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**CHIASMUS IN CHRONICLES: INVESTIGATING THE
STRUCTURES OF 2 CHRONICLES 28:16-21;
33:1-20; AND 31:20–32:33**

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This article is a brazen, but wary, demonstration of chiasmus in three narrative passages of varying length and complexity from the last half of 2 Chronicles: 2 Chron 28:16-21; 33:1-20; and 31:20–32:33. After necessary methodological discussion, we will evaluate and explore the particular ways *chiastic aspect* functions in these texts. Some comments on the literary-theological implications of the chiastic aspect of each passage then follow, though it is the hope of this author that investigation and dialogue will continue beyond this study with regard to the presence of chiastic aspect in Chronicles and its relevance for interpretation.

I. Methodology

The term *chiastic aspect* is coined here to denote literary counterpositioning, which can vary in degree of strength. For example, all else being equal, a rare word is more likely to have a greater chiastic aspect than a common word, and two verses equidistant from the pivot will almost always have greater chiastic aspect than two verses not equidistant from the pivot. *Chiastic aspect* may be contrasted to *chiasmus* in that the latter implies that the *entirety* of a text explicitly exhibits chiastic aspect. It seems safe to say that chiasmus proper in biblical narrative prose is extremely rare, and when it does occur, it borders on—if not crosses over—the gray divide between prose and poetry. Perhaps it would help if we qualify as *narrative chiasmus* a narrative text with overall strong chiastic aspect approaching chiasmus proper.

In line with this, it may be said that I have a somewhat circular perspective of chiasmus. A legitimate narrative chiasmus has a strong enough overall chiastic aspect that it may be recognized as an intentional structure. Elements of the text signify the chiasmus; the chiasmus, in turn, contributes its own meaning to the text. As seen in the relationship between other literary biblical structures and their content, one may expect that the chiastic structure's contribution is consistent with other meanings and emphases clearly conveyed through the text's content.

Chiastic aspect, on the other hand, does not necessarily render a text as a chiasmus. Weak chiastic aspect may help to delineate a pericope, or mildly accentuate its unity, but the text of which it is a part may not be further involved in the chiastic dynamic. Strong chiastic aspect draws more of the text into chiastic relation. The stronger the chiastic aspect, the more a text approaches chiasmus proper and the “circular” effect of structure-informing-content dynamics may be considered.

The most rigorous procedure for discerning chiasmus that I have encountered so far is by Butterworth, of “Isaiah 67” fame.¹ I have summarized his procedure below:

1. Establish the text form and its divisions independently of structural considerations.
2. Examine *all* repetitions, and discard those that seem to be insignificant.
3. Estimate the likely importance of the repeated words that remain. Butterworth gives more priority here to repetitions of whole phrases, rare words, words used in characteristic ways, and clusters of related words. He gives less priority to technical terms.
4. Consult and compare conclusions with the work of scholars in various branches of OT research.
5. Attempt to explain the purpose(s) of the authors in presenting material in this particular way.

In addition to my focus on *chiastic aspect* instead of *chiasmus*, there are two matters on which I diverge from Butterworth’s approach that deserve further comment here. The first regards his evaluation of the repetition of common words. While I agree with Butterworth that, in general, “common words are of minimal value in indicating structure” because of the natural frequency of common words in longer passages,² I cannot agree that this necessarily calls for complete disregard of common vocabulary. True, more often than not common vocabulary is simply used in a common way. But let’s not throw the baby out with the bathwater. Common words may indeed be used chiastically; their chiastic aspect may not be strong and one should approach common words with more reserve than not, but still their potential contribution to structure should not be presumed null.

Second, with regard to the more subjective element of a text (i.e., its conceptual content), Butterworth finds it “strange for a writer to avoid using certain words more than once, if he wanted to draw the reader’s attention to the correspondence [between one part and another].”³ This assumes a particularly rigid style on the part of the writer, and that is a presumption I am not led to make concerning the authors of the ancient Hebrew text. Furthermore, Butterworth’s wariness of eisegetic misinterpretation of subjective material is such that it results in a complete avoidance of the consideration and evaluation of subjective elements. I readily concur that the evaluation of subjective aspects of a text is difficult. Yet, difficult as these

¹See Mike Butterworth, *Structure and the Book of Zechariah*, JSOTSS 130 (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1992), 13-61, esp. 53-61. Butterworth’s randomly created “Isaiah 67” entertainingly demonstrates that repetitions can sometimes be mere coincidences.

²Ibid., 55-56.

³Ibid., 59.

matters are, subjective elements remain a vital part of the text and should not be excluded from evaluating its structure.

For this article, the chiasmic structures presented were incidentally found during exegetical translation of the passages. The texts and delineation of units had already been established independently of any consideration of chiasmus or chiasmic aspect. Unusual repetition of vocabulary, phrases, and motifs presented themselves, however, and chiasmic aspect appeared evident. To evaluate the apparent chiasmic features in the passages, I applied Butterworth's procedure, *mutatis mutandis*, and further tested the strength of my own observations by discussing, presenting, and forwarding them to various colleagues for critical feedback. Naturally, for good or ill, I assume full responsibility for the final results regarding the presence of chiasmic aspect in 2 Chron 28:16-21; 33:1-20; and 31:20–32:33, as shown below.

II. The Structure of 2 Chronicles 28:16-21

The chiasmic structure of 2 Chron 28:16-21 may be discerned as follows:

- A 28:16: King Ahaz sends to Assyria for help
(על-מלכי אשור לעזר לו).
- B 28:17-18: Invasion by foreign enemies
(Edomites and Philistines).
- C 28:19: The reason for Judah's troubles: YHWH humbles (בנע) Judah as judgment on Ahaz's infidelity against him (ביהודה—ומעול מעל—ביהודה).
- B' 28:20: Enmity from foreign enemy (Assyria).
- A' 28:21: Ahaz gives tribute to Assyria, but receives no help
(למלך אשור ולא לעזרה לו).

A/A' (28:16, 21): These verses share the keyroot עזר, "to help."⁴ The root עזר occurs thirty-one times in Chronicles, four times in chapter 28: in vv. 16 and 21, and twice in v. 23. On its own, the occurrence of עזר is not exceptional. However, vv. 16 and 21 also have end-phrases that are similar in meaning and sound:

2 Chron 28:16 בעת ההיא שלח המלך אחז על-מלכי
אשור לעזר לו

2 Chron 28:21 כי-חלק אחז את-בית יהוה ואת-בית המלך
והשרים ויתן למלך אשור ולא לעזרה לו

⁴Unless otherwise indicated, figures for occurrences of roots do not include proper nouns.

In addition to the above, these verses are evidently located at the terminal positions of the unit. Taken together, the chiasmic aspect of vv. 16 and 21 is high.

B/B' (28:17-18, 20): The correspondence I have identified here is based purely on content and is fairly subjective, hence chiasmic aspect for this pair is low.

C (28:19): **ביהודה—ומעול מעל—ביהודה**, a strongly chiasmic construction, is continuous in the text. The paronomasia of **ביהודה** and **ביהודה** is strong and reinforces a symbolic relation in which Judah is posited opposite YHWH because of Ahaz's faithlessness.

Verse 19 is distinctly theological in vocabulary and tone. The tetragrammaton appears twice, as does **יהודה**, in addition to a single occurrence of **ישראל**. The Hiphil of **בנע**, "to humble," occurs in this chapter in v. 19; root **מעל**, "to be/act unfaithfully," appears twice in v. 19, but also once in v. 22. Add to all the above the central location of v. 19 in the unit, and its overall pivotal function should be recognized as evident and strong.

In comparing my results with the work of other scholars, it seems that vv. 16-21 are well-recognized as a unit, though not as a chiasmus (e.g., Williamson, De Vries, Japhet).⁵ The NIV, NJPS, NRSV, GNB/TEV, and NASB reflect this as well. The connection between vv. 16 and 21 through the keyroot **עזר** is also acknowledged.⁶ Verse 19 has been recognized by other scholars as distinct for its theological, explanatory nature.⁷ On the whole, the general conclusions of secondary literature regarding 28:16-21 do not recognize the chiasmic structure, but are harmonious with our proposed structure.

The overall function of the passage's chiasmic aspect appears to be (1) to delineate vv. 16-21 as a unit; (2) to emphasise the folly of Ahaz's reliance on Assyria for help; and (3) to emphasise Ahaz's responsibility in Judah's afflictions.

Considering the whole of the unit, 2 Chron 28:16-21 appears to have high chiasmic aspect for biblical narrative and may be considered a narrative chiasmus.

⁵H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, NCBC (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1982), 347-348; Simon J. De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, FOTL 11 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 362, 364-365; Sara Japhet, *1 and 2 Chronicles: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993), 904-907; and Martin J. Selman, *2 Chronicles*, TOTC (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1994), 481-482; implied in Gary N. Knoppers, "Treasures Won and Lost: Royal (Mis)appropriations in Kings and Chronicles," in *The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture*, ed. M. Patrick Graham and Steven L. McKenzie, JSOTSS 263 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 181-208, see esp. 200-201; and Michael E. W. Thompson, *Situation and Theology: Old Testament Interpretations of the Syro-Ephraimite War*, Prophets and Historians Series 1 (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1982), 94.

⁶E.g., Japhet, 907; Williamson, 348-349; De Vries, 364-365; Knoppers, 200-201.

⁷E.g., Japhet, 906; De Vries, 362, 364-365; Thompson, 95.

III. *The Structure of 2 Chronicles 33:1-20*

To my knowledge, there has been no extensive treatment of the chiasmic structure of 2 Chron 33:1-20, the pericope concerning Manasseh. Smelik, Japhet, and Abadie all present basic chiasmic outlines of 2 Chron 33:1-20,⁸ but none goes beyond discussing general content and broad, somewhat subjective description in identifying their chiasms.⁹ If indeed 2 Chron 33:1-20 is chiasmic, it needs to hold up to more rigorous testing.

On the basis of repeated words and phrases, as well as content, 2 Chron 33:1-20 appears to have the following complex structure. Correspondences are matched by number, and those within a subunit are connected by a solid, curved line, while those uniting the overall passage are connected by straight

⁸Klaas A. D. Smelik, "Portrayal of King Manasseh: A Literary Analysis of 2 Kings 21 and 2 Chronicles 23," in *Converting the Past: Studies in Ancient Israelite and Moabite Historiography*, OTS 28 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 129-189, see 170:

- Part I (v. 1)
- Part II (vv. 2-8)
- Part III (v. 9)
- Part IV (vv. 10-13)
- Part V (v. 14)
- Part VI (vv. 15-17)
- Part VII (vv. 18-20)

Japhet, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 1000:

- (a) Introduction: Manasseh is king (v. 1)
- (b) Manasseh's transgressions (vv. 2-8)
- (c) Punishment: exile to Assyria (vv. 10-11)
- (d) Repentance and delivery (vv. 12-13)
- (e) Manasseh's earthly enterprises (v. 14)
- (f) Religious restoration (vv. 15-17)
- (g) Conclusion: death and burial (18-20)

Philippe Abadie, "From the Impious Manasseh (1 Kings 21) to the Convert Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33): Theological Rewriting by the Chronicler," in *The Chronicler as Theologian. Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein*, ed. M. Patrick Graham, Steven L. McKenzie and Gary N. Knoppers, JSOTSS 371 (London: T. & T. Clark, 2003) 89-104, see 96:

- A Manasseh is king (v. 1)
- B The religious *in fidelities* of Manasseh (vv. 2-9)
- C In punishment, Manasseh is deported to Babylon (vv. 10-11)
- D Repentance of the king, following his deliverance (vv. 12-13)
- C' Manasseh restores Jerusalem (v. 14)
- B' The religious *reforms* of Manasseh (vv. 15-17)
- A' The end of the reign. Amon is king (vv. 18-20)

⁹Abadie, 96, offers one exception in that it contrasts Manasseh's deportation to Babylon in v. 11 with his restoration of Jerusalem in v. 14.

lines. Though incidental to our discussion, the frequent occurrences of **בנה** are in 50% grayscale:

Subunit I

v. 1: Introductory formulae

v. 2: יהוה מפני בני ישראל⁵, הוריש⁴, הגוים אשר³, בעיני יהוה², ויעש הרע¹v. 3: אשרות⁷, הבמות, ויבן⁶

v. 4: ובנה

v. 5: ויבן

v. 6: לעשות הרע¹, בעיני יהוה²v. 7: דויד⁹, הסמל⁸

v. 8: -----

v. 9: יהוה מפני בני ישראל⁵, השמיד⁴, הגוים אשר³, לעשות רע¹v. 10: וידבר יהוה אל¹⁰v. 11: ויבא יהוה עליהם¹⁰**Subunit II**

- low chiasmic aspect contributes cogency and emphasizes theme of M.'s apostasy
- content: M.'s apostasy and reign before Y. acts

Subunit III

- pivot
- content: Y. acts

Subunit IV

- no chiasmic aspect within subunit
- inclusion emphasizes M.'s humbling and prayer, and Y.'s receipt of both
- content: M.'s faithfulness and reign after Y. acts

v. 12: ויכנע¹¹v. 13: ויעקר לו¹³, ויתפלל¹²v. 14: דויד⁹, בנהv. 15: הסמל⁸, בנה

v. 16: [יבן]

v. 17: בבמות⁶

v. 18: -----

v. 19: הכנעו¹¹, האשרים⁷, במות בנה⁶, והעתר-לו¹³, וחפלתו¹²**Subunit V**

v. 20: Closing formulae

I will first discuss the structure of 2 Chron 33:1-20 with regard to its subunits. Subunits I and V are fairly self-explanatory in that they mark the terminal points of the unit as a whole. They also feature standard introductory and concluding formulae, respectively.

