun and Shouse, *Golden Gate to Gateway*, 11–12.

his family settled in Shafter.[16] Some members of the Mouser family joined the Northern Baptist church in Shafter but objected to the church's practice of open communion and alien immersion (admitting to membership those who had not been baptized by immersion as believers). The Mousers began holding worship services in their homes and on May 10th, 1936, a Baptist church was organized that met in the Seventh-Day Adventist building.[17] In coming decades, hundreds of Southern Baptist churches would be planted, though the conditions that made such growth possible—mass migration from Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas–stemmed from calamity, notably the Great Depression and Dust Bowl.

The Dust Bowl

In *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck imprinted on national consciousness, the Okie as an American stereotype. The author's disillusioned ex-revivalist preacher, Jim Casy, who accompanies the Joad family to California attests to his spiritual exhaustion.

> I ain't preachin' no more much. The spirit ain't in the people much no more; and worse'n that, the spirit ain't in me no more. Course now' again the spirit gets movin' an' I rip out a meetin', or when folks sets out food I give em' grace, but my heart ain't in it.[18]

Unable, in his own words, to "take the good ol' gospel that was just layin' there to my hand," Casy, to use a modern idiom "deconstructs." Haunted by an entrenched pastoral pathos, he laments, "Here I got the sperit sometimes an' nothin' to preach about. I got the call to lead the people, an' no place to lead 'em."[19]Reverend Casy, whose evangelical zeal is rekindled, a socialist evangel as its new object, is bludgeoned to death, a martyr for the workingman's cause. If Jim Casy's western migration paralleled a move to secularity, this was not the pattern for the majority of southerners, most of which brough their earnest revivalistic religion with them.

A year after the publication of Steinbeck's iconic novel, fourteen churches met to form the Southern Baptist General Convention of California. These congregations tallied a membership of 1,038 with 142 recorded baptisms. In 1941, when California had a population of just over 7 million people, R. W. Lackey estimated that 75,000 to 100,000 of those residents were Southern Baptists concentrated in the central valley.[20] One year later, the number of churches had grown to 40, with total membership topping 2,647. Even with the dearth of men, many of which were mo-

16 Marvin's brother Virgil came in 1927. Marvin and Virgil's father, George, a Baptist preacher, migrated in 1928.

17 *Into the Wind: Reflections on the Early Years of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1983), 30–31.

18 *Grapes of Wrath*, 20.

19 *Grapes of Wrath*, 20.

20 Hughes provided a ratio of Southern Baptist churches in proportion to population growth.

bilized for World War II, the convention listed 56 churches with 4,449 members in 1943.[21] Elmer Gray noted that in 1943, new SBC churches were being planted at a staggering rate of one every two or three weeks. That same year, B. N. Lummus, general missionary of the state convention, wrote in *The California Southern Baptist* "No Southern Baptist state convention has made so marvelous a growth in so short a time as has the Southern Baptist General Convention of California."[22] Drawing from available data, Robert D. Hughes noted that Southern Baptist presence in California kept pace with growth so that by 1977, they constituted 1.5 percent of the total population.[23] As of 2023, 392,119 members in 1,738 Southern Baptist churches constitute 1.005 percent of California's 39 million residents.[24] While the ratio has diminished, total SBC membership in California places it among the largest in the national convention.

Isam B. Hodges, a native of Harisburg, Arkansas, who came to California in 1935, served as Golden Gate Seminary's first president. Reflecting on the conditions that led to the institution's founding in 1944, Hodges understood that without the devastating drought that brought droves to California, the seminary would likely not exist. Calamity proved providential.

> We never know all there is behind a movement. God may have caused this dust bowl in order to scatter these people over the western country and evangelize it for Him. This country is the greatest mission in all our nation. These become leaders for God in every community where they reside. God may be getting ready for the great revival that he knows ought to sweep this western country.[25]

In addition to Golden Gate, Southern Baptists founded California Baptist College in 1950, following the familiar pattern of establishing institutions of higher learning in wake of renewal movements. By the late 1960's, the nation's cultural mood had dramatically shifted. Baby Boomers across the nation were heading to the West Coast by thousands, many on quests that, if they could be broadly classified as "spiritual," were markedly un-evangelical. Yet even at world's western periphery, the gospel would prove persuasive to unlikely converts, proclaimed as it was by preachers and evangelists who judged that new wine would not fit in old wineskins.

21 Elmer L. Gray, *Heirs of Promise: A Chronicle of California Southern Baptists, 1940–1978* (Fresno, CA: California Baptist Press, 1978), 29.

22 *The California Southern Baptist*, June 1943.

23 Robert D. Hughes' 1975 study provides the following ratios of Baptist churches to population growth. In 1950, 34,061 Southern Baptists in a population of 10.5 million yielded .3 percent, 201,905 members out of 18.5 million in 1965 reached 1.1 percent. By 1975, 299,610 California Southern Baptist constituted 1.5 percent of the state's 21,250,00 residents. Cited in Gray, *Heirs of Promise*, 168.

24 "2023 SBC Statistic by State Convention" http://media2.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/annuals/SBC_Annual_2023.pdf

25 Isam Hodges, private papers. Cited in Harold Graves, *Into the Wind*, 41.

The Jesus People Movement

In 1968, Harvard sociologist Peter Berger claimed that, "[by] the 21st century, religious believers are likely to be found only in small sects, huddled together to resist a worldwide secular culture."[26] Drawing from Max Weber's secularization thesis—that nations become less religious as they become wealthier and technologically advanced—Berger could make such prognostications with some confidence, assuming that patterns in the U.S. would follow those of Western Europe. The same year, *Time* magazine featured its iconic *Is God Dead?* cover. With the Vietnam War at its height, a string of political assassinations, an emerging drug culture and sexual revolution, religion's outlook certainly appeared "bleak."

By June of 1971, after which nearly a quarter of a million young people had been converted, scores of them baptized in Pirate's Cove, *Time* published "The New Rebel Cry, Jesus is Coming!" A magenta-colored sketch of Christ superimposed on a backdrop of red and yellow—a suggestive subversion of Communist insignia. An Awakening had begun, one whose impact was centered around young hippies, many of whom were converted while living in the Bay Area.[27]

Like most revivals in history, fluidity complicates attempts to measure results, yet as Larry Eskridge's detailed study has persuasively shown, the "resurgence of evangelicalism during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries" is indebted to the Jesus People Movement (JPM).[28] Though overshadowed by Chuck Smith, Lonnie Frisbee, and the beginnings of Calvary Chapel as a new evangelical denomination, Eskridge's decades-long project traces this revival's beginning to the nondescript First Baptist Church of Mill Valley in 1967. Ted Wise was converted after reading the Bible, and after a harrowing acid trip in which he believed God commanded him to attend the preaching of John MacDonald, Wise joined the church.[29]

Baptist support for the earliest "Jesus Freaks" —complex as the relations were at times between middle-aged established ministers and young, often irregular hippie converts—makes for an unconventional, albeit fascinating narrative. Arthur Blessitt, a Southern Baptist from Mississippi came to California to study at Golden Gate Seminary in 1965. Disappointed at his experience, he dropped out and eventually made his way to Los Angeles.[30] In 1967 Blessitt did street evangelism on the Sunset Strip, handing out tracts and helping drug addicts and runaways. After gathering

26 Peter Berger, "A Bleak Outlook is Seen for Religion" *New York Times*, April 25, 1968, 3.

27 June 21, 1971, pp. 56–63. https://time.com/vault/issue/1971-06-21/page/1/

28 *God's Forever Family: The Jesus People Movement in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

29 See *God's Forever Family: The Jesus People Movement in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 10–28. McDonald's account of these events was published as *House of Acts* in 1970.

30 Blessitt claimed that fellow students and professors were "cold in spirit" and "arch liberals." Cited in *God's Forever Family*, 56.

financial support from pastors and businessmen, Blessitt rented a storefront on Sunset Boulevard that became known as "His Place." Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, His Place featured live music, provided ex-addict counselors and had evangelistic preaching.[31] In *Turned on to Jesus* (1971), Blessitt, who claimed that upward of ten-thousand people were converted in a three-year period, gained notoriety for carrying a 90-pound wooden cross across the U.S. and around the world, tallying tens of thousands of miles.[32]

Kent Philpott's *Memoirs of a Jesus Freak*, a first-person account of the JPM, provides insight into Southern Baptist involvement, specifically in the Bay Area. Philpott also traces its origins to San Francisco in 1967 and its ending to 1972.[33] He describes the movement's theology as "either Pentecostal in nature or Dispensational and anti-Pentecostal, but in either case, it was thoroughly fundamentalistic, literalistic, and certain that Jesus was coming soon."[34] JPM's leadership was predominantly young; most had little or no formal theological training. These strengths proved to be liabilities at times, but the impact of this revival in the subsequent decades was substantive, albeit in subtle ways.

Apart from Calvary and the Vineyard Movement, a charismatic offshoot of Calvary led by John Wimber and Frisbee, Eskridge identifies four additional contributions to evangelical Christianity in America, namely, the Contemporary Christian Music Industry, Praise Music, Youth Culture and Willow Creek and the "Seeker Sensitive" Movement.[35] Evangelical churches today take some, if not all, of these dimensions for granted. Worship music that in form and content, is amenable to contemporary ears, intentional strategies for welcoming visitors unaccustomed to church, what were once innovations are now first principles. In 2017, fifty years after the beginning of the JPM, Greg Laurie led his 15,000-member congregation, Harvest, to join the Southern Baptist Convention. Citing his admiration for the SBC's "focus on evangelism . . . outreach in the missions and relief ministries," Laurie's cooperation with the SBC, rather than an older pastor's reactionary move to an establishment institution, demonstrates the latent evangelical affinity.[36]

31 Eskridge, *God's Forever Family*, 56–57.

32 See *Baptist Press*, July 9, 1976.

33 *Memoirs of a Jesus Freak*, 63. Philpott estimates that there were "probably 500 conversions just in the central area [of Marin County]." p. 68. He recounts interaction with an array of cults and cult teachers including Jim Jones (The People's Temple), David Berg (The Children of God), and Victor Paul Wierwille (The Way International). An article in the *California Southern Baptist*, Vol. 30 No. 26, July 8, 1971 captures the theological tension present at the time. In response to criticism of his "afterglow" services and Pentecostal label, Chuck Smith countered, "Calvary is not Pentecostal...we're totally opposed to Pentecostalism...and believe the greatest manifestation of the Holy Spirit is love. See *California Southern Baptist*, Vol. 30 No. 26, July 8, 1971, 12.

34 *Memoirs of a Jesus Freak*, 112.