Subunit II contains the thrice-repeated combination **עשה + רע** in vv. 2, 6, 9. Though it is a phrase, it is also a technical term, or idiom, that occurs elsewhere in Chronicles—notably, eleven times in 2 Chronicles; and even a fourth time in chapter 33, in v. 22. Still, 27% of the total occurrences of **עשה + רע** in 2 Chronicles are in subunit II. The combination that follows, **בעיני יהוה**, also is an idiom appearing fairly frequently in Chronicles (19 times; 18 of which are in 2 Chronicles). The repeated idioms and distinctive locations of vv. 2, 6, 9 contribute some chiastic aspect. An envelope figure, or inclusio, is strongly made between vv. 2 and 9's verse-ending phraseology of **הגוים אשר—(Verb in the Hiphil Perfect 3ms)⁴—יהוה מפני בני ישראל³**.

The remainder of subunit II lacks further chiastic aspect. The overall chiastic aspect for the subunit is low, and its function appears to be simply that of emphasizing (1) the cogency of vv. 2-9 as its own subunit; and (2) the overall theme of subunit II as the apostasy of Manasseh.

Subunit III is composed of two verses, both of which begin with the construction (*wayyiqtol* 3ms form) + **יהוה** + (guttural-**ל** preposition), which is generally unexceptional in biblical literature. However, being that the constructions here are chapter-unique, parallel, and centrally located in the pericope, they distinguish vv. 10, 11 as the pivot. This differs from the more subjective, content-based conclusions of Smelik, Japhet, and Abadie, all of whom include at least vv. 12-13 in the pivot, shifting the center's emphasis to Manasseh's action and condition instead of YHWH's action, which vv. 10-11 convey and which seems more theologically resonant with the emphases of the Chronicler (e.g., the sovereignty of YHWH and the decisive quality of His intervention in the course of history).¹⁰

Moving on to subunit IV, we bear in mind that **כנע** is frequent vocabulary in Chronicles. **כנע** occurs 19 times in Chronicles, 16 of which are in 2 Chronicles. The verb also occurs later in chapter 33, in v. 23, and nearby, in 32:26. On its own, the repetition of this root could be coincidental. However, the clustering in subunit IV of **כנע** with forms derived from root **פלל** and the more unique occurrences of **ל + ו + עתר** strengthens its distinctive use here.¹¹ The parallel aspect for subunit IV's beginning and end, which suggests an inclusio, may not seem to be strong at first because of the distance between elements in vv. 12 and 13. It could be argued that vv. 12 and 13 belong together, but in such cases one must be especially careful to make judgments independently of structural concerns. With that in mind, it may be

¹⁰For further discussion, see Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought*, BEATAJ (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989), 62, 125-136.

¹¹In addition to these unique occurrences of **ל + ו + עתר**, it is worth noting that **עתר** occurs twenty-four times in the OT, of which three are in Chronicles, of which two are in 2 Chronicles (namely, in these verses).

seen that vv. 12 and 13 do share similar content and are distinguished from the rest of subunit IV by the **וְאֶחָרֵיכֵן** that begins v. 14. No other inner subunit features are present. In terms of content, vv. 12-19, along with the formulaic conclusion of v. 20 (i.e., subunit V), share the subject of Manasseh's reign *after* YHWH acts.

Thus far repetitions have formed inclusios and appear to delineate subunits. Taking a look now at the general structure of 33:1-20, we may recall that subunit I includes a standard introductory formula, naturally placed in counterposition to subunit V, which features a standard concluding formula. Subunit II has shared phraseology at the beginning, center, and end (vv. 2, 6, 9), which demarcates the boundaries of that unit while also emphasizing its primary motif of Manasseh's apostasy against YHWH. In contrast to the focus on Manasseh by the overwhelming majority of verses, subunit III (i.e., the pivot; vv. 10-11) emphasises a different subject: YHWH. In both verses of this pivot, YHWH appears immediately after the initial verb and before a guttural-ל preposition (**עַל** and **אֶל**). As we observed, this is *not* unusual for the OT. However, the constructions gain distinction here as the only chapter-wide occurrences, and the verse pair overall is reinforced as a subunit by their central location and parallel positioning. Subunit IV is marked by an inclusio of shared vocabulary between vv. 12-13 and v. 19. While the repeated words and roots underline the key changes in Manasseh's behavior to which God responded and thus enabled the king's recovery in subunit IV, the lack of repetition at the center of subunit IV (which one might expect, in correspondence to subunit II) may be because the emphases of other significantly located verses (i.e., the subunit's inclusio) also do not entirely reflect the general content of its subunit. Or, this situation may simply be because the portrayal of the reinstated Manasseh is more complex (cf. v. 17; 2 Kgs 21:10-16). At any rate, subunits II and IV clearly present a contrast of "before" and "after" the events of the pivot, Manasseh's apostasy and recovery.

Considering the unit as a whole, there do appear to be some chiasmic elements functioning across it. In particular, note the occurrences of **בְּמוֹת**, **אֲשֶׁרוֹת/אֲשֵׁרִים**, and **הַסִּמֶל**. **בְּמוֹת** occurs 106 times in the OT, 17 times in 2 Chronicles. In 2 Chron 33, **בְּמוֹת** occurs in vv. 3 and 19, which are generally equidistant of the pivot. However, **בְּמוֹת** also occurs in v. 17, which lowers its chiasmic potential. That said, **בְּמוֹת** also appears in vv. 3 and 19 with the only chapter-wide occurrences of **אֲשֶׁרוֹת/אֲשֵׁרִים**. This combination of **בְּמוֹת** and **אֲשֶׁרוֹת/אֲשֵׁרִים** occurs 10 times in the OT, in the books of Kings and 2 Chronicles alone. Of its six occurrences in 2 Chron, two are here in vv. 3 and 19. I would rate the chiasmic aspect of vv. 3 and 19 as low. While the pairs of words are, as I pointed out, fairly equidistant, it is not clear that the clustering of cultic technical terms **בְּמוֹת** and **אֲשֶׁרוֹת/אֲשֵׁרִים** is significant, nor that **בְּמוֹת**'s multiple occurrences are not merely dependent on the message of the content. Our third cultic reference, **סִמֶּל**, is not a technical term, though it is rare.¹²

¹²See Butterworth, 60, regarding the importance of rare words and relative unimportance of technical terms in discerning chiasmic structure.

occurs a total of five times in the OT, two times in 2 Chronicles (those two occurrences being vv. 7 and 15), and is attested outside the OT only in Phoenician and Punic inscriptions.¹³ Further, the combination סמל + ה occurs in the OT only in 2 Chron 33:7 and 15. Even more distinction is added when it becomes apparent that the Chronicler deliberately chose הַסַּמֶּל in place of הַאֲשֵׁרָה in his Kings *Vorlage* (cf. 2 Kgs 21:7).¹⁴ Possibly the chiasmic use of אֲשֵׁרֹת/אֲשֵׁרִים, בַּמֹּוֹת, and הַסַּמֶּל functions to underline Manasseh's idolatry, though the frequent use of such terms may be coincidental to the content, which focuses heavily on Manasseh's apostasy and restoration.

Less certain, though perhaps worth mentioning, is the appearance of דויד in vv. 7 and 14. דויד occurs in Chronicles 261 times; in 2 Chronicles, 74 times. Its only appearances in chapter 33 are in these two verses, but given the high concentration of דויד instances in 2 Chronicles—such that a chance double occurrence of דויד in any one chapter of 2 Chronicles is more likely than not—I consider the chiasmic aspect of vv. 7 and 14 as very low. Another weak connection may be between vv. 4-5 and v. 17. With regard to content, the contrast between vv. 4-5 (in which pagan worship is conducted in YHWH's temple) and v. 17 (in which YHWH worship happens at pagan sites) is striking. Still, given the subjective nature of this correlation and the absence of clearer "signals," the chiasmic aspect of vv. 4-5 and 17 is relatively insignificant.

The general infrequency of these chiasmic elements and the relatively minor role of their subject matter suggest that their function is simply to tighten the whole together. By linking individual parts of two large and clearly demarcated subunits together (that is, subunits II and IV), the whole gains

¹³John W. McKay, *Religion in Judah under the Assyrians: 732-609 B.C.*, SBT 26 (London: SCM Press, 1973), 21-22. The other three uses of סמל are in Deut 4:16; Ezek 8:3, 5.

¹⁴Looking at other scholars' work on this matter, the chiasmic relationship between vv. 7 and 15 has heretofore not been observed, though the marked change by the Chronicler of אֲשֵׁרָה to סמל in v. 15 has been undeniable. Scholars since McKay, 22, usually explain the change as reflecting specification of an idol type, probably Phoenician. J. M. Hadley, "סמל," *NIDOTTE* 3:271-272, makes a different suggestion: סמל in chap. 33 emphasizes a sense of image, in contrast to a being. She remarks that the use of סמל "may suggest that סמל is specifically the goddess Asherah, but it is more likely that the Chronicler wished to remove any suggestion that an existent deity was involved, and asserted it was merely an image." Either or both of McKay and Hadley's proposals may be operative for סמל in 2 Chron 33. It seems to me, however, that a chiasmic relationship best explains both unique occurrences of הַסַּמֶּל. It is possible to harmonize the theories and suggest, e.g., that the Chronicler wished to emphasize through the chiasmic pairing the foreign, Phoenician nature of the Asherah that Manasseh erected. Being that the etymological evidence for סמל remains inconclusive, however, I hesitate to advocate such theories. What one can more confidently forward is the strong presence of chiasmic aspect through הַסַּמֶּל in 32:7 and 15. See "סמל," *HALAT* 3:717. For further discussion on the term סמל itself, see Christoph Dohmen, "Heißt סמל 'Bild, Statue?'" *ZAW* 95 (1984): 263-266.

more of a sense of cogency as one large unit concerning Manasseh. The seven occurrences of keyroot **בנה** serve no apparent chiastic function, though their relatively high frequency here serves to unite the passage further.¹⁵

Taking into account the broader chiastic structure of 33:1-20 in terms of its repetition-delineated subunits (which are affirmed by content) and the few occurrences of detailed chiastic aspect within that broader structure, 2 Chron 33:1-20 has an overall chiastic aspect that, in terms of clarity, is high for its general structure; in terms of chiastic complexity, it is low. All that to say, chiastic aspect is present in 33:1-20—it functions generally, in the service of structure, contrast, and cogency. Most would consider 2 Chron 33:1-20, by way of its general outline, to be a chiasmus, though it should be further qualified as a weak or “general” narrative chiasmus.

IV. *The Structure of 2 Chronicles 31:20–32:33*

Finally, 2 Chron 31:20–32:33 demonstrates strong enough chiastic aspect that, for all intents and purposes, it may be considered a narrative chiasmus. Chiastically arranged verses and elements exhibiting strong chiastic aspect are described in plain, black print in the following diagram. Elements with weaker chiastic aspect are noted in 50% grayscale, though my discussion in this paper will concentrate on the stronger chiastic pairs in this pericope.

The chiastic structure of 2 Chron 31:20–32:33:

- A. Summary formulae about Hezekiah (31:20-21)
- B. Foreign power (Assyria) tests Hezekiah’s faithfulness (32:1-2)
- C. Hezekiah **סתר** the springs (32:3)
- D. **ב-ג** occurs twice; abundant resources for Jerusalem in time of war (32:4)
- E. **בנינו** made; Hezekiah’s building projects in time of war (32:5)
- (32:6)
- (32:7)
- (32:8)
- F. Introductory statement, **אמר** **זה**; “to Hezekiah, king of Judah”; content: foreign nation hostile to Jerusalem (32:9)
- G. cluster: “Sennacherib king of Assyria” and issue of what happens to **בירושלם** . . . **שבים**; Sennacherib’s questions . . . (see G’, v. 22) (32:10)
- H. Content: Hezekiah defamed by the king of Assyria; Sennacherib predicts death for Jerusalemites . . . ; Sennacherib challenges the ability of the Jerusalemites’ God to save them (32:11)
- I. Content: Sennacherib looks at the Israelite cultus and begins his challenge of the exclusivity of the one God YHWH and the centralized cultus (32:12)

¹⁵**בנה**, “to build,” occurs 61 times in 2 Chron. Its various uses in 33:1-20 may be seen to draw attention to Manasseh’s dramatic change in relation to his political and religious building projects.

- J. cluster: “the lands”; root עָשָׂה; “my [Sennacherib’s] hand”; implicit comparison of YHWH to other gods (32:13)
 (32:14)
 (32:15)
- K. **PIVOT**: self-contained chiasm and assonance (32:16)
 (32:17)
 (32:18)
- J'. cluster: “the land”; root עָשָׂה//radicals עֲשֵׂה; “the hands of humanity”; explicit comparison of YHWH to other gods (32:19)
- I'. Content: Hezekiah and Isaiah appeal exclusively to YHWH in a way not restricted by the formalisms of the cultus, but pray “(to) the heavens” (32:20)
- H'. Content: Hezekiah proven correct by YHWH; Assyrian enemy forces and Sennacherib himself die; Sennacherib not saved in “the house of his own god” (32:21)
- G'. cluster: “Sennacherib king of Assyria” and issue of what happens to שְׁבִי יְרוּשָׁלַם; ...are well-answered! (see G, v. 10) (32:22)
- F'. Concluding statement, מֵאַחֲרַיִכֶן; “to Hezekiah, king of Judah”; content: foreign nations honor the king in Jerusalem (32:23)
 (32:24)
 (32:25)
 (32:26)
- E'. מִגְּנִים in treasuries; Hezekiah’s building projects in time of rest and prosperity (32:27-28)
- D'. ב-ר occurs twice; abundant resources for Hezekiah in time of peace (32:29)
- C'. Hezekiah סָתַם the spring (32:30)
- B'. Foreign power (Babylon) tests Hezekiah’s faithfulness (32:31)
- A'. Concluding formulae about Hezekiah (32:32-33)

A/A' (31:20-21; 32:32-33): These verses bookend the remainder of chapter 32 in an inclusio of formulae about Hezekiah. These are standard formulae in predictable places. The verses share no distinct vocabulary, and chiastic aspect for these verses is low.

C/C' (32:3, 30): The correspondence relies on the distinctive occurrences of the fairly rare root סָתַם, “to shut, stop.” This root occurs 13-15 times in the OT,¹⁶ three times in Chronicles, all of which appear here in 2 Chron 32. Lowering the chiastic aspect is the fact that there is a third occurrence, in v. 4. Strengthening the chiastic aspect, though, is the particular motif of

¹⁶See discussion in B. Otzen and H.-J. Fabry, “סָתַם,” *TDOT* 10:359-362, esp. 359-361.

the manipulation of springs leading to Jerusalem. The sharing of this motif was observed by Ackroyd, who unfortunately did not discern further literary-structural relevance.¹⁷ Similarly, Otzen noted the shared use of סתם, with both occurrences being in the Qal, and surmised an indirect connection, but to no further discussion.¹⁸ Overall chiastic aspect for this chiastic pair is strong.

D/D' (32:4, 29): The repetition of ג-ב by itself is unexceptional. The combination initial-ג followed by ב occurs 118 times in Chronicles, 68 times in 2 Chronicles, and 8 times in 2 Chron 32. Its occurrences in vv. 4 and 29 have an additional distinctive feature, however, and that is ג-ב's double appearance in each verse.

2 Chron 32:4 ויקבצו עִמָּרֹב ויסתמו את־כל־המעיינות
ואת־הנחל השופר בתוך־הארץ לאמר למה
יבואו מלכי אשור ומצאו מים רבים:

2 Chron 32:29 וערים עשה לו ומקנה־צאן ובקר לרב כי
נתן־לו אלהים רכוש רב מאד:

Still, the frequency of ג-ב in 2 Chron 32 and beyond keeps the chiastic aspect between these verses low.

E/E' (32:5, 27-28): These verses share the word מגנים, “shields,” which occurs 10 times in 2 Chronicles, twice in this chapter. The placement of מגנים in v. 27 has been considered so unusual at times in history that the Greek and Latin interpreters preferred to emend מגנים to the biblically unattested form מגדנים (“choice, excellent things,” cf. 32:23).¹⁹ מגנים is maintained in the MT, however. Bearing in mind the unusual use of מגנים—at least, in antique and modern eyes—the chiastic aspect here is significant.²⁰

F/F' (32:9, 23): Both verses share similar positions marking the beginning or conclusion of a subunit within the plain prose structure of the text by means of temporal markers incorporating אחר. This also occurs in v. 1, which could be understood as reinforcing an echo of the uses in vv. 9 and 23, or, contrarily, may indicate that the correspondence in vv. 9 and 23 is less exceptional. The latter conclusion is supported by the fact that אחר is very common vocabulary. At

¹⁷Peter R. Ackroyd, “The Chronicler as Exegete,” *JSOT* 2 (1977): 11-12.

¹⁸Otzen, “סתם,” 359-360.

¹⁹[מגדן־גד] occurs in the OT in only the feminine plural form and in just three clear instances: Gen 24:53; 2 Chron 21:3; 32:23.

²⁰For modern interpreters questioning the use of מגנים, see *BHS*; *NAB*; *NJB*; Wilhelm Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, HAT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1955), 312; Peter R. Ackroyd, *1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah*, TBC (London: SCM Press, 1973), 195; and Williamson, 387. See also discussion in Mark A. Throntveit, “The Relationship of Hezekiah to David and Solomon in the Books of Chronicles,” in *The Chronicler as Theologian: Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein*, ed. M. Patrick Graham, Steven L. McKenzie, and Gary N. Knoppers (London: T. & T. Clark, 2003), 105-121, esp. 116.

the same time, the epithet **יְחִזְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה** (“Hezekiah king of Judah”) occurs five times in the whole of Chronicles (1 Chron 4:41; 2 Chron 30:24;²¹ 32:8, 9, 23), which is surprisingly seldom, relative to the thirty-eight occurrences of **יְחִזְקִיָּהוּ** and five occurrences of **יְחִזְקִיָּהוּ** in Chronicles. What should not be taken into account for the chiasmic aspect are the shared occurrences of “to Jerusalem,” a phrase that uses different prepositions in the two verses. Moreover, **יְרוּשָׁלַם** occurs 12 times in chapter 32 alone, half those occurrences being preceded by a preposition.

G/G' (32:10, 22): **סִנְחַרְיִב מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר** (“Sennacherib king of Assyria”) occurs fairly frequently in chapter 32, and it seems that the Chronicler is simply following his Kings *Vorlage* in repeating this epithet. The combination **יְרוּשָׁלַם + יָשָׁב** also occurs frequently in 2 Chronicles with at least thirty-eight instances, and in chapter 32 with four instances.²² The clustering of both these combinations together occurs only in vv. 10 and 22, but that could be coincidental, given the unexceptional nature of both. Chiasmic aspect for this possible correspondence is so low that it is relatively insignificant.

J/J' (32:13, 19): By way of comparison to G/G', this pair also shares frequent vocabulary that is possibly clustered. The cluster of **אֲרָץ** (“land”), derivative root **עָשָׂה** (“to do, make”), and **יָד** (“hand, power”) may seem unusual, but the combination actually occurs approximately twenty-six times in the OT, three of which are in 2 Chron—twice through this pair and once in 2 Chron 13:9. Still, the combination is distinctive enough to suggest a correspondence between the two verses.

K (32:16): This verse has the central position in the chiasmus and comprises a self-contained chiasmus and consonantal assonance (ל, ד, ר, ב, ע). For these obvious reasons, its chiasmic aspect is very high.

The self-contained chiasmic structure is:

ועוד דברו X (anacrusis)
 עבדיו A
 על- B
 יהוה האלהים C
 ועל B'
 יחזקיהו עבדו A'

The primary effect of this chiasmic structure is to highlight **יהוה האלהים** and his central role in chapter 32. The effect of the assonance is to render the verse aesthetically pleasing and hence attention catching and memorable, as

²¹Minor variant spelling: **יְחִזְקִיָּהוּ**.

²²Accordance search of “**יְרוּשָׁלַם**” <WITHIN 3 Words><FOLLOWED BY> “**יָשָׁב**.”

well as to reinforce the unity of v. 16's content.²³ Verse 16's structure conveys the message that YHWH is in control: in the midst of the conflict between the עבדֵי־י (‘‘servants’’) of Sennacherib and the עבד (‘‘servant’’) of YHWH,²⁴ and even in the midst of—ironically—Assyria’s insults and attacks, YHWH is the determinative factor; he is the hinge on which everything changes and the circumstances make a turn for the better. Further, YHWH is at the center of all the events of chapter 32, as the pivot indicates in its relation to the rest of the verses. Possibly the centrality of YHWH in the structure reflects the Chronicler’s concern to uphold throughout his work the centrality of the cultus and exclusive worship of YHWH.²⁵

The epithet יהוה הוֹאֵל הַיִּם is rare in the OT (41x) and unique within chapter 32.²⁶ With the few occurrences we have to consider, it may seem at first glance that ‘‘the use of ‘YHWH [Ha]Elohim’ is sporadic and does not seem to point to any particular intent or requisite context.’’²⁷ However, its use in chapter 32 appears to be more intentional than not, as הוֹאֵל הַיִּם occurs in 31:21; 32:16, 31—at the beginning, middle, and *near* (but not quite *at*) the end of the unit.

Even without recognizing the chiasmic structure, Japhet writes concerning the significance of הוֹאֵל הַיִּם[ה]:

The use of ‘‘Elohim’’ as the proper name for the god of Israel neutralizes any plural connotation the word might have and expresses the abstract idea of ‘‘godliness.’’ The determinate form (‘‘ha-Elohim’’) as a proper name suggests the fuller sentence ‘‘The LORD [is] God’’ (יהוה הוא הוֹאֵל הַיִּם).²⁸ Not only does it express an abstract understanding of the divine essence, it also emphasises *God’s qualities of uniqueness and exclusiveness*. The increased use of the determinate form testifies to a *stronger awareness of God’s exclusiveness* and may be seen as a theological-linguistic development typical of late biblical literature, including the book of Chronicles.²⁹

²³Appreciation of the multiple effects of literary devices such as paronomasia and other consonantal wordplay was first brought to my attention by Isaac Kalimi, ‘‘The Contribution of the Literary Study of Chronicles to the Solution of its Textual Problems,’’ *BiblInt* 3 (1995): 210-211.

²⁴עבד also occurs in v. 9 inconsequentially to the chiasmus here.

²⁵Consider esp. couplet I/I', vv. 12, 20, which explicitly concerns that issue.

²⁶Japhet, *Ideology of the Book*, 38, observes that the phrase appears twenty times in the story of the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:4–3:24), twelve times in Chronicles; and in the rest of the OT, nine times (mostly in Psalms).

²⁷Japhet, *Ideology of the Book*, 41.

²⁸W. H. Schmidt draws out the exclusiveness implied in this sentence more clearly, translating and scripturally explicating the confession ‘‘Yahweh is (the true, only) God’’ (‘‘הוֹאֵל הַיִּם,’’ *TLOT* 1:115-126, esp. 124).

²⁹*Ibid.*, 30, emphasis supplied.

Japhet's conclusions above concerning the use of [ה]אלהים are reinforced by my observation, based on the chiastic structure of 2 Chron 32, that one of the chapter's dominant, implicit messages is that YHWH alone is God. Further, the Chronicler's combining of האלהים with יהוה in v. 16 to emphasize YHWH's uniqueness, exclusiveness, and determinative power seems to affirm Japhet's proposal that the determinate form (האלהים) suggests "The LORD [is] God."

The chiastic structure of v. 16 also contrasts Sennacherib's servants (עבדיו) with YHWH's servant, Hezekiah (עבדו). In many respects, the battle in chapter 32 is staged between these two representative parties, though the "servants" cannot be separated from their masters in this situation.³⁰ Bearing in mind that the role of Sennacherib's ambassadors and King Hezekiah is likened to that of faithful representatives, to counter the "servant" is to counter the servant's master.

Hezekiah's exceptional status as the only king besides David to be designated in Chronicles as the servant of YHWH by a voice other than his own is no small honor, and the Chronicler's awareness of this is probably reflected in the placement of the servant title in this central verse. The use of עבדו in v. 16 impresses upon the reader the dependence, favored status, and faithful fulfilment of commissioned task(s) by Hezekiah.³¹ Furthermore, the strength of the theology inherent in the use of עבד with YHWH as genitive object (namely, that the "servant" of YHWH acknowledges his/her dependence upon and service to YHWH, and that YHWH assumes a degree of ownership and responsibility for his servant) reinforces the polarization between Hezekiah and Sennacherib's ambassadors.

Overall, I would rate the chiastic aspect of 2 Chron 32 as above average. In addition to the chiastic aspect of several pairs, the impressive maintenance of chiastic symmetry across 34 verses contributes to its strength. Emphases, nuances, contrasts, and reinforcements of literary elements are highlighted by varying degrees throughout the chiasmus. Some of the more salient ways by which recognition of the narrative chiasmus proves informative, if not necessary, to our reading of the text are emphasis of the symbolic centrality of YHWH; identification of the conflict as being between the representatives of YHWH and of the Assyrian king; affirmation of the text (the case of מגנים in vv. 5 and 27 being an eminent example); and delineation of the

³⁰Relatedly, Brevard S. Childs observes by way of comparison with the 2 Kings//Isaiah accounts: "The Chronicler does not allow the enemy for a moment to play Hezekiah off against Yahweh as B² had pictured. Their positions are identical throughout and the issue of faith is clear-cut between God with his servant Hezekiah and the Assyrian threat" (*Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, SBT 3 [London: SCM Press, 1967], 110).

³¹See H. Ringgren, U. Rütterswörden, and H. Simian-Yofre, "עבד," *TDOT* 10:376-405, esp. 395; R. Schultz, "Servant, Slave," *NIDOTTE* 4:1183-1198, esp. 1190-1193; C. Westermann, "עבד," *TLOT* 2:819-832, esp. 826-829; E. Carpenter, "עבד," *NIDOTTE* 3:304-309, esp. 306-307.

narrative unit, which includes vv. 24-33 by way of the structural balance and meaning it contributes to vv. 1-23 through the chiasmus.