35 Eskridge, *God's Forever Family*, 266–283.

36 Diana Chandler, "Greg Laurie's Cooperation with SBC Mutually Beneficial" Baptist Press, June 14, 2017. https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/greg-lauries-cooperation-with-sbc-mutually-beneficial/ (accessed August 30th, 2023).

Southern Baptists, present in the earliest days of the Jesus People Movement played critical roles in its development and growth. The reverse is also true. SBC churches are indebted to the JPM for its positive contributions not just in California, but across the county, a case of evangelical cross-pollination.

Nobel laureate Czeslaw Milocsz, speaking in an ironic vein in 1969 wrote that, "...it is truly a privilege to live in California and every day to drink the elixir of perfect alienation."[37] Methodist theologian Stanley Hauerwas stated bluntly, "I don't believe in California." Whatever California's essence may be—the object of Hauerwas' contempt—the state is not a place devoid of evangelical belief and believers. In addition to events noted above, California is home to the Azusa Street Revival, to Billy Graham's inaugural Los Angeles Crusade to *Youth With A Mission*. *Jews for Jesus* was started by Martin (Moshe) Rosen, himself converted during the Jesus Movement. Whatever merit the critiques leveled at megachurches have, 14 percent of them are in California.[38] 500,000 college students are enrolled at Christian colleges in the state.[39] Among the eleven largest accredited seminaries in the United States, three—Fuller, Talbot, and Gateway—are in California.[40]

In a study from 2020, sociologist Ryan Burge compared church attendance numbers in 2020 to 2008, California decreased only 2.5%, which, with the exception of Nebraska, was the smallest drop among states west of the Mississippi.[41] Any diminution is concerning, but the statistics provide necessary perspective. Southern Baptist growth is a far cry from the 1943 pace of a new church every two or three weeks, but the conditions which precipitated this meteoric rise were unforeseen and could not be replicated. In his defense of Christ's resurrection, Wolfhart Pannenberg argued that every historical event is unique in the sense of being non-repeatable. Applying Pannenberg's insight to the present subject should guard us against expecting that the church will experience a future that directly mirrors the past. The Dust Bowl and the Jesus Movement were not the outcome of a complex and intentional strategy but were the result of an incalculable convergence of personal and impersonal conditions. That the unfolding was providential we must affirm, but that conclusion became clearer as the present receded into the past. Positively, as the future holds unknown possibilities, the church may be vivified in ways that are presently unimaginable. G. K. Chesterton had something akin in mind when he wrote:

37 *Visions from San Francisco Bay* trans., Richard Lourie (New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 1982), 40.

38 http://hirr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/database.html

39 http://hirr.hartsem.edu/cgi-bin/mega/db.pl?db=default&uid=default&view_records=1&ID=*&sb=4&State=CA

40 https://www.ats.edu/files/galleries/2022-2023_Annual_Data_Tables.pdf

41 https://mobile.twitter.com/ryanburge/status/1625924542819336212 (accessed on June 14, 2023). In a recent survey on *weekly* church attendance, California notched 22%, 3% below the national average, but equal to five states (Alaska, Arizona, Montana, New York, and Wisconsin) and better than 11 others. https://twitter.com/ryanburge/status/1696892545219899855 (accessed on September 1, 2023).

> Again and again, before our time, men have grown content with a diluted doctrine. And again and again there has followed on that dilution, coming as out of the darkness in a crimson cataract, the strength of the red original wine.[42]

Winning the West through Education: Southern Baptists in the State of Utah

In the milieu that is the American West, Utah is an outlier in discussion on the religious and political destiny of the United States, particularly in its attempts at religious education and acculturation. What the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) has done to train and acculturate its people in this desert "island" of a state is certainly the envy of any institution, perhaps even of Lyman Beecher himself, despite its errant theology. Mormon settlers arrived in 1847, and Utah's 177-year history provides a snapshot of what diligent systems of education and discipleship can do to maintain a particular culture despite various attempts to tear it down from the outside. As an orthodox Calvinist, Beecher would be disappointed at the LDS stronghold that has, to the present period, kept evangelical Christianity from taking a large hold in the state.

A First Touch

The first substantiated record of westerners to Utah, Christianity included, comes during the Domínguez-Escalante expedition through Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico in 1776. The explorers, Fray Francisco Atanasio Dominguez and Fray Silvestre Vélez de Escalante were inventorying new land for the Spanish Crown, trying to find a new route from Santa Fe, NM to Monterey, CA. These early explorers kept about them the "Franciscan aim of Christianization" that viewed indigenous cultures with an eye towards proselytization.[43] The team entered eastern Utah on Sept 11th, 1776. The party spent a month traveling West to modern-day Provo, UT and then South along the Wasatch Range to the Southwestern corner of the state near modern-day St. George. The team left the state on October 15th and continued on their return journey to Santa Fe.[44] While the Catholic Church was making its presence known in the desert Southwest and California very little would be done in Utah for years to come until 1871 with the dedication of the first Catholic Church in Salt Lake City.

It would be another 71 years after the Domínguez-Escalante expedition until Mormon Pioneers, led by Brigham Young, would arrive in the Salt Lake Valley on July 24th, 1847, to set up what they believed to be the New Jerusalem, fleeing the persecution they had faced in the Midwest.

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42 *The Everlasting Man*, 165.

43 Ted J. Warner ed., Fray Angelico Chavez trans., *The Domínguez-Escalante Journal: Their Expedition Through Colorado, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico in 1776* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995), pages viii.

44 Warner, *The Domínguez-Escalante Journal*, 50–97.

Mormon Education

From Mormonism's very beginnings, Latter Day Saints worked at education for the purposes of increasing intelligence and theological indoctrination. In Kirtland, Ohio the fledgling Mormon Church worked to establish theological schools with instruction for converts, ministers, and missionaries. In 1833 the "the school of the prophets" was launched in Kirtland. As the church was forced to move, they consistently worked to established schools starting in Ohio, then Missouri, and in Nauvoo, Illinois.[45] With the theocratic LDS government issuance of the Nauvoo Charter, education was again established with the proposed University of the City of Nauvoo. In 1845 the Nauvoo dream was shattered with the killing of Joseph Smith and the need to flee further Westward. Even during the trek to Utah, Mormons under Brigham Young's instruction were exhorted to establish schools, and did so, even in their camps.[46]

From the time the Mormons settled in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847, they began to set up common schools housed within the various ward houses.[47] The curriculum in the LDS schools included the Mormon Scriptures and the Bible. Other church leaders like Orson Pratt advocated for additional books such as the *History of Joseph Smith the Prophet* as a reading primer for students.[48] As Mormons had fled from the east, hoping to establish an autonomous state, the State of Deseret, they wanted no influence from the US federal government. Mormons believed all governments to be inadequate because they were not led by Mormon men. The LDS church and Brigham Young were especially opposed to any governmental control of the education of Mormon children. As the US government shrewdly brought this rogue state under its control, education became a battle ground. The battle was over Mormon goals of indoctrination via schooling and the wider goals of governmental policy to assimilate students into American culture, thereby preparing them to serve in the nation's workforce.[49] Mormons wanted to further their theocracy using the education of their children as the principal means.

45 John Clifton Moffitt, *The History of Public Education in Utah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1946), 1–2.

46 Moffitt, *The History of Public Education in Utah*, 7, 9.

47 John Gary Maxwell, *Robert Newton Baskin and the Making of Modern Utah* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013), 202. A Mormon ward is the local "church building" that the average member of the LDS church attends weekly for services. Members of the church are assigned to the ward they are to attend, and even the time, based on their geographic location in the city. Five to twelve wards are organized into a stake. The geographic breakups for wards and public schools have always been very similar creating an insulating factor in the culture. The people you live with you go to church with, and the people you go to church with you go to school with.

48 Moffitt. *The History of Public Education in Utah*, 16.

49 Maxwell, *Robert Newton Baskin and the Making of Modern Utah*, 201–203.

Like the unfulfilled dream that was the University of the City in Nauvoo, the general assembly of Utah passed an act on February 28, 1850, that created the University of Deseret.[50] This dream became a reality. The institution was the first state university west of the Missouri River, renamed the University of Utah in 1892.[51] Twenty years later in 1870 the Timpanogos Branch of the University was opened, later reorganized as Brigham Young Academy in 1875. Brigham Young Academy would go on to become Brigham Young University in 1903 and is now the largest church-sponsored university in America. The founding purpose of these schools was to raise up Mormon teachers who could impart theological ideals to students in the LDS schools across the territory of Utah.[52]

During the latter half of the 19th century antipathy between Mormons and non-Mormons increased. As the population of the state grew—in part because the trans-continental railroad brought more non-Mormon workers to the state—so did the need for education independent of LDS hands. During this early season of population increase, Mormons were segregated non-Mormons from themselves.[53] The earliest non-Mormon denominational work in Utah came among those who settled in the fledgling state because of employment. Naturally, their denominational affiliation followed them, and many of the mainline traditions set up private mission schools that served the non-Mormon population. The first protestant church that was founded in Salt Lake City was the First Congregational Church that began in 1865. Soon after Saint Mark's Episcopal Church organized on November 15, 1870. Then, First Presbyterian Church of Salt Lake City was founded in 1871. First Presbyterian Church started the most notable of denominational schools in Utah. In 1875 the Collegiate Institute was started in the basement of the church, which would later become Westminster University which is still in operation today.[54] By 1890 there were thirty-six Presbyterian mission schools and four academies in Utah.[55] These denominational schools provided a missional way to educate Mormons in Christian doctrine.[56] Since these early efforts at Christian education by denominations, there have been various attempts to start "Christian schools," particularly for grades K-12. Intermountain Christian School, established in 1982 and still in operation, is a notable example.

In 1890 *The Collett Bill* and similar legislation in 1892 made public education of children in the territory of Utah compulsory, provided such education was adequately funded and district

50 Moffitt, *The History of Public Education in Utah*, 13.

51 https://about.utah.edu, (accessed 3/28/2024).

52 Moffitt, *The History of Public Education in Utah*, 13-14.

53 Moffitt, *The History of Public Education in Utah*, 15.

54 Unfortunately Westminster University severed its Presbyterian affiliation in 1974 and all religious ties in 1983.

55 https://www.fpcslc.org/history (accessed 7/18/24).

56 Maxwell, *Robert Newton Baskin and the Making of Modern Utah*, 201.

boundaries were not the same as LDS ward boundaries. As these requirements were met, construction of public schools began. The strong push for Americanization by the US government is evident in the way the early schools were named for American statesmen, soldiers, educators, and other personalities.[57] By 1883, eighty-four percent of children six to eighteen were enrolled in Utah public schools, a rate higher than many progressive states. By comparison, before 1883, only thirty-one percent of school-aged children in LDS schools were educated in the wards.[58] A curriculum more familiar to the American public education system was put in place. In 1896, when Utah was admitted to the Union as a state, the Mormon Church's hold on education ceased on account of separation of church and state[59]

By 1911, the number of students that were enrolled in Utah public schools outnumbered those in LDS academies. Though it was government pressure that toppled Mormon-dominated education system, in 1912, a new face of Mormon education appeared alongside public education with its express goal to further inculcate LDS youth in doctrine and culture. Joseph Merrill, inspired by a seminary he had seen in Chicago, proposed the idea of a separate LDS seminary structure near a public school where students could get LDS religious education alongside secular instruction. Students would learn about the Old and New Testaments, the Book of Mormon, and Mormon church history. Taught by a qualified LDS teacher, high school students would receive credit upon completion. The first LDS seminary, built by the LDS church near Granite High School in Salt Lake City in 1912, began a revolution in LDS theological instruction. The second seminary was opened in 1915, and by 1920 there were 20 in operation. Similarly, in 1926 the LDS church began to undertake a similar program that aimed at universities, launching its first LDS Institute of Religion near the Campus of the University of Idaho in Moscow. The University of Utah Institute of Religion started in 1935.[60]

As of 2012, the LDS seminary had "375,389 students in 146 countries while the institute program enrolled 375,380 students in 144 countries" for a total of 727,830 students worldwide involved in LDS theological education as part of their high school and college education.[61] This system did see a significant decline in enrolment from 2012 to 2022, but the last few years have witnessed a resurgence. Drive by any major high school in modern-day Utah and you will see students walking across the street to the LDS seminary for instruction and inculturation. The same holds true on college and university campuses in the state as students attend the LDS Institute of Religion.

57 Maxwell, *Robert Newton Baskin and the Making of Modern Utah*, 209.

58 Maxwell, *Robert Newton Baskin and the Making of Modern Utah*, 202, 210.

59 Moffitt, *The History of Public Education in Utah*, 17. Separation of religious and public education is enshrined in Utah's Constitution, Article X. sec. 12–13.

60 Casey Paul Griffiths, "A Century of Seminary," https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/si/history/a-century-of-seminary?lang=eng (accessed 3/30/24).

61 Griffiths, "A Century of Seminary."

SBC Work in Utah

Baptists first arrived in Utah in the 1880s. The Northern Baptist Convention (now American Baptist) organized First Baptist Church of Ogden in 1881, and then First Baptist Church of Salt Lake City in 1883. First Baptist Church of Salt Lake City began in the home of an Ohio Baptist mining superintendent because the LDS church opposed the use of any facilities for a meeting of non-LDS people. In 1884 FBC Salt Lake City would receive gifts from John D. Rockefeller to build a new facility including a worship center and a school. The Northern Baptist convention had a heart for the West and reported in 1900 that 799 of its 1,180 missionaries were in the West. The convention used progressive missionary methods such as fitting seven railroad cars as chapels to park in towns without a church. The railcars included "living quarters for an evangelist, a chapel seating one hundred people on oak pews, an organ, pulpit, and blackboard."[62]

Because of fallout from the Civil War, the SBC would not establish a presence in Utah until 1944. On July 2, 1944, Harold Opal and Robert and Cora Johnson along with eight charter members organized the Roosevelt Baptist Church in Roosevelt Utah, again an area that was seeing an influx of transplants from across the US for the booming oil industry.[63] The second SBC church in Utah would be First Baptist Church of Vernal Utah on November 22, 1946. Others would follow. First Baptist Provo, organized on August 23, 1948,[64] Rose Park Baptist Church in Salt Lake City on November 12, 1950,[65] and First Baptist Church of Clearfield Utah was organized on April 1st, 1951.[66] In the fifties and sixties the SBC would hear the call to missions in the West and begin to emphasize evangelism and church planting. Many of its original churches were started during these golden years. Risen Life Church (originally Holladay Baptist Church) was organized in April of 1962, having begun as a mission on May 19, 1957.[67] Utah churches have continued to grow in number from these humble beginnings. In 2013 the Utah Idaho Southern Baptist Convention numbered 149 churches of which 73 were in Utah. That year the UISBC started a new vision for church planting, called *Vision 2020*. By 2020 the UISBC had 188 churches. At the most recent count, there are 102 SBC churches in UT. Almost 30% of the SBC churches in Utah have been planted in the last ten years.[68]

62 E. W. Hunke Jr., *Southern Baptists in The Intermountain West (1940-1989): A Fifty-Year History of Utah, Idaho, and Nevada Southern Baptist*, (Franklin, TN: Providence House Publishers, 1998), 34–36.

63 Hunke Jr., *Southern Baptists in The Intermountain West (1940-1989)*, 50.

64 Hunke Jr., *Southern Baptists in The Intermountain West (1940-1989)*, 68.

65 Hunke Jr., *Southern Baptists in The Intermountain West (1940-1989)*, 77.

66 Hunke Jr., *Southern Baptists in The Intermountain West (1940-1989)*, 79.

67 Hunke Jr., *Southern Baptists in The Intermountain West (1940-1989)*, 153. I, Jared, am currently the pastor of Risen Life Church.

68 These numbers were supplied by Rob Lee the current Executive Director of the Utah Idaho Southern Baptist Convention.

As the numbers attest, the primary work of Southern Baptists in Utah and the intermountain West was on evangelism and church planting. Beyond the discipleship that came through Sunday School and Vacation Bible Schools little, if any, effort was devoted towards systems or institutions of Christian education. Granted, SBC seminaries, particularly Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary (Now Gateway), helped to train pastors sent to Utah. Professors would regularly speak at conventions, events, and revivals, but to date, there has not been extensive effort to Christianize Utah through systems or institutions of theological education.

Theological Training Efforts in Utah

Ken Mulholland, a graduate of Reformed Theological Seminary, after looking around Utah's church landscape saw the need for pastors to be theologically educated.[69] Opened in 1984 as the Utah Institute of Biblical Studies—and then later renamed the Salt Lake Theological Seminary—this institution boasts of some 2,500 students around the world who have studied there. Salt Lake Theological Seminary was the only theological school of its kind between Denver and California.[70] The institution attempted to align itself with other seminaries outside Utah including Fuller and Denver Seminary, but in 2009, due to financial constraints, lack of accreditation, and theological drift, the school was forced to close its doors after 25 years in ministry.[71] In 2010 the school regrouped to become the Vine Institute, which now functions as a "diversified, decentralized, educational network" that serves to develop existing leaders in churches, but especially church leaders in the immigrant and refugee communities.[72] They currently offer a program in Christian Leadership.

A more recent attempt came at the hands of Dan Walker and the Salt Lake Baptist Association in partnership with Gateway Seminary to increase the theological education of laymen and pastors in the Salt Lake Valley through the Seminary's Contextualized Leadership Development program (Now called Advance). A non-accredited certificate program for men and women without a bachelor's degree or qualifications to attend seminary, Advance offered the core curriculum of a seminary education. Many pastors in the Salt Lake Baptist Association were trained from 2006 to 2015 in what totaled six graduating classes.

69 Becky Hobbs, "UIBS: Strengthening the Saints in Utah," *Reformed Quarterly* 8.4 (Winter 1989). https://rts.edu/resources/uibs-strengthening-the-saints-in-utah/.

70 Carrie A. Moore, "Salt Lake seminary to graduate final class?," *Deseret News*, May 16th, 2009. https://www.deseret.com/2009/5/16/20317911/salt-lake-seminary-to-graduate-final-class, (accessed 1/23/2024).

71 Carole Mikita "Economic woes force seminary to shut its doors," *KSL News*, Oct 30th, 2008. https://www.ksl.com/article/4661572/economic-woes-force-seminary-to-shut-its-doors, (accessed 1/23/2024).

72 https://vine-institute.org/about/#mission (accessed 3/25/2024).

In 2021, three churches in Salt Lake City partnered together to bring accredited seminary training to Utah. In the last twenty years the Christian population in Utah has grown tremendously, yet still has not increased statistical because of overall population growth in the state, and hovers around three percent of the total population. The last ten plus years has seen many churches planted in Utah. The need for qualified leadership is greater than ever. Pastor Dr. Matt Emadi of Crossroads Church, Dr. Jared Jenkins, of Risen Life Church, and Dr. Lukus Counterman of Gospel Grace Church, began to dream of bringing accredited seminary level training to Utah.

Drawing lessons learned from previous unsuccessful attempts at theological training, these pastors met with representatives of the six SBC seminaries as well as non-SBC seminaries in an attempt to bring accredited seminary training to Utah, thereby raising up more indigenous leaders. Many of the seminaries offered classes taught by churches that then could be transferred in for credit to the seminaries. It was Gateway Seminary that was able to deliver the best possible solution. Gateway allowed a teaching site to be formed as part of its Rocky Mountain Campus. Gateway was able to adjunct these three pastors to teach in person classes and meet the accreditation standards and fill the gaps with online education through Gateway's extensive network. The Salt Lake School of Theology, a teaching site of Gateway Seminary, was able to bring accredited seminary classes to Utah for the first time. After three years of operation the school has about twenty students pursing a Masters of Theological Essentials. The fruit for the leadership of churches in Utah is already being felt. The school is strengthening existing church staff with educational opportunities and assisting in raising up new church leadership for the future.

The battle for the future of Utah by the Baptist has faced one large foe, the LDS church, and her strong institutions for education. LDS institutions have shaped the history of Utah and have insulated the dominate Mormon culture from changing too quickly, and in the fight for the West we must consider this institution's success. The educational systems put in place by the Mormon church are commendable in many ways, but imitation may be out of reach, and maybe ill-advised for Baptists. In circumspect, Baptists must wrestle with their core values of freedom of conscience, local autonomy, and occasional partnership that may prohibit a rigid system of discipleship that is applied across their churches broadly. Furthermore, Baptists have traditionally had an evangelistic zeal that has often eclipsed a catechistic drive in ongoing discipleship beyond initial conversion and the organization of new churches. Finally, the churches of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century have been shaped by the seeker-sensitive movement and business marketing that encourages differentiation between churches instead of a commonality of core teaching.

Despite different approaches to education, the churches of Utah are growing and flourishing, and it is precisely their freedom that is often attractive to those coming out of the systems of Mormonism, not to mention the teaching of Gospel truth. It also must be remembered that evangelicalism as a whole and the Baptist church in Utah are still in their infancy—as are their

institutions. Though appearing weak when faced with a mighty foe, recent moves toward deeper theological education through cooperative efforts between churches promise an ever-brightening future. Education is and continues to be a core tenant of the Baptist Faith and Message for advancing the Gospel in the world, and we would do well as Southern Baptist to revisit and recommit ourselves to this ideal. To continue to win the West, Baptists must make concerted and creative efforts to deliver not only the Gospel but theological training and education to its people and those that God is saving.