The attention evidenced by the Chronicler in arranging chapter 32 as a chiasmus suggests several intents. To structure such a sizable length of text at the end of a king's account signals more than closure to a section. The chiasmus gives a sense of unity to otherwise disparate parts. As well, chiastic structures contribute an aesthetic quality of balance and craftsmanship, which themselves often serve to highlight the chiastically arranged text. Further, as we have seen, the primary emphases of the chiasmus are indispensably relevant for understanding the pericope and have proven to coincide with known aspects of the Chronicler's ideology (e.g., the centrality and exclusivity of YHWH worship). These emphases of the chiasmus, in turn, may be seen to create thematic connections at least between the chapters concerning Hezekiah, if not the whole of the book.

When its chiastic structure is taken into account, 2 Chron 32 accomplishes too much to be regarded as a mere summary or minimized report of the 2 Kings // Isaiah account. Rather, the passage's chiastic structure may be seen to highlight Hezekiah's handling of the Assyrian attack and its aftermath. Possibly the chiastic structure marks the events as climactic in relation to the other features of Hezekiah's reign. At the very least, this narrative chiasmus distinguishes the situation between Hezekiah and the Assyrians as deserving of attention.

One final note is that the final redactor of Chronicles apparently maintained and/or crafted the chiastic structure as part of his work. The narrative chiasmus of 2 Chron 32 highlights themes that are consistent with the Chronicler's emphases elsewhere, which strongly suggests that the chiastic structure is the Chronicler's own creation.

V. Summary-Conclusion

To review, I will recall here only the most salient points of this paper. In the discussion of methodology, I introduced the concept of *chiastic aspect*, a more nuanced concept than straightforward *chiasmus* in that the former recognizes the possibility of varying degrees of chiastic presence. Butterworth's procedure for discerning chiasmus was also discussed.

Analysis of 2 Chron 28:16-21; 33:1-20; and 31:20-32:33 demonstrated different degrees and ways in which chiastic aspect may function in a text. The parameters of 28:16-21 were confirmed as a unit, and the chiastic structure was evaluated as strong. As well, this narrative chiasmus emphasizes Ahaz's folly in relying on Assyria and his responsibility regarding Judah's afflictions. While chiastic structures have been suggested in the past for 2 Chron 33:1-20, I proposed a fresh, new, and more detailed chiastic structure quite unlike previous attempts. The passage is organized into subunits, which demonstrate various degrees of chiastic aspect within and between themselves. The overall chiastic structure is clear and contributes cogency to the text. It does not appear to significantly influence meaning apart from the pivot's emphasis on the actions of YHWH in bringing about the reversal of Manasseh's heart and

behavior. Second Chronicles 31:20–32:33 is identified for the first time here as a chiasmus. This recognition explains details in the text that have long intrigued scholars—namely, the use of the root סתם in vv. 3 and 30, and the presence of מנני in v. 27. Another exciting discovery found by way of the chiasmus is the location of the pivot in v. 16, itself a chiasmus emphasizing (1) the conflict occurring between Sennacherib’s ambassadors and Hezekiah; and (2) the central role of YHWH in the midst of the conflict and even through the Assyrian rhetorical-psychological onslaught.³²

³²I would like to thank R. P. Gordon, M. J. Lynch, and A. Lynch for their helpful comments on previous drafts of this article. Any errors or inconsistencies are solely mine, of course.

THE PARABLE OF THE TARES AND MATTHEW'S STRATEGY VIS-À-VIS EXTREME SECTARIAN IMPULSES FROM WITHIN HIS COMMUNITY

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Opinions on the sociohistorical location of the author of the first Gospel and its intended readers with respect to Judaism are many and varying. A classical way to develop a taxonomy of these diverse opinions is to divide them into three categories:¹

1. Matthew was written for a Gentile community that had ceased debating with Judaism;
2. It was written for a Jewish-Christian community that had recently severed ties with the synagogue and was dialectically debating with Judaism;
3. It was written between 70 and 85 C.E. for a Jewish-Christian audience that still considered themselves a part of Judaism.

Although none of the above solutions overcomes all the raised difficulties, I favor in this article an understanding of the Matthean community as still dealing with fundamental questions of Jewish identity. As Anthony Saldarini writes:

the [first] gospel is in a real sense a Jewish document, written within what the author and his opponents understood as Judaism. They were debating the shape of Judaism and forging competing identities in contrast to one another. But they did this within the Jewish tradition, in Jewish categories, concerning Jewish questions.²

¹Richard E. Menninger, *Israel and the Church in the Gospel of Matthew*, American University Studies 7, Theology and Religion 162 (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 24-62.

²Anthony Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 110. Cf. Wayne A. Meeks, "Breaking Away: Three New Testament Pictures of Christianity's Separation from the Jewish Communities," in *To See Ourselves As Others See Us: Christians, Jews, "Others" in Late Antiquity*, ed. J. Neusner and E. S. Frerichs (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 93-115; Günther Bornkamm, "End-Expectation and Church in Matthew," in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, New Testament Library, ed. Günther Bornkamm et al. (London: SCM, 1963), 15-51; Michel de Goedt, "L'explication de la parabole de l'ivraie (Mt. XIII : 36-43)," *RB* 66 (1959): 32-54; Kenzo Tagawa, "People and Community in the Gospel of Matthew," *NTS* 16 (1970): 149-162; Robert R. Hann, "Judaism and Jewish Christianity in Antioch: Charisma and Conflict in the First Century," *JRH* 14 (1987): 341-360; Donald A. Hagner, "Matthew: Apostate, Reformer, Revolutionary?" *NTS* 49/2 (2003): 193-209. Others, while acknowledging Matthew's Jewish origin and character, allow for a more substantial differentiation between the Matthean community and formative Judaism:

Thus the working hypothesis, for this article is that the Matthean community was a Christian-Jewish group—probably living in Syrian Antioch—and that the redactor of the first Gospel was striving to (a) keep his fellows from creating too wide a gap with the leaders of Formative Judaism, and (b) show that the solution to his congregation's crisis and uncertainties was not to be found either in a hysterical attempt to constitute a holy assembly or in refraining from any contact with the "others."

We will proceed as follows. After a quick look at Antiochene Judaism contemporary to Matthew, we will underline the internal tensions between the contrasting statements and attitudes found in his Gospel. We will attempt to understand Matthew's strategy vis-à-vis his own community using the parable of the Tares and its explanation (Matt 13:24-30; 36-43) as a case in point.

Antiochene Judaism(s)

According to Josephus (*B.J.* 7.44), a Jewish community existed in Antioch since the second century B.C.E. It seems fair to assume that between the middle of the second century B.C.E. and the end of the first century C.E., Antiochene Judaism was quite fragmented—as elsewhere in Palestine or the Diaspora—exhibiting a broad range of movements and sects.³ Formative Judaism can be reconstructed in the light of writings such as (a) *1 Enoch*; *Psalms of Solomon*; *4 Ezra*; *2 Baruch*; (b) descriptions given by Josephus and the Pharisees; and (c) documents such as those stemming from Qumran. All of these writings were produced by different sects that considered themselves to be the righteous minority.

Andrew J. Overman notes that

[those sects] would have been primarily at odds with the religio-political powers in their setting. These powers could have been the priests in the temple in Jerusalem or the local *boulē*, or authorities who exercised power because they enjoyed the favour of a ruler or Roman client.⁴

Robert R. Hann warned that any attempt to obtain an objective picture of Judaism from such writings is a difficult task for they were all produced by passionate partisans and composed in the context of conflict. Nevertheless, we can still attempt a generic reconstruction of the *Sitz im Leben* of Antiochene Jews living around the end of the first century C.E. According to David C. Sim, data seems to indicate a certain level of anti-Semitic violence in

David C. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 182, 203; Graham N. Stanton, "The Gospel of Matthew and Judaism," *BRL* 66 (1984): 264-284; Andrew J. Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism: A Study of the Social World of the Matthean Community* (Boston: University of Boston Press, 1989).

³Overman, 8-16; Hann, 343; Martin Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity*, trans. J. Bowden (London: SCM, 1983), 12.

⁴Overman, 15-16.

Antioch during and after the first Jewish War (66-70 C.E.).⁵ Logic implies that Matthean Christian-Jews suffered persecution in the same manner as other Jews. Moreover, Jewish minority sects were exposed as well to another form of persecution—or at least pressure—from their own kindred. Following William D. Davies, Sim argued that

After the war the economic conditions of Palestine were extremely difficult and many Jews emigrated to Syria in general and to the capital Antioch in particular in the hope of a better life. It is quite probable that certain Pharisees and their supporters were involved in this migration and that they became influential in the Jewish communities at Antioch.⁶

One might wonder if Antiochian Jews were influenced by the coalition of Pharisees and Scribes who were reorganizing and consolidating Judaism after the destruction of the Temple. Davies argued that Matthew's Christian scribes were a response to Yavneh's rabbis.⁷ Revitalizing Ulrich Luz's thesis, Donald A. Hagner more recently claimed that there was no relationship at all between the Matthean community and Yavneh.⁸ Perhaps more wisely, Wayne A. Meeks urged caution, recalling the scarcity of elements we possess to draw this or that conclusion.⁹

Regardless, Matthean Christian-Jews and other Diaspora Jews, along with other Jews coming from Palestine (among whom there might have been some Pharisees), were all living side by side in the same city, generating the unavoidable conflictual situations that played an important role in the redaction of the Gospel of Matthew.¹⁰

An Attempt to Describe Matthew's Community

Given the scarcity of information regarding Antiochene Judaism at the end of the first century C.E., it is not surprising to hear a most prominent Matthean scholar affirm that

nothing is certainly and directly known about the group within which and for which the Gospel of Matthew was written—not its size, nor the

⁵Sim, 205.

⁶Ibid., 191-192; William D. Davies, *The Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 295-296.

⁷William D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 315.

⁸Hagner, 198; Ulrich Luz and Wilhelm C. Linss, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989), 88.

⁹Meeks, 110.

¹⁰R. Stark, "Antioch as the Social Situation for Matthew's Gospel," in *Social History of the Matthean Community*, ed. D. L. Balch (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 192-193.

background of its members, not its organization and internal relations, nor its social relations with other groups, not even its place or date of origin.¹¹

Saldarini also acknowledges the fact that such a group can be only known “from its imperfect reflection in Matthew’s narrative,” and that therefore “no clear and unambiguous categorization of it can be made.”¹² However, such a quest is inevitable and we must at least make an attempt.

Graham N. Stanton suggests that Matthew’s pages emanate a mix of apocalyptic fervor, concerns about internal discipline, and a “keen interest in and ‘scholarly’ approach to the re-interpretation of Scripture for the new circumstances in which the community believed itself to be living.”¹³ He also recognized that although Jesus’ story and his significance are Matthew’s first concern, “yet since he interprets that story in the light of the needs of his own community it is possible to try to understand the concerns and the fears of that community.”¹⁴ We essentially accept Stanton’s analysis here, with the addition that in Matthew’s Gospel it is also possible to perceive the redactor’s strategy as he deals with an ongoing conflict within the community itself.

Before attempting to portray the basic traits of Matthew’s community, however, we must briefly address an objection raised by Richard Bauckham, who challenged the widely accepted paradigm that the Gospels were addressed to specific communities, and argued instead that they were originally written for a more widespread audience than generally admitted.¹⁵ Against this view, we still find convincing the arguments presented by Richard S. Ascough,¹⁶ whose conclusion is summarized here:

In the case of Christianity, the “translocal” link among a number of the various congregations is Paul. However, Paul had trouble enough maintaining the unity of his local congregations (especially Corinth and Galatia) and there is little evidence that there were ties between different locales, with the exception of the missionaries themselves. At least during its formative stage Christianity seems to have been comprised of local groups with only very loose translocal connections—much the same as some of the voluntary associations.¹⁷

¹¹Saldarini, 84.

¹²Ibid., 121.

¹³Stanton, 283.

¹⁴Ibid., 284.

¹⁵Richard Bauckham, “For Whom Were the Gospels Written?” in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed. R. Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eedermans, 1998), 30.

¹⁶Richard S. Ascough, “Translocal Relationships Among Voluntary Associations and Early Christianity,” *J ECS* 5/2 (1997): 223-241.

¹⁷Richard S. Ascough, “Voluntary Associations and the Formation of Pauline

Further, even Bauckham concedes that “it may be argued that *the community in which a Gospel was written is likely to have influenced the writing of the Gospel* even though it is not addressed by the Gospel.”¹⁸

Tensions in Matthew's Gospel

Any attempt to depict Matthew's community must take into consideration the *tensions* found in the first Gospel. These tensions might point to an ongoing conflict between different ideologies coexisting in the same community. We will now provide a glimpse of these tensions by surveying what Matthew's Gospel has to say about the Pharisees, the Law, the Gentiles, and the Discipline.

The Pharisees

As Douglas R. A. Hare remarked, in Matthew “there is no attempt to distinguish between good and bad Pharisees. The scribe who in Mark receives approbation is altered by Matthew into an enemy who ‘tests’ Jesus in an effort to gain evidence to be used against him (Mk 12:38-24, Mt 22:34-40).”¹⁹ Moreover, passages such as Matt 15:3-9 (“You hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied rightly about you. . . ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines’”; cf. 15:14—“blind guides of the blind,” and 16:6, 11—“beware of the yeast of the Pharisees”) leave little room for a conciliatory attitude toward the Pharisees.²⁰

But along with this strong anti-Pharisee position, we also find in Matthew more accommodating statements. Hare notices that Matt 5:38-48 (a softening of the “eye for eye” and the instruction to love your enemies) points to a passive resistance against and shunning of hatred for the persecutors (among whom there might have been some Pharisees) in favor of a more positive attitude. The Sect of Qumran seemed to espouse a less indulgent attitude towards its “enemies” (cf. 1QS 1:9-11: “He [the Instructor] is to teach them [the members of the community] both to love all the Children of Light—each commensurate with his rightful place in the council of God—and to

Christian Communities: Overcoming the Objections,” in *Vereine, Synagogen un Gemeinden im kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien*, ed. Andreas Gutsfeld und Dietrich-Alex Koch (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 177.