Conclusion

Nearly two centuries have passed since Lyman Beecher's *Plea for the West* and it is difficult to determine if one could tally more fulfillments or disappointments. As noted, the West is not an occidental version of early 19th century Connecticut, but then again, theologically-speaking, neither is Connecticut. The states of California and Utah were not in the purview of Beecher's essay. The former was admitted to the union 15 years after *Plea* and the latter, over sixty years after its publication, but the developments, growth, and culture of the United States have been as the author claimed, in the West. The populations of the western states, particularly California, are large, and there are evangelical Christians, especially Southern Baptists—most of which have a lineage younger than a century. And the institutions of theological learning have followed and continue to follow the churches. Is the West's evangelical future bright? Beecher had higher hopes than anyone. He cited Jonathan Edwards' well-known eschatological prognostication that the millennium would commence in America. Beecher admitted that when he first heard the opinion, "thought it chimerical; but all providential developments since, and all the existing signs of the times, lend corroboration to it."[73] A patent dismissal of such optimism is tempting, but perhaps we are simply too close, temporally, or otherwise, to recognize what is before us. Southern Baptists in California and Utah accomplished much in a relatively short period of time and have thus far resisted the theological disjunction between the believing faithful in the pews and the unbelieving lecturers in the classroom. As few theological institutions remain faithful to their founders and their respective churches, perhaps we can embrace the status of pleasantly surprised outliers.

73 *A Plea*, 10.

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HOW HAVE WE MISSED THIS? PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

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I am a professor of special education specializing in moderate to severe disabilities. I am not a seminary professor or theological expert who can parse out Bible verses or speak about meanings in the original languages. However, I am a Christian who has worked within the Christian church and community on areas related to persons with disabilities since 1974. I can read my Bible and make applications to Christian life. Following this simple practice, I can say that we as the Christian church are failing in this area.

Love your Neighbor

In considering theology and disability, one should begin by looking at the greatest commandments, to love God and to love your neighbor. Jesus addressed this in the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37). When scripture commands us to love our neighbors, we cannot be like the law scholar described in the passage who in seeking to "justify himself" basically asks Jesus, "Who is *not* my neighbor?" It could be that he wanted to reflect on what he would expect to be Jesus' perspective in that he is commanded to love some people but not love others. We may think we can look at this question and consider it a bit silly. However, although this question has perhaps already been answered, we act as if the Lord supported the questioner's perspective and in fact, did identify groups of people whom we are not required to love. Among those are persons with disabilities.

Back in 2010, I ran across a document related to persons with disabilities in Uganda, a place where I was attempting to develop a university program in disability studies. Entitled, "As if we weren't human: Discrimination and violence against women with disabilities in Northern Uganda" the essay shares stories which make the reader wonder if the women described were indeed fully human. Too often, persons with disabilities are perceived as weak (McNair, 2014) and are treated poorly. That is wrong. However, there are other ways in which people can be considered less than fully human. When the Lord commands us to go and make disciples of all nations, he does not add any qualifications. If we were to say, "No, I'm not going to go to Canada" we would be considered disobedient. Why would we exclude a group of people simply because they have the characteristic of being from a place called Canada? We might also say, "No, I'm not going to go to people with a particular skin color." We would then be a racist community. However, we feel entirely comfortable in saying, "No, I am not going to go to people with disabilities." It is as if people with that characteristic were not human, i.e., not created in the image of God, and so needn't be a focus for evangelism and discipleship.

In a recent conversation with a denominational leader over what was called *compassion ministries*, I asked whether churches were reaching out with ministry towards persons with disabilities. He indicated that of the over 200 churches in the region he was over, he knew of only six that were evangelizing, discipling, and/or including persons with various impairments in a very deliberate fashion. I wish I could say that this is a malaise of only this particular denomination, but virtually every flavor of Christianity might be indicted for lack of caring for this particular group.

As we consider a Biblical perspective on disability, we begin by understanding that the Bible applies to all people. We then move to other scriptures commands which we have apparently chosen to ignore. I would refer the reader to McNair and Rhodes (2019) for an in-depth discussion of scripture references which they lay out in the description of a Christian model of disability. This model uses the Bible to describe five relationships: the person with disabilities in relation to God, the person with disabilities in relation to themselves, the person with disabilities in relation to the community, the community in relation to itself, and the community in relation to God.

Confronting Traditions

Scripture shows us that Jesus confronted unloving traditions. We see this is the story of the woman at the well (John 4), the woman with the bleeding issue (Mark 5:25–34), and the woman who washed his feet with her tears (Luke 7:36–50) among others. The Pharisees and scribes of Jesus' day (maybe pastors of our day) allowed their traditions to trump the commands of God, particularly to love one's neighbor. They replaced the command with their traditions, treating them as equivalent to the commands of God. In Mark 7:6–9 and 13, Jesus says,

> Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men. And he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition…thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do."

It is as if I am considering two options: I can obey the commands of God (e.g., love all of my neighbors) or I can hold to my traditions where I treat some people as more valuable than others, the others as if they weren't human. James addresses this practice in chapter 2:1. "My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory." The New Living Translations translates the passage in a more confrontative manner saying, "My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others?" Other passages such as Romans 2:11 also make this point. The implications of this passage are many, however. At a very basic level, this form of favoritism can call into question whether we have faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet we consistently exclude persons with disabilities, particularly those who may have some form of social skill deficit.

In an introduction to special education class that I teach for general and special education teachers, I have my students interview their pastor with three questions.

1. Are people with disabilities a priority for ministry in our church?
2. If they are a priority, what is the evidence that they are a priority?
3. If they are not a priority, why aren't they a priority?

I will also prepare the students for the often-disappointing responses they may receive from church leaders. Sadly, most walk away discouraged. Pastors will say everything from, "We are not impacted by persons with disabilities," the implication being almost a sigh of relief in that they therefore don't have to do anything in that area. One might respond, "Maybe that is why no one with a disability attends your church." Another common response is "We love all people who come to us the same" when many are unable to come to church because they cannot drive or get a license due to their disability and regular congregational members have been discipled into feeling no compulsion to provide rides to potential disabled members. I've used the word "discipled" deliberately throughout this paper as I believe that is how people have been taught about the Christian faith in relation to persons with disabilities within the Christian community. Pastors have told me, "We cannot prioritize all areas of ministry, so we chose not to serve in this area." In other words, if you are a person with a disability go someplace else because you are not a priority to us.

One would think these responses are not the result of a lack of understanding scripture's indicating we should love our neighbors, all of our neighbors. It is more likely a decision to not un-

derstand, to not love some neighbors because loving them may be more challenging. It is like the old adage, "You cannot wake someone who is pretending to be asleep." Somehow, cultural change in the Christian community needs to be facilitated.

It is interesting to look at how Jesus interacted with persons with disabilities, and there are many examples. Two verses when considered side by side are particularly interesting. In Mark 2:1–2 we read the familiar story of the paralytic who was lowered through the roof by his friends. In verse 5, the passage states, **"**And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'" I suspect that when the friends heard this, they were disappointed. But when confronted by a person with a disability, Jesus looks to the need that every person has independent of their personal characteristics, the need for forgiveness. Contrast this with the story of another interaction. In Mark 10:46–52 we read of Bartimaeus, a blind man. He calls out, arguably in faith, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus ultimately calls him forward but then asks an unusual question for the context. "What do you want me to do for you?" Clearly, Jesus knew what he wanted but I suspect he was trying to teach something about the blind man. He already had faith which was the most important thing and healing on some level was secondary.

In each of these interactions with someone with a disability, the critical question is whether they have faith or not; once again the same question for any of us. If Jesus goes to the heart of the issue which is faith in God, why wouldn't we?

The Sovereignty of God

As Christians, we are familiar with the concept of the sovereignty of God, which implies that nothing is outside of his control. Everything we observe is either caused or permitted by him. We see this idea in a variety of passages. Exodus 4:11 states "Then the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?" This implies purpose on God's part.

But let's think some more about the ramifications of the sovereignty of God. His design for people is the church. The church is a gathering of Christ followers. One would assume therefore there should be a place for all Christ followers in the church. If there is not a place for someone based on some perceived characteristic or difference, if a person with disabilities is rejected or unwelcome, then something is wrong with how the church operates. This is the case whether it is tradition trumping the commands of God (Mark 7), members seeing and treating some people as more important than others (James 2) being unwilling to relinquish our power (McNair, 2014) such that seemingly weaker people are treated as dispensable (1 Corinthians 12:22), that people are thought as less honorable and treated as such (1 Corinthians 12:23) or telling someone, "I don't need you" (1 Corinthians 12:21). The end result is that we reject God's sovereignty for the church/Christian community by rejecting people created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) who according to his purposes have a disability.

In recent years, there has been a significant growth in the incidence of autism. Whether this is an actual increase or in part a recategorization of persons who were served under a different label like "learning disability" in the past—a discussion on labeling people is worthy of another whole discussion—it seems there are more people with this characteristic today than in the past. From a sovereignty of God perspective, one might ask, "What is God doing with this increase?" "Is there purpose in this for the church, the Christian community?" Inviting their presence to the larger community would change us. For example, we likely would have to do things reflecting the showing of special honor (1 Cor. 12:23). So, is this increase a corrective for us in the way we have been doing church and Christian community? Going back to Mark 7, will we obey the commands of God particularly to love our neighbors and embrace the radical changes obedience would bring? Or will we ignore, sidestep, or deny the commands of God and continue to hold to traditions which cause us to stay the same, making our traditions-based failings the newly created and embraced commands of God? These then allow us to not love all of our neighbors.

Changing our Culture

Can we, once again under the sovereignty of God, accept that people have purpose in the way they are for themselves and for the community? I can ignore that sovereign purpose for me as a community member and not experience the growth minimally in love for others that I might learn. "I only want to love people who are easy to love" could be a criticism of some Christian groups. Don't ask me to love someone who would cause me to have to change my life traditions, my church traditions, my worship traditions. It is important to note, however, that you are not the way God created you exclusively so that I can learn lessons about life. That perspective is too self-centered. Your life has purpose entirely apart from mine. Yet at the same time, we are in community in part, so that we will learn these lessons from each other.

It might be countered, "If persons with disabilities are present, I won't be able to do all the things I have always done in the same manner." You are absolutely correct! You often will not.

However, as implied thus far, is their presence in some way a "prophetic presence" (McNair in press)? A prophet may be defined as someone who speaks for the Lord. Is the presence of people, the mere presence, prophetic through the changes their presence demands? It is not that a child with autism is making demands in the form of statements like, "I want this or that." But rather his presence forces us to reflect on our comfortable, entrenched practices that have resulted in exclusion. We learn what loving our neighbor acted out in inclusive practices demands. We then must decide whether we will respond to those demands and change. Once again, overtly or not, this is something that we in the church have too often considered and have then decided to hold to traditions and ignore the commands of God. As indicated by the responses my students receive when interviewing their pastors, the lack of evidence of caring would condemn us in that we don't care for some people because of the way they have been created.

It is funny that when people with disabilities are at times integrated, we decry their presence and talk about how we don't know what to do. Take the example of a 10-year-old child with autism who joins the Sunday school class. We are stymied as to what to do with their presence. There is no disagreement that faith development/discipleship can become more challenging particularly as compared to the way we typically do these things. However, once again at a very basic, organic level these people were created to be among us in a community called the church.

But that is what obedience to the command to love your neighbor looks like. It can be inconvenient, challenging, hard, life-changing and it is not even so much about the person with the impairment as it is about you. Resistance to change is a characteristic of all of us. When we devalue some people, that is a defect in our character, not theirs. Perhaps the increase in autism, for example, is in part God's way of showing us how much we fail at loving our neighbors. Think back again to the story of the Good Samaritan. The man in the story who had been beaten and left for dead was doing nothing in the story, just lying there dying. But his presence showed which of the passersby would or would not love their neighbor. It is interesting how Jesus uses someone with a disability to teach that in the parable. How will we respond when people with potentially difficult issues come into our social sphere? I know one thing that happens to me is that I am forced to rely on the Lord more in the context of ministry. I can no longer do things myself in my own power. It is like in the story of Jehosophat (when the nation is surrounded by enemies). He hasn't the strength to defend his people. So, he prays, "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you" (2 Chronicles 20:12). On some level, that is a place we should desire to occupy. A place where we recognize we do not have the strength or ability to do something and must rely on the Lord.

Yet within the Christian community, we have created settings with physical demands that cannot be met by some, social demands that cannot be met by others, intellectual demands that cannot be met by others and in the process have discipled people into becoming intolerant of any expectations being placed on them to do anything outside of their accustomed practices. This is in contrast to Christ's command when he said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). These environments and practices have been socially constructed. Because of that, they are different in different places around the world with different groups. If they are socially constructed, one must wonder how they came to be as they are. The author has often wondered about this when considering the unanimity there is in the Christian tradition towards persons with disabilities and the resistance to change in those traditions in response to the command of God to love our neighbors. We are commanded to love all of our neighbors and we must recognize that they are the way they are according to God's sovereignty.

Change in Discipleship

When one considers the lack of inclusion of persons with disabilities, there is a degree to which this exclusion must be laid at the feet of our leaders. Whether it be pastors, denominational leaders, or faculty and administrators at Christian colleges and seminaries who are training our leaders. Based upon their actions, apparently, these folks have been discipled into the viewpoint that ministry to persons with disabilities is not sufficiently important to be made a priority. This perspective is then relayed to pastors-in-training and rank-and-file members of local Christian communities with the end result being the ministry priorities we currently see in local churches. This goes broader than disability ministry in a specific sense. At my own church, we have women with disabilities who would desire to participate in the women's ministries and seniors who would like to be a part of the ministry to seniors. However, despite persistent efforts to encourage leaders of these ministries to invite and get group members to offer rides to individuals with disabilities, there is an ongoing refusal to do so by the ministry membership. This reflects both the priority the leaders place on loving all of our neighbors and the way participants in these ministries have been discipled into what their responsibility to love their neighbors might entail. It is important to note that this is also occurring in a church that vocally prides itself on ministry to persons with impairments. But no hypocrisy is apparently felt by leaders or members.

I observed this form of discipleship in a seminar I once gave in Chicago. While speaking to Sunday school leaders/teachers, one attendee who was an assistant to one of the children's pastors who was present indicated with tears, that her son with autism had been in the children/youth ministry for eight years and had no friends. Apparently, that was an acceptable way to disciple young people about their responsibility for loving others with disabilities.

This is even at the Christian university level. I was once asked by a faculty member in the School of Theology whether one of my special education teachers in training would befriend one of their theology students with high-functioning autism. I responded, "Listen to what you just told me. There are no students preparing to be pastors who will invite someone with disabilities to friendship." That the professor was looking outside of their school also implied that this was an acceptable practice.

So, once again people are literally being discipled into accepting the exclusion of persons with disabilities as an acceptable practice.

The Challenge of Loving Your Neighbor

It is also important to be honest in considering the propositions put forward in this paper. Some individuals with disabilities have social skill deficits. Some will have difficulty participating in church structures the way they are currently designed and acted out. This makes their participation difficult for them and for those who do not experience the same types of challenges

as they. Also, for people who have no experience with persons with disabilities and don't forget those with disabilities themselves. Will we have to change the ways that we do things? As stated, we definitely will. Will that cause people to leave churches that embrace a new way of doing Christian community? Yes. Change is difficult and it has yet to be determined what specifically we would be changing to. How does a community look different when it prioritizes loving all of its neighbors over not loving all of its neighbors? Surprisingly, it is arguable that this question has yet to be explored. It is more comfortable to love those who are more predictable and thus easier to love. I have personally received significant pushback when I state the fact that for some people, those with impairments can be more difficult to love, to do the things for these individuals that love requires. But this is true for all of us. For example, persons without intellectual disabilities may struggle with those who do. Those with intellectual disabilities may struggle with those with autism. And those with autism may struggle with those who are "neurotypical" (a new label developed by persons with autism for those who do not have autism). Pushback comes from both those who believe that exclusion is the preferred option and those who assume that loving all of one's neighbors is something that is easy and should simply be demanded. On the one hand, because we all sin in this area, we really don't know what this would actually look like. We do not know how the culture would change, how our traditions would be different and what might be required of each of us. On the other hand, we could attempt to facilitate ways that it would perhaps make it easier for us to love our neighbors. But to quote James Baldwin (1962, p. 62), "Not everything that is faced can be changed; but nothing can be changed until it is faced." We need this form of confrontation. Do we have the courage to do what might be required to love our neighbors?

I once received pushback from a famous American Christian leader when I tried to describe how the typical worship service would change if more persons with social skill deficits were present. The response from the leader was that it would be difficult to worship with such distractions. We need to have completely quiet worship services out of respect for the Word being shared and for God himself. I responded by asking if the leader had ever attended the type of worship that often characterizes many African American churches. The congregation is very vocal and the last thing the worship service is is quiet. But please don't tell me that you think that the Word of God is not going out, not being delivered in such settings. What we minimally come to understand is that the way we do Christian community is a cultural choice. We can choose to have quiet, social skill-demanding services. We can choose to have more verbally open and "noisy" services. One might find themselves uncomfortable in either of these types of services depending upon what they are used to. However, neither one is necessarily wrong unless, as they both will sometimes do, they refuse to embrace the changes in their culture leading to loving their neighbors. Any Christian community that embraces a culture resulting in them not loving their neighbors because of the way people are under God's sovereignty, is doing something wrong. Their culture needs to change.

Inclusive Ministry

I was once invited to do a sermon at a church in Northern Ireland. The pastor encouraged me to be very confrontive, jokingly saying, “Punch us in the nose!” At one point in the sermon, I asked the congregation just to stop and listen. It was perfectly quiet. “This is what segregation sounds like,” I told them. “Segregation implies that we as Christians are not loving our neighbors as you cannot have a perfectly quiet worship service unless certain groups of people are excluded and that is sin.” After the service, the pastor good-naturedly said, “I told you to punch us in the nose, not body slam us!” Once again, we know what we may need to change from, but what do we need to change to? Remember, culture is to a great extent a choice. It has been socially constructed. Because it was socially constructed, it can be changed. Much thought and proposals from the theological and pastoral leadership is needed to guide us to what might be next as far as our culture goes.

This is true for our culture, our group, but it is also true for us individually. Our church would be different in the way that we would do things, but how would that make me different? Like the story of the Sunday school teacher and the theology professor, maybe there would be a greater demand for my acceptance of others. That is, perhaps I would learn that my primary responsibility toward others is to love them, to invite them to friendship, not to judge them or change them. That would cause me to become different. Maybe there would be a greater demand for service from me. Going to a worship service would perhaps cause me to do everything from helping someone to find a Bible passage, to ignoring movement and noise, to assisting people who want to stand during parts of the service, to assisting people to use the restroom, and everything in between. Worship would imply service during the service. What a novel idea. Church would not be simply about me and perhaps complaining when my preferences for a particular type of music or social environment are not met. It might also imply expectations of me to bring people to church and make them feel welcome. I might learn to overlook social skill deficits and support families who are struggling with children with challenging behaviors. Just this brief description provides a bit of a visual of what the result of changes might look like. How would I benefit?

We must be clear that inclusive ministry is not just for me and not just for those with disabilities; the latter of which is the mistake most often made. The feeling can be that even though you are at church, I don’t need to be integrated with you because the ministry you participate in is only to serve you and I have nothing to gain from your presence. So, I reject the prophetic potential of your presence. Using the metaphor of a human body, Paul warns us in 1 Corinthians 12 that we need each other. Verse 21 tells us that the eye can’t say to the hand, “I don’t need you.” In other words, I can’t say to you, “I don’t need you” nor can you say that to me. We may not have specifically said those words to a group of people, but our actions too often have reflected those words. Until we are all present, arguably we are not the church as it was intended to be if only

based upon God in his sovereignty making people the way that they are. It is an elementary proposition to state the following:

1. God made everyone the way that they are.
2. We are commanded to love everyone.

Yes, this is very simple to state, but it is so difficult to carry out. Will we try and fail? Of course, we will. However, to quote the basketball great, Michael Jordan, "I can accept failure; everyone fails at something. But I cannot accept not trying." I think that could be what we are most guilty of.

It is funny that people will use the phrase "people affected by disability" to describe those who have impairments like autism or intellectual disability or cerebral palsy. The implication being there are two distinct groups and that one alone is "affected" by disability. In reality, parents, family members and friends are deeply affected. Yet our goal should be to increase the number of people affected by disability through friendship and community participation together. There should be little room for an us and them perspective. It should only be us. Sure, you have cerebral palsy and I may not. But I am also affected by cerebral palsy because I am in your life through our inviting each other to friendship if nothing else. We should see this type of relationship and the disdain for the separation described, throughout the Christian community because that is what loving one's neighbor would look like.