¹⁸Bauckham, 44, emphasis supplied.

¹⁹Douglas R. A. Hare, *The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, Society for the New Testament 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 162.

²⁰“[T]he rejection of the Jewish leadership during this period within Judaism was widespread among these sectarian communities” (Overman, 23). Cf. Sim, 184-185.

hate all the Children of Darkness, each commensurate with his guilt and the vengeance due him from God.”²¹

William G. Thompson, too, discerns an attempt by the redactor to cushion the clash between his community and the Pharisees. According to Thompson, Matthew was facing a “concrete pastoral situation”:

Matthew included advice about paying the half-shekel (17:24-27) because the Jewish members of his community were concerned about their relationship to the religious center at Jamnia, and wondered whether they should support the new High Council. The emphatic statement about the sons of the king (v. 26b) reaffirmed their radical freedom due to their union with Jesus and their relation to the Father. But the practical instructions (v. 27) urged them to pay the half-shekel rather than risk creating an unnecessary gap between themselves and their fellow-Jews.²²

Although one cannot be sure about the relationship between Matthew’s community (and the Antiochene Jewish community at large) and Yavneh, Thompson was probably correct in that Matthew was trying to bridge the gap between his community and (local?) Jewish authorities (represented in his Gospel by the already destroyed Temple). According to Matt 23:2-3, what is condemned is not the Pharisees’ authority or teaching, but “the discrepancy between what they teach and what they do, their hypocrisy (23:4ff.; 6:1ff.)”²³

The Law

Scholars mostly agree in depicting Matthew’s community as holding fast to the Law.²⁴ Nevertheless, some Matthean statements beg for explanation. Günther Bornkamm, referring to Matt 5:21-48 (“You have heard that it was said . . . but I say to you”), argued that Matthew is simply being inconsistent because of his allegiance to Jesus’ own words. To Bornkamm, Matthew was unable to deal with the tension between the understanding of the Law in the “Judaistic Jewish-Christian tradition” and his new interpretation in light of Jesus’ authoritative words.²⁵

Contrarily, we believe that Matthew was fully aware of what he was doing: he was simply opening the way to a certain degree of “tolerance for halakic

²¹Michael Wise, Martin Abegg Jr., and Edward Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999), 127.

²²William G. Thompson, *Matthew’s Advice to a Divided Community: Mt 17:22-18:35*, *Analecta Biblica* 44 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970), 259.

²³Bornkamm, 24.

²⁴See, e.g., Overman, 89-90, 157; Sim, 190, 209, 214-215; Saldarini, 49; L. Michael White, “Crisis Management and Boundary Maintenance: The Social Location of the Matthean Community,” in *Social History of the Matthean Community*, ed. D. L. Balch (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 241-242.

²⁵Bornkamm, 25.

non-conformity”:²⁶ Matthew 5:19 is all about being the least or greatest in the kingdom of heaven, and not about being excluded from it. Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly found three attitudes toward the OT in the Gospel of Matthew: the rigorist, the liberal, and the moderate.²⁷ Matthew could hold the moderate view without necessarily resolving the conflict. Whether or not this thesis completely stands in all its components, it shows that in Matthew there is a convergence of two or more different attitudes toward the Law.

The Gentiles

Sim noticed that it is possible to find *pro*-Gentile, *contra*-Gentile, and *anti*-Gentile statements in Matthew.²⁸ The first group includes statements found in Matt 4:15-16; 8:5-13, 24-34; 12:18-19; 15:21-39, 22-28 and 28:19. Second, a degree of diffidence toward some non-Jewish characters (*contra*-Gentile) is present in Matt 8:34 (rejection of Jesus in Gadara), in 27:27-37 (Pilate), and probably also in 27:54 (the Centurion's confession at the cross), for fear appears to motivate the confession (27:51b-53). Finally, a strong *anti*-Gentile feeling is apparent in Matt 5:46-47 (// Luke 6:32-33), 6:31-32 (// Luke 12:29-30)—both from Q, 6:7-8—and 18:15-17. Sim emphasized the last group of verses when depicting the Matthean community. We perceive here a more complicated picture, where the redactor simultaneously accounts for drastically different attitudes.

Discipline

Matthew 18:8-9 seems to be a reformulation of Mark 9:43-47 in the following terms:

Matthew has transformed a passage that initially appears to have been a word about the disciples loosing themselves from worldly encumbrances into a word of caution and protection for the community against corrupting influences and people.²⁹

To use Thompson's words, Matthew “sharpened the practical advice about avoiding scandalous conduct (Mt 18,8-9 = Mk 9,43-48) because such radical action was necessary when many were actually stumbling and falling away (24,10).”³⁰ Other texts, such as Matt 7:15, 21 and 10:17, clearly evidence a strong suspicion against the “men” and “false [Christian] prophets,” who, from outside, constitute a threat to the Matthean community. In addition,

²⁶Hare, 141.

²⁷Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly, “Attitudes to the Law in Matthew's Gospel: A Discussion of Matthew 5.18,” *BR 17* (1972): 19-32.

²⁸Sim, 201-203, 218-219; cf. Stanton, 277.

²⁹Overman, 102-103.

³⁰Thompson, 262.

Matt 12:49 is especially addressed to the members of his own community, rather than to people in general as in Mark 3:33 and Luke 8:21.³¹

More striking is the omission of the exorcism found in its source (Mark 9:38 // Luke 9:49) performed by an “outsider,” and the rephrasing of Mark 9:40 (// Luke 9:50) in Matt 12:30. Apparently, Matthew made no acknowledgement of outsider Christians. To say it with Overman:

The form and definition of the Matthean community were not vague or amorphous. Matthew had a clear understanding of who was in and who was out of the community. . . . The verse regards allegiance to a particular group or community and not simply or generally to Jesus and his work.³²

However, the strong group identity is not paired with an adequate sharpness in dealing with those who, for one reason or another, disqualify themselves from membership in the community.

Matthew surrounded his disciplinary instructions (Matt 18:15-18) with the parable of the Lost Sheep (Matt 18:12-14, pointing to an ulterior effort toward the lost), an injunction about unlimited forgiveness (Matt 18:21-22), and the parable of the Unmerciful Steward (Matt 18:23-35, underlining the reason for extended forgiveness). In doing so, Matthew was strongly mitigating the attempt of the community to hysterically purge itself.³³ Thompson underscores the fact that Matthew

distinguished between the sheep going astray and one that was lost (Mt 18,12-14 = Lk 15,4-7) and separated the sayings about fraternal correction and unlimited forgiveness in order to expand and develop each theme (Mt 18,15a.21-22 = Lk 17,3-4).³⁴

In the same chapter, we find also an appeal to the disciples (i.e., community’s members) to become like children (v. 3), to humble themselves (vv. 3-4), and to receive others in the name of Jesus (v. 5). At the same time, the community was exhorted to avoid despising or causing a “little one” to stumble (vv. 6, 10), even though he might be considered lost (v. 11). If the Matthean community was struggling to maintain internal order, expelling some members would have been an inevitable choice in some instances.³⁵

But, as Overman argued, Matthew “may have included this disciplinary process reluctantly,”³⁶ while inviting the community to exert forgiveness and

³¹Overman, 111, 126-130.

³²Ibid., 110.

³³See also Bornkamm, 20; Overman, 101; Hare, 48-51.

³⁴Thompson, 262.

³⁵Ibid., 259.

³⁶Overman, 103, 113.

to “if at all possible, hold off until the *eschaton* or, big time, when all will be judged, gathered, or destroyed.”³⁷

It could even be postulated that Matthew used apocalyptic eschatology as a means to preserve internal harmony and social control: “[S]ince anger and bitterness between community members can have a detrimental effect on the whole group, social harmony must be preserved at all costs, even by threat of eschatological damnation.”³⁸ According to Matt 5:22 (“if you are angry with a brother or sister . . . if you insult a brother or sister”) and Matt 25:1-13, 14-30 (the parables of the Virgins and the Talents), punishment is the wage of the unfaithful insiders. Interestingly enough, Matt 25:31-46 (Son of Man Judging all Nations) does not differentiate between this or that group, but between those who have or have not followed the will of God revealed in Christ:³⁹ by adopting this position, Matthew shook the very foundation of the bold sectarian attitude he perceived within his community.

Matthew's Evolving Community

We will now attempt to reconcile the different themes that characterize the Gospel of Matthew. The Matthean community might have started under the influence of Christian-Jewish missionaries coming from (rural) Palestine. After a couple of decades, the group evolved into an urban, economically stable community. It has already been noted that the parables of Enoch (*1 En.* 37–71) and the epistle of Enoch (*1 En.* 91–108) describe economic oppression, whereas the Matthean community seemed to be comparatively wealthy.⁴⁰ Hann remarks that οἱ πτωχοί (poor) and οἱ πεινῶντες νῦν (now hungry) of Luke 6:20-21 are changed into οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην (“those who hunger and thirst for righteousness”) in Matt 5:6; and the injunction Πωλήσατε τὰ ὑπάρχοντα ὑμῶν (“sell your possessions!”) of Luke 12:33 becomes Μὴ θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς (“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth”) in Matt 6:19.⁴¹

The Matthean group probably experienced change and growth the passing of time. The letter of Ignatius appears to indicate that the Matthean community was exposed to the dual influence of the Pharisees fleeing

³⁷Andrew J. Overman, *Church and Community in Crisis: The Gospel According to Matthew*, The New Testament in Context (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity International, 1996), 199.

³⁸Sim, 237. See also Matt 18:23-35 and 24:45-51.

³⁹Bornkamm, 23-24.

⁴⁰Sim, 181; Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew*, Proclamation Commentaries (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 152-153; Michael Crosby, *House of Disciples: Church, Economics and Justice in Matthew* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988): 39-43.

⁴¹Hann, 349.

Palestine and to a new generation of Gentile Christian leaders.⁴² On the one hand, there were internal conflicts as Gentiles joined the ranks, and a rural mindset clashed with a more urban one; on the other hand, there were external frictions with other Jewish communities in the surrounding areas. Meeks notes that “the Matthean community went through several stages of interaction with the Jewish communities close to it, and that these stages have left fossils in the strata of tradition and redaction.”⁴³

Matthew, to counteract sectarian impulses coming from within his community, accounted for different (and often incompatible) ideologies and attitudes, reorganizing them in the more comprehensive picture given by Jesus’ historical teaching and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. What Matthew wrote is not a monolithic theological tractate,⁴⁴ but something that has more the character of a catechism.⁴⁵ In so doing, Matthew’s purpose was to facilitate a difficult, though vital and necessary, transition.

The Parable of the Tares and Its Explanation

To support our hypothesis, we move now to the study of the parable of the Tares among the Wheat that acknowledges the tension between the parable and its explanation (Matt 13:24-30, 36-43).⁴⁶

Other than the parable of the Sower (Matt 13:1-9 // Mark 4:1-9 // Luke 8:4-15), the parable of the Tares among the Wheat is the only parable in the Synoptic Gospels with a developed explanation or interpretation (Matt 13:24-30, 36-43). Both parables are allegorized, and in both cases the explanation follows a question posed by the disciples. Though all three Synoptic Gospels record the parable of the Sower and its explanation, only the Gospel of Matthew contains the parable of the Tares and its explanation. Traditionally, commentators have proposed three scenarios to explain the origin of this parable and its explanation:⁴⁷

1. both the parable and its explanation originated with the historical Jesus: this is the thesis defended by, among others, E. Lohmeyer and W. Michaelis;

⁴²Ibid., 352-353.

⁴³Meeks, 110.

⁴⁴Tagawa, 149-162.

⁴⁵Bornkamm, 17, who draws a parallelism with *Did.* 1-6, 8.

⁴⁶For a more detailed discussion on the narrative structure of the parable of the Tares and its explanation, see Luca Marulli, “The Parable of the Tares and Its Explanation (Mt. 13:24-30, 36-43): A Narrative Criticism Study,” *Rivista Teologica Adventus* 18 (2008): 55-64.

⁴⁷De Goedt, 32.

2. the parable is original, while the explanation is a Matthean creation: V. Taylor, C. H. Dodd, J. Jeremias, and W. G. Kümmel, among other scholars, that adhere to this hypothesis;
3. both the parable and its explanation are a product of the Matthean genius: this is the opinion of A. Jülicher, T. W. Manson, R. Bultmann, and and others belonging to their school of thought.

The last position seems to be gaining more proponents. In fact, many modern commentators dedicate only a few lines of commentary (or none at all) to the parable of the Tares.⁴⁸ The Jesus Seminar⁴⁹ considers the parable to be useful in determining Jesus' ideas, but certainly not as his utterance. We hold that the parable is original,⁵⁰ but this paper's argumentation gains only from answering the following question: Why did Matthew include this parable *and* its explanation in his Gospel?