Disability and Lament

It is important to understand that building relationships can be difficult for those with and without disabilities. Minimally, they are "unchosen" (McNair & McKinney, 2016). I have often heard from parents of children with impairments, the lament, that it is at times frustrating to try to integrate their family into typical social settings because of the way they are misunderstood or treated. But I understand from a theological perspective that I, we, need these people in our community to be what we were intended to be. This is not some pablum of a statement, but a truth that desperately needs to be embraced. Parents and their children with disabilities may experience being segregated from the community, but in part because of the experiences they have had, in attempting to participate in the community they may also segregate themselves. We must do our best to encourage them not to do that. We need them, their perspective, even their lament. If we will listen to that lament, we can become better at understanding their lives and loving them better. Individuals with disabilities will often state that the hardest part of having a disability is the way you are treated by others. This is a very broad-brush statement but remember that most disabilities are mild and can cause someone to act a bit different, socially. But that minor difference is for the community's unkind treatment. As stated earlier, if I devalue others because of a personal characteristic such as a disability, that is a characteristic of me, not of them. When I am confronted with their consistent devaluation through their lament, I may become aware, start to pay attention, and see my need to change.

But there are other aspects of lament that go beyond the social consequences of disability. How do I respond to God if I have a physical disability that I was born with? What does Christian theology tell me about who I am because of this impairment? People have been told some pretty awful things about what they or their parents may have done to cause this. Such misunderstanding about disability is once again in part based on the lack of attention the Christian community has paid to this topic and has almost been encouraged by the lack of attention. This misunderstanding is so prevalent it even has a name in academic circles, the "moral model of disability," which states that any disability you experience is the result of sin in your, your parents or someone else's life. that has caused this form of punishment to you. This perspective needs to be attacked at every level.

I once interviewed a prospective student for an MA program in Disability Studies. In the course of the interview, the applicant revealed that he struggled with mental illness. "In terms of your acceptance to the program, that doesn't matter to me," I replied, "as long as you can do the work required." He responded, "Do you mean that you don't think that I have mental illness because of unconfessed sin in my life? That is what my pastor told me." This is the kind of pronouncement people hear when their leaders are uninformed about disability. The haughty implication is, "I don't have mental illness because I have confessed the sin in my life. But you do because you have done something wrong." I wish I could say these types of experiences are much less frequent than they are.

Once again, I believe we have been discipled into not caring about persons with disabilities. You have seen this term used elsewhere in this article. This is an outcome of a malaise within the Christian community. We do not teach about these issues in theology programs in Christian colleges. We do not teach about these issues in pastoral programs at seminaries. We do not teach about these issues from the pulpit. We do not teach about these issues in Bible studies or Sunday school classes. So, why would we expect anything other than the kind of response the student received from his pastor?

It is not entirely surprising that people would say these kinds of things. Have they ever been given a biblical perspective on disability? Think about the number of times you have heard a sermon in church that has addressed the topic of disability. In my own church, there have been 3 in 30 years. I know because I was the one who delivered them. This is in spite of estimates that nearly 20 percent of the population of the United States experiences some form of impairment. If one were to factor in the number of persons affected by disability through family or friendship connections, percentage. What would your conclusion be about yourself as a person with a disability or your family's conclusion if the church never addressed people facing issues related to impairment? These people don't think my experience is important.

To help people understand the prevalence of the experience of disability, we once created an event in our church where everyone who attended was given access to a bright yellow t-shirt

with the words “Everyone belongs” printed on it. People were told, “If you have a disability, have a family member with a disability, or a friend with a disability, please take a shirt and wear it during the service today.” Minimally two-thirds of the congregation were wearing a shirt. This illustrated in a very observable way, the impact of the experience of disability on people’s lives. The question was then, what did people do with this information? For our congregation, the answer was that there was no significant change that we could identify. Why might you ask? Could it be because this information was outside of what had already not been taught about people with disabilities and our response to them?

C.S. Lewis wrote about what he called “the terrible parable of the sheep and the goats” based on Matthew 25:31–40. He states,

> This can leave no conscience untouched, for in it the ‘Goats’ are condemned entirely for their sins of omission as if to make us fairly sure that the heaviest charge against each of us turns not upon things he has done but on those he never did–perhaps never dreamed of doing (Lewis, 1958, p. 11).

This observation applies to the points we have been making here. It is pretty obvious that, if you want to love other people, they probably have to be present. Interestingly, the things the sheep in the passage are commended for doing, ways they loved their neighbor, are not impossible actions. Matthew 25:37–39 lists the things what the sheep did.

> Then the righteous will answer him, saying, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?” And the King will answer them, “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”

How do we get on the right side of this sheep/goat dichotomy? Give some food, give a drink, welcome others, provide clothing, and visit the lonely. These acts are not difficult, but they are things we too often are not doing, particularly in the context of disability. Arguably, these are the basic components of loving one’s neighbor. But the starting point—the principal challenge—is that one’s neighbor first be present.

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August, Jared M., ed. *A Daily Greek Devotional: 365 Devotions on the Greek New Testament*. Bennington, VT: Northeastern Baptist Press, 2023, 371 pgs., $24.99, paperback.

August's *A Daily Greek Devotional* is written for any who consider themselves students of the Greek New Testament, from first-semester students to experienced academicians and pastors. Each devotion is intended for academic enrichment and spiritual refreshment, ultimately for the purpose of knowing and loving the God who gave us the New Testament (pg. i). Editor Jared M. August has assembled over three dozen contributors. Those contributors come from a variety of backgrounds. Some work in academia as deans or professors, many of whom are Greek professors. Some are pastors. There is a theological librarian, an associate editor, and a layman who have contributed to this devotional. Most contributors are educated by Baptists or serve in Baptist institutions, but there are also Presbyterian, Congregational, Evangelical Anglican, and non-denominational contributors. The contributors working in academia represent over two dozen colleges and seminaries. The front matter includes a helpful reminder of parsing abbreviations for those who may need some extra help as they use this devotional (pg. iii). The back matter consists of contributor biographies (pg. 367–371).

The devotional works through the entire New Testament, from Matthew to Revelation, over the course of the 365 devotions. Each devotion is one page in length, with many entries using less than the full page. Each devotion covers a brief selection ranging from as little as one verse to three verses of the Greek New Testament. The page-length devotional entry starts with the specific date (e.g., January 13 on pg. 13). Immediately after the date is the Scripture address, followed by a separate paragraph of the Greek text, including versification, capitalization of proper nouns, punctuation, and ellipses when only part of a verse is quoted (e.g., 2 Corinthians 7:6–7a on pg. 86). After the Greek text is a section on context, written by that entry's contributor. The context sections reference the larger context of the passage or perhaps the entire book of the New Testament. The context sections also sometimes give interpretation options, like the entry on May 22. That devotional covers Philippians 3:20–21. The context section on that page gives the broader context of Phil. 3:17–21 and 3:2–3. Then, in reference to the false teachers Paul writes about in this passage, the context section says, "Some see a change of opponents, while others see a reference to the Jewish false teachers previously condemned, which is more probably the case" (pg. 142). Sometimes, the context section is as brief as one sentence (e.g., March 7 entry on pg. 66), but it can also be as long as a large paragraph (e.g., December 17 entry on pg. 351).

A section on commentary follows the context section, which is also written by the entry's contributor. The commentary is consistently the longest portion of the devotional entry, even in the briefest examples such as August 11's entry on John 8:12 (pg. 223). After the commentary, the reader will find parsing and definitions for the rarer words used in the text of the day. Un-

derneath the parsing and definitions, they have a "Further Reading" piece that suggests more Scripture to read to help understand that day's passage. The recommended reading is usually the broader context of the day's passage, but many entries recommend alternate Biblical passages on that subject (e.g., July 2's devotional about 2 Thessalonians 3:6–7, which recommends also reading Acts 18:1–3, pg. 183), or multiple Biblical passages (e.g., November 20's entry about Jude 5, which recommends reading Jude 5–19, as well as 2 Peter 2:9, pg. 324). Finally, each devotional entry credits its contributor.

Many books are treated at more of a birds-eye view as a natural result of the devotional being limited to a one-year focus. One example is the book of Matthew, covered in three overall sections. Matthew chapters 1 through 7 are covered in seven pages. The first entry for Matthew's Gospel is on page 1 and it covers Matthew 1:20–21. The second entry is on page 2 and it covers Matthew 2:14–15, and so on. Matthew chapters 8 through 16 are covered over pages 40–49. Matthew chapters 17 through 28 are then covered from page 70 through page 76. Naturally, a 365 day Greek devotional could not cover every verse of every book of the entire New Testament. For example, the book of Jude does not get a devotional for every verse. Jude 3–4 are covered on page 323. Jude 5 gets an entry on page 324. Jude 20–23 are covered on page 325, which concludes the devotional's use of the book of Jude. These details should not be considered negative criticisms of the devotional. The contextual data and the commentaries are well-written and concise. They reflect excellent scholarly work on the relevant texts. At the same time, the devotional nature of the commentaries get to the point of the quoted text. They are written to get to the spiritual heart of the text so that the reader might know God better and, perhaps, might know oneself better in order to better follow Jesus.

As a devotional, *A Daily Greek Devotional* hits the mark of leading the reader into a deeper study of God's Word for the purpose of knowing the Lord better. As a product of Greek scholars intending to provide a devotional, one could not ask for a better primer and refresher at the intersection of devotional thought and Greek exegesis of New Testament passages. This book could be used by students of New Testament Greek at any level for the purpose of a fresh devotional study, requiring the user to know some basics of Greek vocabulary, grammar, and syntax.

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Beaty, Katelyn, *Celebrities for Jesus: How Personas, Platforms, and Profits Are Hurting the Church.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2022, Pp. 208, $24.99, hardcover

This book focuses on the growth and effects of celebrity preachers and speakers upon the church. Chapter 1, "Social Power without Proximity," describes celebrity and its fundamental problems, starting with the influence of celebrity culture outside of the church on modern evangelicalism. And states that, "celebrity is a feature, not a bug, of the contemporary evangelical movement" (Chap. Ebook Central 1).[1] The book has three parts: "Big Things for God," chapters 1–3; "Three Temptations," chapters 4–6; and "The Way Up is Down," chapters 7–8.