Tension between the Parable and Its Explanation

Many arguments support the thesis that the explanation of the parable is, in its redactional form, a secondary addition.⁵¹ Matthew 13:40 (the explanation), which claims to reveal the true meaning of the parable (ὡσπερ οὖν – οὕτως, “therefore, just a . . . so”), omits the exhortation to patience and tolerance that characterizes the parable (cf. Matt 13:30: “Let both of them grow together”). The explanation emphasizes the destiny of the tares: v. 36b (“Explain to us the parable of *the tares of the field*,” emphasis supplied) clearly betrays a change of perspective. From a narrative point of view, the climax of the parable occurs in the interaction between the servants and their master. The master utterly rejects the servants' proposal (anticipated collection of the tares). The master's order is an invitation to consider the present exercise of tolerance as *necessary* and *useful* for the resolution of the problem:⁵² “Let both of them

⁴⁸E.g., see Eta Linnemann, *Jesus of the Parables: Introduction and Exposition* (London: SPCK, 1966); John Dominic Crossan, *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973); Bernard Brendon Scott, *Hear Then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989).

⁴⁹Robert W. Funk, Bernard Brendon Scott, and James R. Butts, *The Parables of Jesus: Red Letter Edition: A Report of the Jesus Seminar* (Sonoma: Polebridge, 1988), 65.

⁵⁰Luca Marulli, “The Parable of the Tares (Mt 13:26-30): A Quest for its Original Formulation and Its Role in the Preaching of the Historical Jesus” (unpublished article, 2008).

⁵¹Cf. Joachim Jeremias, *Les paraboles de Jésus*, Livre de vie 85-86 (Le Puy, France: Xavier Mappus, 1962), 88-90.

⁵²As John Pilch and Bruce J. Malina remark, in the ancient Mediterranean world “patience bears so close a resemblance to resignation that distinctions between them virtually collapse” (*Handbook of Biblical Social Values* [Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993], 148; cf. Job 1:21-22; 2:9-10; 7:1 and Eccl 1:12-18); and “Resignation in Mediterranean culture

grow together” refers to the present time, while maintaining validity in the future. Although the future’s resolution does not belong to the servants, it is naturally rendered possible by their “patience” and their required attitude to “let [it] grow.” Notice that both the actions of the sower and the enemy in the parable are performed only once, and they are limited to the past.⁵³

In the explanation, however, we witness a change in perspective: the sower, now identified as the Son of Man (v. 37), is the “sowing one” (v. 37, ὁ σπείρων—which gives to his action a status of mixed prolepses), while the enemy (the Devil now) is the one who “sowed” (v. 39, ὁ σπείρας). The enemy/Devil’s action is situated in the past (analepsis), but is by now revealed. The most interesting shift between the point the parable is trying to make and the perspective of its explanation occurs in the second part of the explanation: here the parable’s emphasis on the servants’ action (the passive action of letting the seeds grow—mixed prolepses) is totally ignored, and instead replaced by a long description of what will happen at the end of the time (external prolepsis). In other words, the temporal elements found in the parable (analepsis, mixed prolepses, and external prolepses) are resumed in the explanation, but with a displaced accent:

Parable	Explication
v. 24b-25 <i>Analepsis</i> (Sower who had sown / Enemy who had sown)	v. 39a <i>Analepsis</i> (Devil who had sown)

should not be mistaken for either pessimism or despair. On the contrary, resignation, understood as patience, indicates acceptance of status and condition of the individuals and/or family or tribe, and nation as a whole, together with the cause of events which affect them all, as ordered by God” (cf. Matt 5:45); “unlike human patience (=resignation), God’s patience is identified with compassion, generosity, and generativity (Ps 62; 103:8-13; 106; Is 43:22-44:5; 55; Jer 33:2-26; Sir 18:6-22)” (ibid., 149-150).

⁵³A. J. Kerr notes that in the Digest (D.9.2.27.14, published in 533 C.E. in the Justinian’s *Corpus Iuris Civilis*) that “Celsus asks, if you sow tares [*lolium*] or wild oats in another man’s crops and spoil them, not only can the owner bring the interdiction against damage caused secretly or by force, but he can proceed in factum under the *lex Aquilia*.” Celsus was consul in 129 C.E. Kerr also notes that in D.1.3.4 Celsus says: “Out of those matters whose occurrences in one kind of case is a bare possibility, rules of law do not develop,” and in D.1.3.5 he continues: “For the law ought rather to be adapted to the kinds of things which happen frequently and easily, than to those which happen very seldom” (“Matthew 13:25: Sowing Zizania Among Another’s Wheat: Realistic or Artificial?” *JTS* 48 [1997]: 108). Accordingly, one can argue that, during the second century C.E., spoiling a man’s crop by sowing tares was not a rare event (cf. Giuseppe Ricciotti, *Vita di Gesù Cristo*, Religioni, Oscar Saggi Mondadori 385 [Cles, Italy: Mondadori, 2000; 1941], 408-409).

v. 30a <i>Mixed Prolepsis</i> ("Let both of them grow together," coexistence of the plants until the harvest)	v. 37 <i>Mixed Prolepsis</i> (Son of Man "sowing," accent upon the sons of the Devil until the Judgment)
v. 30bcd <i>External Prolepsis</i> (Harvest, fire, barn)	vv. 40-43a <i>External Prolepsis</i> (End of time, Kingdom of the Son of Man coming as Judge, Judgment, punishment, reward)

The center of the narrative structure in the parable is identified by mixed prolepses. The explanation, however, drops the exhortation to be patient and accentuates only one aspect of the wheat-tares coexistence: in the lengthy and detailed "Little apocalypse" (vv. 41-43), most of the narrative focuses on the bad seed/sons of the Devil. This phase of the redaction clearly creates a shift in interest and accent.

This short analysis thus identifies three main points:

1. The explanation of the parable is clearly tendentious: once the reader is informed of the importance of this private revelation (13:11, 17, 36; cf. v. 51), he is invited to ignore the useful and necessary attitude required by the master of his servants. The explanation also shifts the parable's climax: v. 40 induces the reader to view the main teaching of the parable as the gathering and destruction of the tares.
2. The redundant repetition of the verb συλλέγω (28b, 29a, 30c, 40, 41b) in describing the collection of the bad seed is a clear attempt to capture and redirect the reader's attention. The *ambiguous situation* in which the servants find themselves in the parable (they had good intentions, but were fated to destroy the wheat!), and therefore the reader's engagement in a process of self-questioning, is totally erased. In the explanation, the dualism is more radical, since the servants disappear from the picture, leaving room only for the two kinds of seeds.
3. The master's words regarding the destiny of the two plants (v. 30) seem to evince a calm and balanced attitude. In the explanation, on the contrary, we feel a kind of excessive fierceness toward the tares: the entirety of vv. 40-42 is consecrated to describing their gloomy demise.

Finally, note that the explanation (vv. 41-43a) introduces an apocalyptic element totally absent in the parable. In this "little apocalypse," what might be a source of stupefaction is the fact that the lawless (τοὺς ποιοῦντας τὴν ἀνομίαν) are found *within* the Kingdom of the Son of Man: the Kingdom of the Son of Man is therefore described as a *corpus mixtum*. The final *logion* (v. 43b) is an appeal to comprehend the meaning of the explanation.

Corpus Mixtum, Soteriological Security,
and the Matthean Community

In his doctoral dissertation, Daniel Marguerat argued that two opposite ways to deal with apostasy coexisted within the same community: tolerance and excommunication.⁵⁴ The latter approach is, of course, the one described in Matt 18:15-17 (“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault. . . if he will not listen, take one or two others along, . . . If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector”).

Marguerat argued that the eschatological foundation of the church’s authority (excommunication equals deprivation of salvation: 18:18; cf. 16:19b) is also found in the Qumran sect. In Matthew, there is no hierarchy of who exerts the power, but it is the community as a whole who is in charge of it.⁵⁵

We believe that Marguerat is right in discerning at least “deux ecclésiologies parfaitement incompatibles”⁵⁶ in Matthew’s Gospel: the redactor of the first Gospel did not censor his sources, but reorganized them to convey a more accurate and complete legacy of the historical Jesus. Matthew wanted his community to read the parable of the Tares as

une appréciation correcte du temps de l’Eglise: le présent doit être accepté comme le temps de la coexistence (συναξάνεσθαι, 30a), et la communauté comme un cercle ambigu où voisinent le bien et le mal, sans que la souveraineté du maître soit en cause. . . . Notre parabole met en question toute tentative de réduire l’hétérogénéité de la communauté au moyen de mesures disciplinaires: ce serait usurper la prérogative du Dieu-Juge et faire main basse sur le salut.⁵⁷

In other words, Matthew uses the same argument of those who want to enforce a strict discipline within the community (viz. Matt 18:18) with a twist in favor of Jesus’ own view. The eschatological element, which for some justifies excommunication, becomes for Matthew the very reason for which the community members should not be so quick in purging and condemning (cf. Matt 13:41: “The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and *they* shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity”).

Concluding his analysis, Marguerat describes Matthew’s own vision in the following terms:

L’Eglise n’est pas le conventicule des élus, punissant à sa guise ses membres réfractaires par la privation du salut. Si la procédure disciplinaire (18,15-18) est ratifiée, elle trouve son sens et sa légitimité dans un effort inlassable en

⁵⁴Daniel Marguerat, *Le jugement dans l’évangile de Matthieu*, Le Monde de la Bible 6, 2d augmented ed. (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1995), 425.

⁵⁵1QS 2:25–3:12; 6:24–7:25; 8:16–9:2; CD 9:2-4, 16-23; 19:32–20:13. Marguerat, 427.

⁵⁶Marguerat, 430.

⁵⁷Ibid., 429-430.

faveur du frère égaré et dans la réalité du pardon partagé. La séparation des 'bons et des mauvais' reste l'apanage du Juge eschatologique : l'anticiper dans le présent ne contrevient pas seulement à la nécessité du pardon (18,21-35) ; l'Eglise s'avère inapte à extirper le mal sans porter du même coup atteinte à la vérité (13 :29). [...] Matthieu a cherché ainsi sa voie, entre la vérité et l'amour, dénonçant explicitement le mal qui ronge le cercle des croyants, mais déniait à quiconque le droit de s'intituler 'juste' avant que retentisse le verdict de Dieu (13,43). Lieu d'affrontements théologiques cinglants, l'Eglise est également appelée par Matthieu à reconnaître son ambiguïté comme une réalité constitutive de son existence dans le monde. *Ainsi, la question du salut est placée sous la réserve eschatologique du jugement. La séparation finale traversera l'Eglise, et cette perspective emporte avec elle tout sécurité sotériologique dont pourraient s'entourer les croyants.*⁵⁸

Matthew presents the parable of the Tares according to his inspired theological and ecclesiological perspective as expressed in the entire chapter 18 of his Gospel. In other words, those who are going astray need, first, to be accepted as *still* being a part of the community; second, to be forgiven; third, to be looked after and patiently rescued and encouraged; and only as a last and drastic measure to be disciplined.

Matthew reshapes the Greek wording of the inherited Aramaic parable of the Tares to highlight that: (a) the tares are found in the midst (*ἀνὰ μέσον*) of the wheat and that the bad seed had been sowed *upon and among* the good seed;⁵⁹ (b) the servants are surprised by the presence of the tares in the field;⁶⁰

⁵⁸Marguerat, 446-447, emphasis original.

⁵⁹Matthew and *Gosp. Thom.* 57 disagree in their respective description of the way the enemy spreads his seeds. *Gosp. Thom.* 57 tells that the tare is sowed "upon the seed which was good" (ε.χ.η.π.ε.ο.ρ.ο[θ] ε]-τ.η.α.ν.ο.υ.φ), while Matthew refers to a bad seed which is thrown "in the midst" (*ἀνὰ μέσον*, 13:25) of the wheat. Matthew emphasizes the cohabitation of the two seeds until the angels will take the scandalous and the evildoers "out of his Kingdom" (ἐκ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ, v. 41). The Greek wording of Matt 13:25 might very well be a Matthean redactional trait, too, since Matthew does not feel it necessary to use the same concept (bad seed "in the midst" of the good one) in the parable of the Sower (13:5, where he reads ἐπί, "upon"), while Mark 4:7, 8 and Luke 8:8 both use εἰς followed by an accusative.

⁶⁰The question "from whence then has it tares?" (Matt 13:27b) seems to be superfluous since the presence of the undesirable plant was anything but surprising in Palestinian fields (E. Levesque, "Ivraie," in *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, ed. F. Vigouroux, Fascicule XVI, 2^e partie: G. Gazer (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1899), 1047. However, the first question, "Master, didn't you sow good seed in your field?" (v. 27a) points to the fact that the servants' astonishment is provoked by the presence of the tares in a field that was supposed to have only good plants. The "absurd" astonishment is perhaps a feature introduced by Matthew to captivate the attention of the reader and introduce a metaphorical understanding of the situation. The absurd astonishment of the servants is totally foreign to the parable as recorded in *Gosp. Thom.* 57. Clearly, the Matthean parable gives the master, called κύριος at this point, a chance

(c) the “fruit” (symbol of deeds) will indicate the difference between the two plants;⁶¹ (d) the danger is pulling up the good plants along with the tares because of their intermingled roots;⁶² (e) the master asks the servants to wait (ἀφήμι), a word which can be also translated as *to forgive* or *to permit*.⁶³

to explain to his servants the truth about the presence of tares in the field.

⁶¹According to Matt 13:26, the difference between the tares and the wheat was clear “when the grass sprouted and made fruit.” Apparently, (1) the tares are noticeable well before they bear their fruit (De Goedt, 52; Gustaf Dalman, *Die Worte Jesu mit Berücksichtigung des nachkanonischen Jüdischen Schrifttums und der Aramäischen Sprache erörtert* [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1930], 325), and (2) “bearing fruit” in Matthew is often a question of doing “good deeds.” The Greek term καρπός is found in the first Gospel 19 times. The expression καρπὸν ποιεῖν (“to make, bring forth fruit”) in Matthew is always used in the context of an appeal to the “deeds” (Matt 7:16-20 [// Mark 4:8 and Luke 8:8]; 12:33 [// Luke 6:43-44]; 3:8, 10 [// Luke 3:8, 9]; 21:19, 34 [// Mark 11:14; 12:2; and Luke 20:10]). Matthew is the only Gospel that includes, at the end of the parable of the Vineyard (Matt 21:33-41 [// Mark 12:1-2 and Luke 20:9-19), the following verse: “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it” (v. 43, NAS). In the parable of the Tares, it is exactly when the grass bears fruit that the tares are manifested (Matt 13:26), therefore the fruit is the proof of the quality of the plant (cf. Matt 12:33). The metaphorical dimension of the word “fruit” shines in the parable of the Tares in all its splendor.

⁶²Gosp. Thom. 57: “(For) on the day of the harvest the weeds will appear forth (ΝΑ ΟΥΩΝΜΖ ΕΒΟΛ).” Matthew uses the verb φαίνω, which indicates a clear and incontestable manifestation in its aorist form, to describe the manifestation of the tares well before the time of the harvest (v. 26) (See, e.g., F. Schenkl and F. Brunetti, “φαίνω,” *Dizionario Greco-Italiano / Italiano-Greco* [Genova: Polaris, 1990], 918), while Gosp. Thom. 57 employs its Coptic equivalent—in the future tense—to refer to the harvest time. Logically, the tares are visible and recognizable well before the harvest: even the Gosp. Thom. 57 seems to postulate this. Otherwise, how can the interdiction to go and eradicate the tares be explained? Why then should Gosp. Thom. 57 underscore that the tares will appear at the harvest time? Probably Gosp. Thom. 57 meant that “the tares will be manifested at the harvest time without the possibility of being mistaken for the wheat.” In this case, according to Gosp. Thom. 57, the danger of eradicating the tares before the harvest time lies in the possibility of eradicating the wheat along with the tares because of their similar appearance (this would already be an interpretation of Gosp. Thom. 57 since the first part of his version of the parable shares the same concern of the Matthean version: the tares are easily spotted before the harvest time). Matthew, on the other hand, did not see any possibility of confusion between the two kinds of seeds. Matthew then could have felt the need of anticipating in the parable the use of the verb φαίνω to show that the interdiction to eradicate the tares is not motivated by the fear to extirpate the wheat believing that it was tares, but was motivated instead by the risk of eradicating the wheat along with the tares (13: 29b ἅμα αὐτοῖς: “with them,” and not “instead of them”) because of entanglement between their roots (Levesque, 1899:1046).

⁶³ἄφετε (Matt 13:30), the imperative form of ἀφήμι, means “leave, permit, leave in

If to those redactional traits we add the fact that the word οἰκοδεσπότης (“master of the house”) may refer to Jesus as well as to the Christians,⁶⁴ it is natural to conclude that the redactor’s intention was to underline that Jesus’ parable was, in fact, encouraging the community to accept and deal with its status of *corpus mixtum*. The “servants” in the parable do not receive any allegorical counterpart in the explanation. Matthew does not censure the radical dualism that sees the “children of God” as opposed to the “children of the Evil one,” but reframes it into the correct original context: the Kingdom of the Son of Man (13:41). In the *little apocalypse* (Matt 13:40-43),⁶⁵ following the *lexicon* (vv. 37-39), the Kingdom of the Son of Man is inhabited by the righteous (who will eventually enter into the Kingdom of the Father) as well as by the scandalous and the unrighteous. The difficulty of the text lies in the understanding of the nature of the Kingdom of the Son of Man (13:41).⁶⁶

place,” but also “forgive” (e.g., Matt 6:14; Schenkl and Brunetti, “ἄφιμι,” 145-146).

⁶⁴In Matthew, the word οἰκοδεσπότης is used as referred to Jesus (10:25), God (20:1, 11; 22:33), and every Christian (13:52; 24:43). It is unlikely that Jesus used the word οἰκοδεσπότης to identify himself in a technical way: in Mark the word is used only once (Mark 14:14 // Luke 22:11; missing in Matthew) and it refers to neither Jesus nor a disciple. In the context of our parable, the “master of the house” could designate a small independent farmer or, less likely, a “local rich resident favored by the government” to receive a portion of the government estate (Zeev Safrai, *The Economy of Roman Palestine* [New York: Routledge, 1994], 322). It is also possible that the οἰκοδεσπότης is here a title for a tenant farmer (sharecropper), who is using slave labour (Safrai, 335).

⁶⁵Overman, *Matthew's Gospel*, 17-18: “Two terms that are characteristic of these sectarian communities and are regularly found in their writings are ‘lawless’ and ‘righteous,’” referring to 4 *Ezra* 7:17, 51; 9:14ff (community of righteous); 8:48 and 15:23 (wicked ones as opposing the righteous community); 7:51 (many ungodly among a few righteous); 7:48 (future world promised to the righteous); 9:36 and 7:81 (lawlessness); 2 *Baruch* 14 (rewards for the righteous); 1 *En.* 94:1,4; 103:11-12 (righteousness—wickedness); *Pss. Sol.* 1:1; 2:16, 35; 3:11; and 17:23 (sinners); 3:3, 8; 10:3; and 14:1-2 (righteous); 1:8; 2:3, 12; 4:1, 8, 12; and 17:11 (lawless ones); 4 (lawless leaders; cf. 1:4-8).

⁶⁶Sim, 109, states: “That Jesus would be accompanied by angels upon his return was a common notion in early Christianity, but only Matthew (24:4-31) and Revelation depict them as heavenly soldiers and Jesus as their military leader. This myth of the final war which we find in different versions in Matthew and Revelation is likewise found in the Qumran War scroll where it receives its fullest expression. . . . Whereas the Qumran community expected the archangel Michael to lead the heavenly forces, this role now falls to the returning Jesus in Matthew and Revelation. In both these Christian texts and in distinction to other strands of the New Testament, it is emphasized that when Jesus returns he will do so as a saviour figure who relieves the plight of the righteous in their darkest hour. . . . [U]nlike Mark and Q, which both describe Jesus as an advocate at the eschatological judgement, Matthew ascribes the role of judge to Jesus himself in his role as Son of Man. This is made clear in his redaction at 16:27 of Mk 8:38.”

Without claiming exhaustiveness, we will present here the three main interpretations of the Kingdom of the Son of Man:⁶⁷

1. The Kingdom of the Son of Man is the Church as a *corpus mixtum*.
2. The Kingdom of the Son of Man is the world, according to the hermeneutical key given in Matt 28:18-19 and 25:32, which sees in the Son of Man the universal Judge: “Le point de vue de l’explication de la parabole de l’ivraie serait donc universel et strictement éthique: la seule chose qui comptera au jugement est de savoir si l’on a accompli la volonté de Dieu, méritant ainsi d’être appelé ‘juste.’”⁶⁸
3. The Kingdom of the Son of Man is an eschatological reality: “il s’agirait du Royaume qui doit commencer avec l’avènement du Fils de l’homme; les mauvais en seront extirpés, en ce sens qu’ils en sont exclus: ils ne pourront y avoir part.”⁶⁹

Regardless which position one may stand for, it is logical to see the church’s bailiwick in the field/cosmos (Matt 18:24, 38). However, it is more difficult to explain the relationship between this field and the Kingdom of the Son of Man when the latter is an eschatological reality (v. 41) that could affect the whole cosmos, since the Son of Man is also presented as the one who has power and authority in heaven as well as on the earth (Matt 28:18). Moreover, the action of “sowing” performed by the Son of Man, in this post-Easter interpretation, is not limited to his past terrestrial life, but continues in the present time: Matt 13:37 clearly reads a present tense: Ὁ σπείρων τὸ καλὸν σπέρμα ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (“the one *sowing* the good seed is the Son of Man”), whereas the parable reads the aorist σπείραντι (v. 24). The fact that Matthew puts the scandalous and the ποιοῦντας τὴν ἀνομίαν (“those committing lawlessness,” v. 41) within the Kingdom of the Son of Man might be an attack against a form of soteriological security common in contemporary Palestinian Judaism.

The *Psalms of Solomon* witness to the *certitude* that a member belonging to the sectarian community had on finding mercy before God on the Judgment day.⁷⁰ That day was expected to be synonymous with national liberation, and

⁶⁷Jacques Dupont, “Le point de vue de Matthieu dans le chapitre des paraboles,” in *L’Évangile selon Matthieu. Rédaction et Théologie*, BETL XXIX, ed. M. Didier (Gembloux, Belgium: 1972), 224-227. Cf. Robert K. McIver, “The Parables of the Weeds among the Wheat (Matt 13:24-30, 36-43) and the Relationship Between the Kingdom of God and the Church as Portrayed in the Gospel of Matthew,” *JBL* (1995):643-659.

⁶⁸Dupont, 226. Cf. Anton Vöegtle, “Das christologische und ekklesiologische Anliegen von Mt. 28, 18-20,” in *Studia Evangelica*, ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1964), 2:266-294.

⁶⁹Dupont, 227. Cf. De Goedt, 44.

⁷⁰Daniel Marguerat, “L’Église et le monde en Matthieu 13: 36-43,” *RTbPh* 110/2 (1978): 111-129.

the foregone favor with which God would have looked upon his people filled the Israelites' hearts with optimism (*Pss. Sol.* 11; 17: 8-31; 18). Why such an optimism? Like Matthew, the *Psalms of Solomon* does not employ the word δίκαιος only in its eschatological connotation, but also to refer to the children of Israel *tout court* (*Pss. Sol.* 15:6, 7).⁷¹ God's graciousness toward people is portrayed as unquestionable (*Pss. Sol.* 14:2s, 6; 15:1-2, 8, 15), and the people, because of their election, cannot fail in fulfilling the Law (*Pss. Sol.* 14:1; 15:5-6). It is true that there is an awareness of the presence of transgression, but it is also true that every transgression is expiated by the atoning sufferance endured by the righteous Israelites (*Pss. Sol.* 8:29-32; 10:2-4; 13:5-11; 14:1; 17:5; cf. Heb. 12:4-11). This means that trust in God was coupled with self-confidence of being the chosen people; and certitude of divine mercy toward the righteous, who are, in fact, identified with the suffering people, dialectically corresponds to the appeal to repent. The same optimism is shared in the Syriac apocalypse of Baruch, a contemporary of Matthew.⁷² Matthew acknowledged the infinite mercy of God (Matt 18:23-27), but for him this mercy is an imperative leading to imitation (18:28-35). A possible optimism fostered by the reality of belonging to the chosen nation is annihilated by a fierce self-criticism (Matt 7:1-5) and by questioning the spiritual leaders of the people (15:12-14). On the other hand, the only way to face the Judgment with assurance is provided by an imitation of Christ in his obedience to the Father's will (e.g., 21:43; 15:13; 8:10-12; 21:28-22:14).

The Matthean insistence on "good deeds" is reminiscent of the *Tractate Abot*. However, the difference is striking: *Tractate Abot* preconizes a *quantification* of the good deeds.⁷³ The Judgment is thus seen as a retribution given to men, a salary for their obedience (4:11a; 2:16; 3:11; 6:9b).⁷⁴ Matthew never attempted to quantify good deeds, although he insisted on ethical behavior and faithful practice (cf. Matt 16:27). He knows that quantity is probably not the way to heaven, as the parable of the Workers seems to indicate: "These men who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day'" (20:12).

Another document akin to Matthew is the *Rule of the Community* found in Qumran, particularly 3:13 to 4:26, where dualism is the undergirding leitmotif. 1QS 3:17-21 reads: "He created man to rule over the world, appointing for them two spirits in which to walk until the time ordained for His visitation. These are the spirit of truth and of falsehood. . . . The authority of the

⁷¹Benno Przybylski, *Righteousness in Matthew and His World of Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 104.

⁷²Marguerat, "L'église," 127. Cf. 2 *Baruch* 14:2, 12-13; 15:7; 51:1ss; 16:1-17:4; 48:12ss; 75:5ss.

⁷³"With benevolence shall the world be judged, nevertheless all will depend on the quantity of the deeds" (*T. Abot* 3:15).

⁷⁴Marguerat, "L'église", 126.

Prince of Light extends to the governance of all righteous people . . . the authority of the Angel of Darkness embraces the governance of all wicked people.”⁷⁵ This cosmic dualism penetrates the very nature of the human being (1QS 4:23); humanity cannot avoid this conflict (4:15-16) and it must face a choice that leaves no room for compromise (4:18).⁷⁶ Furthermore, God has appointed a time on the eschatological horizon to visit men and to reveal by which spirit they were animated (4:18-26). In spite of undeniable parallelisms with the first Gospel,⁷⁷ Qumranian dualism

vise donc non à élucider une situation de mixité de la communauté, mais— dans la mesure où l’esprit de perversité menace les sectaires (3: 21-24)—à sanctionner l’état de la pureté de la communauté et à justifier la séparation sectaire.⁷⁸

On the other hand, Matthew 13:24-30 (parable of the Tares) and 36-43 (its explanation) refuse any anticipation of the eschatological judgment. Whereas the *Rule of the Community*, 2 *Baruch*, and the *Psalms of Solomon* foster absolute confidence in the members’ immunity against God’s judgment, Matthew makes the Kingdom of the Son of Man the theater of this judgment. By doing so, Matthew follows a tradition already found in Ezek 9:6 (“Begin at my sanctuary”) and 12:2 (cf. also Matt 13:13-16 and Isa 6:9-10): it is precisely the people of God, as Israel, but also as the Kingdom of Christ, that the Judge will sift.⁷⁹ Moreover, while the *Rule of the Community* sees the origin of the evil tendencies in the human heart as somehow related to God’s will, Matthew underscores that any evildoer is originally motivated by an action of the “enemy” and that they are plants not sown by the Father (Matt 13:25, 37, 39; 15:10-20).