While some Christians have gained fame, they use this prestige as a tool, but it is not their primary goal, others make celebrity their goal. Beaty says that, "the very nature of celebrity…hides its power behind the illusion of intimacy" (Ch. 1). The right kind of fame, "arises from a life well lived, not a brand well cultivated" (chap. 1, Ebook Central). God does his primary work through ordinary saints. However, "A celebrity is known for their well-knownness—and we feed the problem" (chap. 1, Ebook Central). Some people reflect the image of God. Others, however, become idols, which draw our eyes away from God. Idols embody values and myths that oppose God, like sex, money, and worldly power. While we don't have shrines set up for our favorite celebrity, for many, our attention, money, and fascination with celebrities fill our hearts more than attention to God. Beaty defines celebrity as "social power without proximity." The author asserts that, "the American church has overall mimicked celebrity culture rather than challenged it" (chap. 1, Ebook Central). Many fallen Evangelical leaders did not start out seeking celebrity, but once it came, they were not held accountable for their actions. True accountability is a theme throughout the book.

Chapter two, "The First Evangelical Celebrities." For many church goers, celebrity pastors and speakers were, "more dazzling than Pastor Jim in his pleated khakis" (chap. 2, Ebook Central). Billy Graham and others took full advantage of mass media to spread the gospel and news of their revival meetings. Graham's Modesto Manifesto protected him and its other authors from the very sorts of sins we see celebrity pastors and speakers committing today. Graham saw that Christian leaders can come to see their ministry as more important than the local church, and the Manifesto seeks to avoid that. Now, "celebrity power in our day has far eclipsed the power of institutions, including the church" (chap. 2, Ebook Central). Celebrity pastors make their churches platforms to increase their influence outside the local church and ignore the very people they are supposed to be serving. Megachurches show clearly how leaders, with few gatekeepers and

1 I am accessing this book as an ebook. Ebook page numbers are dependent upon the font size. Therefore, this review will not list pages, but every quotation comes from the named chapters in the review.

little accountability, can succeed "on the basis of charisma, hustle, or a good game rather than a genuine desire to serve like Christ" (chap. 2, Ebook Central).

The subject of chapter three is "Megachurch, Megapastors." Megachurches are defined as churches with more than 2000 members, and are a "dynamic story of ministry success…in an age of religious disaffiliation" (chap. 3, Ebook Central). The chapter profiles the efforts of people like Bill Hybels, Robert Schuller, and Rick Warren, in their efforts to make a church feel more like a theater or the mall. Megachurches emphasize, "buildings, budgets, and butts (seats in the pews)" (chap. 3, Ebook Central). While traditional churches may have messages of guilt, judgment, and sacrifice, megachurches offer messages of human potential. Megachurches have made their pastors into celebrities. Then, the pastor becomes more important than the church, and the church views its success as dependent upon the success of the pastor. This leads to believing that the church cannot go on without the celebrity pastor, as though God depended on the pastor.

Part Two is "Three Temptations." Chapter Four, "Abusing Power," looks at celebrity power and how it corrupts. It details the "connection between celebrity and abuse and mistreatment of fellow image bearers." Beaty considers the case of Ravi Zacharias. Beaty poses the rhetorical question, How could someone who preaches the gospel "be capable of such harm behind closed doors?" Since Zacharias fell so far, many wonder if they can still accept his message. Often, such powerful celebrities are surrounded by powerful men who protect their secrets. Celebrity power, as seen in Mark Driscoll, means you can say anything and get away with it. Beaty speaks of the way celebrity pastors flaunt their wealth. Jesus did not become wealthy to speak to wealthy people and he treated everyone alike. Some celebrity pastors use their wealth to hire lawyers to protect them from victims or buy the victims' silence. Even with a board or institution, abusers can still act out. In fact, many organizations and institutions defend the celebrity and harass the victims. RZIM refused to investigate accusations. Instead, it went after the victims and was harsh on employees who sought to get to the truth. Boards and institutions should not accuse victims of lying until they have done a thorough investigation. Many do not for fear that if the accusations are correct, the organization will fall apart, as happened with RZIM.

Chapter 5, "Chasing Platforms," addresses issues when celebrities seek to build their platform through book publishing. Beaty suggests that readers need to be aware that just because an author's book is published, the author may not have been vetted at all, theologically, doctrinally, or in any other way. Serious plagiarism has occurred among some prominent Christian celebrities. Not only does intellectual theft raise serious ethical issues, but "highlight[s] the way modern celebrity can lure individuals and companies to skirt ethical standards while feeding the lucrative celebrity machine" (chap. 5, Ebook Central).

In the section, "Evangelicals are People of the Books(s)," the author speaks of reading as both a spiritual act and a consumer act. Increasingly, books from Evangelical publishers are by ce-

lebrities and readers want to read about those people and their success. Mass Media makes a celebrity well-known, "without the celebrity necessarily having to do anything noteworthy or virtuous" (chap. 5, Ebook Central). Beaty describes deceitful tactics celebrities and others use to get their books sold.

Chapter Six, "Creating Persona," examines the cost of celebrity to the celebrity and why and how others place this burden on celebrities. Being famous can also mean isolation and loneliness. The celebrity may practice character-splitting: one is the public persona, the other the true self seen only in private with trusted friends and family. Many Christian celebrities suffer from "narcissistic personality disorder." In some cases, the leader and the followers or congregation have a mutually reinforcing "collective narcissism." The author asks, Why do we keep putting leaders on pedestals, asking them to fulfill their own parasocial needs?

Part three of the book is, "The Way Up is Down." Chapter 7, "Seeking Brand Ambassadors," begins with a description of Kanye West. His conversion was a surprise, but he removed bad elements from his rap. Christian leaders encouraged people to take him seriously as a believer, even though we cannot see his heart. Christians see such conversions as a "win." Christians speak about celebrity conversions and platforms in order to stand against the culture's pressure. Celebrity conversions validate the Christian faith for some. It enables Christians to still be "cool," especially important for teens. Beaty concludes that, "Before we hope to convince those outside the house of faith that we are still relevant, we need to clean up our house from within" (chap. 7, Ebook Central).

"The Obscure Messiah and Ordinary Faithfulness," chapter 8, rounds out the book. Beaty, considering how many in her generation have exited the faith and leaders have fallen, states that she is not a Christian because of some Evangelical celebrity. It is because of ordinary people around her who, "find their lives taken up in an eternal reality larger than themselves [which] can carry out small acts of love that will have a greater significance in the next" (Ch. 8). We are to become "little Christs." The mindset of growth is a distraction from what God wants us to be.

Beaty acknowledges that some readers will be disappointed or bothered that she does not lay out a plan to fix the mess, though she has hinted at means throughout the book. She warns against seeking to be relevant or spectacular. In order to go up, we need to go uncomfortably low.

This book is definitely worth reading, though it may be unsettling. Elders could use it to help them take steps if their pastor becomes a celebrity. "Ordinary" Christians will see warnings about creating celebrities.

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Webb, Barry G., *Job*. Evangelical Biblical Theological Commentary. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2023. 499 pp. $54.99, Hardcover.

I have always personally felt that wisdom literature is the jazz music of the Bible. Like jazz, wisdom literature does not always conform to the common conventions. It deals with the unexpected moments of life, it tackles the "stuff" between the notes, it wrestles with life in the gray, and it is not content with cliches or platitudes. Wisdom literature does not ask easy questions and never provides easy answers. This is true of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, but especially, perhaps, the book of Job.

Interpreting the book of Job has always been notoriously difficult. Its Hebrew is often challenging, its length and subject matter are intimidating, and its meaning has been debated throughout the history of biblical interpretation. Rising to meet this challenge, however, is Dr. Barry Webb (the senior research fellow emeritus in Old Testament at Moore Theological College) with his 2023 commentary on the book of Job.

Having previously authored commentaries on the former prophets (i.e., Judges, Isaiah, and Zechariah), Webb has also published a work dealing with wisdom literature as well (i.e., *Five Festal Garments: Christian Reflections on the Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther* in the New Studies in Biblical Theology series). Here again in *Job*, Webb takes up the task of playing "jazz" (i.e., wisdom literature)—and proves himself a virtuoso.

As far as commentaries go, this one doesn't necessarily have any unique features not already possessed by other commentaries. It does, however, possess a clarity, format, and logical structure that makes it not only accessible, but enjoyable to read and use.

Although designed primarily to equip people for local church ministry and not necessarily for the scholar or professor, the volume still has a quality that even scholars will respect. This begins with a introduction that thoroughly covers author and date, historical context, literary analysis, theological themes, and the purpose of the book of Job (more about this introduction below).

With regard to the format of the commentary, Webb uses a clear and simple structure that is quite effective for reading and use. He begins with the text itself (in smaller, cohesive logical units, all from the Christian Standard Bible). He then moves to a summary of the context, examines the structure with an outline, and then proceeds to exegesis of the text.

After the exegesis is a crucial section called the "Bridge." This part of the commentary is given to discussing the themes of the text in relation to the canon as a whole and its ultimate connection to Christ and His redemptive work. Thus, this section is, by the general editors' own admission,

the major distinctive of the Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary series. In the preface, the editors make clear that this commentary series is dedicated to biblical theology which they define as "the theology of the entire Bible" or as "an exercise in whole-Bible theology" (xi). They note that each volume explores "the contribution of a given book . . . to the theology of Scripture as a whole" (xiii), and that each passage is to be understood "in terms of larger Christological or soteriological themes" (xii). In other words, this series is not only dedicated to the understanding of a passage *itself*, but also how the text finds its ultimate fulfillment in the finished work of Christ.

With regard to the contents of the commentary, the introduction is worth the (affordable) price of the book. Although regarding Job an actual historical person, Webb nevertheless took a post-exilic view of Job's composition (the reasons for which I personally found unpersuasive). While this may be disappointing to some, the introduction is still thoroughly engaging and insightful. Webb's discussion of the nature of wisdom, as well as the structure, theme, and theology of Job was nothing short of stellar.

With regard to Webb's handling of the text in the exposition portions, I found him to be a master expositor. Whether dealing with the thorny issues of theodicy, the theology of Satan, the sovereignty of God, or the complex speeches between Job and his friends, Webb expounds the often tricky text of Job with an engaging clarity.

I was particularly impressed with Webb's exposition of the speeches and dialogues in chapters 4–27. Legendary for their interpretive challenges and theological knots, Webb nevertheless takes on these daunting dialogues with commendable skill and refreshing insight. He not only shows how the speeches logically connect and flow together (and react *against* one another), but he also draws out the core of their arguments—showing both what the speakers got right, as well as what they got very wrong.

What I especially enjoyed about the commentary is that Webb's exegesis was not a raw, detached dispensing of data, but instead provides a warm, God-exalting exposition of the text. He not only explains the text with precision, but also helps the reader to worship and respond in obedience and faith. Although not a highly technical commentary, Webb knows well when to open the safe, as it were, and show us more complex grammatical or lexical treasures from the Hebrew text.

Rich with penetrating insights and perspectives that shape and enrich our lives, Webb especially possesses keen insight into the human heart—especially the *suffering* human heart. Thus, one of Webb's greatest strengths is his ability to show the raw humanity of Job's responses to suffering and pain—and how we might learn as inhabitants of the same fallen world of which he was a part.

As mentioned above, the “Bridge” sections are considered by the editors to be the “bread and butter” of this commentary series, and for these sections Webb always provides a delicious meal. Again and again, he draws valid and insightful Christological connections from Job to the New Testament to show its deepest theological significance in the plan of salvation as a whole.

In the end, this commentary receives from me, high commendation. I found it to be an engaging and stimulating contribution to the study of Job that will both benefit the scholar, challenge the layperson, as well as assist the expositor in proclaiming the Word of God to the people of God. Or to return to the opening analogy, this commentary will help anyone willing to learn, play the “jazz” of wisdom literature for the benefit of all who hear.

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Varner, William. *The Preacher and the Song: A Fresh Look at Ecclesiastes & Song of Songs.* Dallas, TX: Fontes Press, 2023, 114 pp., $8.99–13.95 Paperback

In 1968 Addison G. Wright wrote an article on the book of Ecclesiastes (or Qoheleth), the title of which was, "The Riddle of the Sphinx."[1] The title of this article perfectly captures what many readers of the book have felt about this perplexing book. Wright went on to explain that "Qoheleth is one of the most difficult books in the Bible, and it has long been an enigma and a source of fascination for its readers" (Wright, 313). Many throughout the years have echoed similar sentiments about the Song of Songs as well.

And yet, Dr. William Varner (Professor of Bible exposition and Greek exegesis at The Master's University), has sought to solve the riddle of both Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs in his 2023 work, *The Preacher and the Song: A Fresh Look at Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs*. While not intended to be an exhaustive commentary on either book, *Preacher and the Song* instead seeks to provide practical interpretive tools with which one can do their own exhaustive exegesis.

Among the several features that makes this work a unique—and indeed, a "fresh" contribution, is his explanation of the three-character scheme of the Song of Songs, as well as his "goad and nail" paradigm by which to understand the book of Ecclesiastes. Varner states in his preface: "Rather than offering a detailed exegesis . . . my goal is to suggest a strategy for reading these books as a whole" (xiv). What makes this goal unique, however, is that Varner makes a case that the paradigm for accurately interpreting, both Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes, come from the books *themselves*. That is, each book, he contends, has embedded within it its own interpretive methodology.

Leading up to these reading strategies, however, Varner first provides in the opening chapter a superb overview of Solomon's life. This, then, prepares the reader to engage the works attributed to Solomon in Scripture, beginning first with the book of Proverbs in chapter 2. Arguing for what he calls a "back door" approach, Varner contends that the interpretive key to the wisdom books of the Bible is strategically found at the end of the book or, as he calls it, at the "back door." Thus, he reasons that chapter 31 is not intended to describe any actual woman in history, but instead is the personification of wisdom. This "Lady Wisdom" in Proverbs 31, therefore, is but the culminating chapter in a book that has expounded the subject of wisdom throughout its pages.

1 Addison G. Wright, "The Riddle of the Sphinx: The Structure of the Book of Qoheleth," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 30.3 (1968): 313–34.

With this "back door" interpretive method for the wisdom books established, Varner then moves on to explain the Song of Songs in chapters 3 and 4. After working through title and authorship issues, Varner surveys the predominant interpretive approaches to the Song in chapter 3 and argues for what is known as the "Three Character View." This approach, Varner says, "vindicates the literal interpretation of Scripture and enjoys the privilege of spiritual application within the limits of Biblical history" (35).

This, then, leads to Chapter 4, in which is contained both an outline and translation of the Song, as well as clearly labeled sections for each of the three characters who appear in the book. The end of chapter 4 also includes helpful sections in which Varner discusses a literary approach to the book, as well as a way to locate the book within Solomon's life. It is clear that Varner seeks not to provide a commentary, but rather a decoder ring with which we, as interpreters, may grapple with the book ourselves at a level of depth and specificity.

Chapters 5 and 6, then, focus on Ecclesiastes which, in many ways, is the "heart" and even culmination of his book. After dealing with preliminary issues like title and author of Ecclesiastes, as well as a history of interpretation, Varner then provides a unique and profoundly helpful strategy for reading and understanding this often-puzzling book. Using the methodology of the "back door" from chapter 2, Varner argues that the interpretive key for Ecclesiastes is found in chapter 12:11 which says, "The words of wise men are like goads, and masters of these collections are like well-driven nails; they are given by one Shepherd" (LSB).

Using what may be termed the "goad and nail paradigm," Varner makes a case that the metaphors of "goad" and "nail" at the end of Ecclesiastes actually serve to interpret the entirety of the book. "Goads," Varner argues, are problems, concerns, or "disturbing matters" (72), while "nails" provide "satisfying interpretations" (72), and solutions to the problems raised by the "goads." The purpose of such a paradigm, he argues, drives us away from ourselves, and causes us to cast ourselves on God's wisdom and revelation.

Chapter 6, then, is Varner putting the "goad and nail paradigm" into practice. He provides the entire text of Ecclesiastes (from the LSB translation) and shows us the paradigm in real time. Dividing the text into four discourses, Varner supplies a brief outline before each discourse, followed by the text of that discourse, and yet, to assist the reader, he puts the "nails" of each discourse in bold type. This enables the reader to be struck by the familiar and challenging "goads" of Ecclesiastes, only then encounter the "nails" in bold type that solve the tensions raised by the "goads."

Varner, then, conclude the little volume with a seventh and final chapter, offering a summary of the book and some final insights and lessons from both Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes. These insights and lessons, by the way, are not mere repeats or regurgitations, but reinforcement of previous material put in a fresh and synthesized way.

In the end, what we have on our hands with *Preacher and the Song* is a unique and helpful contribution to wisdom literature in general, and Ecclesiastes in particular. Many strengths make this book a useful little dagger in the arsenal of any pastor or exegete that desires to "cut straight" with the Sword of truth (cf. 2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 4:12).

For instance, *Preacher* is an excellent tool of hermeneutics. Rather than provide a complicated textbook on the intricacies of interpretation, Varner instead provides an "on the job" hermeneutical training that demonstrates the art and science of interpretation in real time. Chapter 6, especially, was the treasure of the book. Applying the "goad and nail paradigm" not only made Ecclesiastes more accessible to the present reviewer, but also edified and stirred the soul.

Preacher and the Song is also a wonderful tool for pedagogy. That is, anyone who teaches the Bible (be it in the church or the academy)—and in particular, wisdom literature—will enhance their teaching with this book. Proverbs, Song of Songs, and perhaps, especially Ecclesiastes, come rife with interpretive challenges and yet, *Preacher* might just provide some hermeneutical insights that can unlock these life-changing books of Scripture for students.

Finally, *Preacher* is also a tool for spiritual encouragement. His commitment and allegiance to the biblical text as inspired and as authoritative is refreshing; his brief points of life application scattered throughout the book are poignant and well-timed; and his personal reflections on how much the wisdom books have meant to him, makes Varner's book both devotional and academic all at the same time. In the end, Varner has what I call, scholarship with a shepherd's heart. He's doing legitimate, academic work that deserves the attention of scholars, and yet, it is skillfully written to bring benefit, edification, and challenge to the reader.

Could the book take more time to exegete the biblical text in more depth? Absolutely. Will we always agree with Varner on what he interprets a "goad" or "nail" in Ecclesiastes? Of course not. But any reader of *Preacher* will agree that once you finish the book, you will hunger for more, and you will be more equipped to grapple with the sacred text.

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Christopher Watkin. *Biblical Critical Theory: How the Bible's Unfolding Story Makes Sense of Modern Culture*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2022.

This latest work by Christopher Watkin, Senior Lecturer in French Studies at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, offers a temptingly innovative look into the convergence between sociology, theology, and Christian worldview. Written from the perspective of a sociologist, the work finds itself in a self-awaredly Augustinian mode, attempting to implement a critical cultural analysis from the perspective of a diachronic biblical analysis in a modern echo of *City of God* (pp. 25–26, 31). Beginning with Genesis and Creation and proceeding through the canon to Revelation and eschatology, Watkin attempts to apply biblical categories of theology, ethics, morality, and culture as a solvent to contemporary ideological quagmires, with a view particularly toward overcoming polarizations or radicalizations of thought. This is what Watkin will refer to repeatedly as "diagonalization," defined as a "move of cutting across and rearranging false cultural dichotomies" (p. 15), which lends a certain dose of temperance to his analysis and which allows him to move with agility to through the otherwise sticky wickets of contemporary controversies.

The work is laudable on several accounts. First, Watkin lends a much-needed element of moderation to various hot-button issues. For example, his view of oppressed and oppressor dynamics is helpfully tempered by an appeal to Scripture and tradition in order to find the grain of truth expressed in both sides of the debate (pp. 107–132). Second, written in a format accessible to layperson and scholar alike, Watkin has given his project a broad appeal and elastic usage, particularly with regard to his study questions near the end of each chapter. Third, and related to the second, the work is clear and lucid, especially in its implementation of graphics and charts that help the author visualize content that could otherwise be considered abstruse. Finally, the mere fact of the depth of his coverage of topics and issues from a biblical perspective makes it a book to be reckoned with, demonstrating an impressive mastery of related interdisciplinary sources from Tim Keller to Umberto Eco to Friedrich Nietzsche.

Several questions arise from the book that bear consideration. The first is related to the style and depth of Watkin's writing. Although the format of the book seems to be directed toward a broad audience, which is helpful in terms of breadth of reception, the actual substance of the book may prove to be a sort of *tertium quid*, too esoteric for the average person, yet not academic enough for the classroom. One can hardly picture members of a Sunday night Bible study sitting down to study it, nor, for that matter, a seminary classroom; as such, the appropriate audience might be somewhere in the middle, limiting the range of readers from what was intended. A second concern is the lens of diagonalization through which Watkin views contemporary issues: one gets the impression that the concern for moderation may override his analysis of positions and

issues, and at times his construal of both positions in a debate, or even the biblical or theological middle-ground, comes across as reductive. Although moderation is admirable in worldview discourse, at times one wonders if Watkin has overstepped being moderately moderate into extreme moderation. Finally, the canonical organization of the book and its various topics could prove to be unnavigable for many who want quick access to subjects.

Has Watkin succeeded in authoring a 21st century *City of God*? Only time will tell. For now, the work proves to be a substantial and valuable engagement that every seminary professor or student of theology would do well to have in their collection as a touchstone for contemporary debate as it intersects Bible and theology. The work thus finds great practical value in the life of both church and academy as a clear consolidation of positions illuminated by the mirror of Scripture.

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