The Matthean perspective seems to be the following: the ecclesiological issue of the presence of evildoers within the community is a localized manifestation of a cosmic conflict that awaits its resolution in eschatological times. Matthew addressed his community with the hope that ecclesiastical discipline might be exerted in the context of the cosmic conflict between Jesus and Satan, and God’s untiring efforts to rescue the “lost.” The final Judgment will surely proceed over “His [the Son of Man’s] Kingdom” (Matt 13:41),

⁷⁵Michael Owen Wise, Martin G. Abegg, and Edward M. Cook, *Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 130-131.

⁷⁶Marguerat, “L’église,” 128.

⁷⁷As in Matthew, Qumranian dualism is expressed by ethical categories: 1QS 4: 2-8 (cf. Matt 14:43; 25:35-40, 46) depicts the deeds of the spirit of truth and the eschatological destiny of the “wise ones”; 1QS 4:9-14 (cf. Matt 13:41; 25:41-46) is a revelation of the deeds of the spirit of perversity and of the punishment reserved to those who are controlled by it (Marguerat, “L’église,” 128).

⁷⁸Ibid., 128-129.

⁷⁹Ibid., 129; idem, *Jugement*, 447.

and this should be reason enough to discourage any illusion of soteriological security and to foster in the community a new self-understanding that would lead its members away from excessive and fierce sectarian attitudes.

Conclusion

In closing, I wish to acknowledge that it is possible to find in Matthew's Gospel a negative vision of the outer world, which is also described as "dominated by the devil (see 4:8) and in need of liberating (see 5:14). [As] . . . a realm of rejection more than acceptance (three quarters of the seed comes to naught, 13:3-9, 18-24)."⁸⁰ But this does not necessarily mean that there is no room in Matthew for reconciliation and cooperation with other leaders of Formative Judaism.⁸¹ We cannot overemphasize the necessity of taking into account the tensions and different perspectives which co-exist in Matthew's Gospel. Therefore, Sim and Stanton are correct in drawing a parallel between the sectarian nature of the Qumran community and the motives found in the first Gospel.⁸²

Saldarini is also correct in stating that

The tension between Matthew's Jewish group of believers-in-Jesus and the majority of the Jewish community does not mean that Matthew's group is Christian in contrast to the Jewish community. Matthew's group is still Jewish, just as the Essenes, revolutionaries, apocalyptic groups, and Baptist groups all remain Jewish, . . . Like many other groups, including the early rabbinic group, Matthew's group seek to reform Jewish society and influence the way it will live and interpret the will of God.⁸³

It is necessary to acknowledge that it is possible to find arguments for both sectarian *and* conciliatory attitudes in the same Gospel: the Gospel of Matthew might not stem from a monolithic community, but from one in which

⁸⁰Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading*, The Bible and Liberation Series (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000), 293. Cf. Overman, *Church*, 199.

⁸¹Contra Overman (*Church*, 416; *Matthew's Gospel*, 153).

⁸²Sim, 182-183, holds that the sect of Qumran "shared the basic outlook of the wider Jewish world—the belief in one God, the importance of the covenant with that God, the observance of the Torah and so on—yet it consciously stood outside 'normative' or majority Judaism in the following ways. . . . The group at Qumran distanced itself, both physically and metaphorically, from the wider Jewish world and derided the leaders who controlled the parent body. Its sectarian nature is emphasized by the fact that it possessed its own rules and regulations and devised its peculiar interpretation of the Torah. It set strict boundaries around itself by the adoption of its own code of practice and also by the adoption of dualistic language which describes the respective natures of the insider and the outsider. . . . [M]any of these sectarian motifs are paralleled in the gospel of Matthew." See also Stanton, 283.

⁸³Saldarini, 121-122.

conflicting views coexisted, although uncomfortably. It is not surprising then to see that Matthew has been well received by “those groups gathered [such as those who originated the Didache, Ezra, and perhaps the Gospel of Peter] around Jesus in the early second century who could not imagine a faithful life outside of Judaism” and by the *Adversus Ioudaios* authors.⁸⁴ In order to grasp the intentions of the first Gospel’s redactor and the circumstances in which he wrote, one needs to concentrate on the tensions between different statements and on how they have been contextualized.

Matthew counters sectarian impulses coming from within his community by undermining soteriological security and discouraging his people from any utopian attempts to constitute themselves into a community free of all impurity. Self-understanding, community discipline, and interrelation with other Jewish groups are all closely intertwined in the first Gospel. Matthew would not have disdained a more positive and proactive relationship between his group and Formative Judaism. This possibility may even be strengthened by Ascough’s claim that urban Christianity (and Matthew was probably writing for an urban group) in the latter part of the first century would have allowed for less exclusivity than generally admitted.⁸⁵

⁸⁴Overman, *Church*, 414.

⁸⁵Ascough, “Voluntary Associations,” 171-176.

**REVIEW ARTICLE OF ADELA COLLINS'S MARK,
HERMENEIA COMMENTARY**

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Collins, Adela. *Mark. Hermeneia Commentary*, ed. Harold Attridge.
Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2007. xlvii + 894 pp. Hardcover,
\$80.00.

In her commentary on the Gospel of Mark in the Fortress Press Hermeneia series, Adela Collins has provided a rich source of valuable information for the understanding and interpretation of the second canonical Gospel. She has compiled a vast array of research both in ancient and modern sources in the 818 pages of text, along with a useful appendix and several indices.

Collins's commentary was reviewed at a session of the Mark Group at the annual meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature held in Boston in November 2008. Three respondents spoke to different aspects of the commentary: Rikk Watts on OT backgrounds, Keith Elliott on textual-criticism questions, and I on literary questions. Collins responded to our critiques and a discussion followed.

What I will present below could be described as a conversation between Adela and me. First, I will present a typical book review with details of the content of the commentary and my reaction to her emphases.¹ Next, I will provide details of our discussion at the Society of Biblical literature meetings in three steps: (1) Collins's position from her commentary and other works, (2) my critique presented at the Society meetings, and (3) her response at the Society meetings (Adela kindly provided me with a copy of her response, titled *Response to Reviewers*). However, since I want to carry on the discussion further, I will also add a rejoinder to her response, not given at the Society meetings, but based on my continuing reflection after the meetings.

Since it is easier to follow an argument on a particular topic through to its conclusion than to follow a strictly chronological presentation, I will list the discussion by topic, presenting my critique, Collins's response, and my rejoinder, as if they all took place in a present setting. This allows the reader a "front-row seat" on the discussion. Though I critique Collins's positions, this review is not meant in any way to diminish the value and importance of this commentary, nor of Collins's achievement in producing such a monumental work. I welcome further discussion.

¹Throughout this review article, references to pages in the commentary will be placed in parentheses. Reference to other works by Collins will include an abbreviated title and the page reference.

Book Review

In keeping with the *Hermeneia* series approach, Collins has written a historical-critical commentary that begins with an extensive introduction to the text of Mark, and then proceeds to the commentary on the text. The commentary section follows the series pattern of presenting a fresh translation of the text, copious text-critical notes, discussion of literary history, context, genre, tradition history, and then commentary on the verses under discussion. It is a special characteristic of this commentary that Collins quotes numerous ancient sources at length in presenting parallels to the text of Mark. She provides not only English translation, but also the respective Greek or Latin text of the sources.

In the 125-page Introduction, Collins carefully weighs the evidence, particularly of ancient sources, and comes to conclusions that, in some cases, step away from some of the accepted positions of the last century (e.g., on Mark as history, authorship, and place of writing).

One of the great strengths of this commentary is the wonderful historical and cultural detail that Collins provides in discussing the text of Mark. A few examples will suffice to illustrate. Regarding John the Baptist in Mark 1, Collins demonstrates how the baptism of John was both parallel to and yet different from ritual immersions at Qumran. She maintains that John's baptism was new in the first century, since Jewish proselyte baptism was not done until the second century (142). Regarding eating with tax collectors in Mark 2, Collins informs us that even the Gentile author Lucian disdained to eat with tax collectors (194). Regarding purification rites in Mark 7, she illustrates (contrary to the claims of many commentators) that many Jews of the first century tried to live in ritual purity (345-349). Also in regard to the healing of the deaf/mute in Mark 7, she lists seven ways that Pliny the Elder said to use saliva in healing, what Galen said it could cure, and a story of how Vespasian cured someone's eyes with saliva (370-371).

I found the discussion of genre of special interest. Collins spends nearly 30 pages (15-43) weighing carefully the evidence for and against exactly what genre best characterizes Mark. She indicates the importance of this decision when she notes, "Assumptions about the literary form of Mark affect the way this work is allowed to function in the lives of readers, in the life of the church, and in society" (17). She concludes that Mark is best classified as an eschatological historical monograph. She parallels the work of the Evangelist to the work of Herodotus and to writers of the HB and considers that as such Mark is "a mixture of free composition and the creation of redactional links between independent blocks of material of different types and genres, some of which already existed in written form" (38).

I was surprised that the section on the Synoptic Problem was only two pages long, without an expression of Collins's position. However, it becomes clear in the commentary that she favors Markan priority. The lack of emphasis on synoptic relationships in the Introduction is mirrored in the commentary with a dearth of references to parallel texts in Matthew and Luke. One is hard pressed to suggest that a commentary of 800 pages be

expanded (though one may note Luz's three-volume set on Matthew in the Hermeneia series), but I think the addition of more parallels to these two Gospels would be useful. Allow me to illustrate. In describing how Jesus dealt with the demons in the story of the Gadarene demoniac in Mark 5, Collins references an apocryphal psalm and the *Songs of the Maskil* from Qumran that describe sending away demons, the first making reference to the abyss (271- 272). But the same Gadarene story in Luke 8 also refers to the ἄβυσσος (Luke 8:31) and the pigs end up in the watery grave of the lake.² It is not a large point, but the reference in Luke is corroboration of the texts from Qumran that are quoted as parallels. Perhaps Collins consciously decided to minimize reference to Matthew and Luke in order for Mark's voice to be unencumbered by "Synoptic interference." All this having been said, Collins provides what many commentaries do not—many parallel references to ancient works of the time period that help illumine the study of Mark.

Society of Biblical Literature Discussion and Further Reflections

My critique contains two central points: (1) just how one knows when a text from the ancient world serves as an interpretive guide for the text of Mark (thus the question of intertextuality—a methodological question), and (2) the question of the makeup of the Pre-Markan Passion Narrative (PMPN) that Collins proposes in the commentary (a content question with literary and historical implications). Space does not permit a full discussion of the issues I and others raise, but hearing Collins's response and having the discussion, and doing more parallel reading following the meetings, has helped me to better understand Collins's perspective and interpretive style in approaching the Gospel of Mark.

The Question of Intertextual Influence

Collins's Position

As noted above, Collins quotes profusely from ancient texts that form a historical milieu of ideas around the Gospel of Mark. Interestingly, in her Introduction she does not express a methodology for their usage except to say laconically that "This commentary emphasizes the interpretation of Mark in its original and earliest contexts" (119). However, in earlier works, Collins gives fuller expression of her methodology. In her book *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), she differentiates her methodology from that of Paul Ricoeur.³ For Ricoeur, the text creates its own world that becomes separate from the intentions of the author and the author's historical context. Collins demurs, stating that the

²Cf. Gen 1:1-3 with ἄβυσσος and ὕδωρ

³Paul Ricoeur, *Philosophical Hermeneutics and Theological Hermeneutics: Ideology, Utopia, and Faith* (Berkeley: Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture, 1976).

logic, the sense of a text, is discovered only when it is read in terms of a specific culture, specific historical circumstances, a particular point of view. If this point of view is not a reconstruction of the original context of the text, it will inevitably be the cultural perspective of the interpreter (*Crisis & Catharsis*, 20).

This is filled out a bit more in her book *The Beginning of the Gospel: Pro/rings of Mark in Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), where she states:

The essays in this volume are programmatic studies, written between 1988 and 1991, for the Hermeneia commentary on Mark that I am preparing. They have been informed by literary approaches to Mark, but use primarily the methods of the history of religion and tradition history (*Beginning of the Gospel*, viii).

Critique

I applaud Collins's emphasis on original context. I agree that the original context is vital to understanding literary documents. Literary works are acts of communication between author and audience. If a work is cut loose from its original setting it can easily become an ideological tool of whoever uses it. As Collins puts it, "the cultural perspective of the interpreter" takes over. However, I would like more clarity on the question of intertextual methodology. I do not think Collins ever insists in the commentary that an ancient text outside of the HB is clearly quoted or alluded to in Mark, but she does use surrounding texts as interpretive guides (see, e.g., the interpretation of "hand," "foot," and "eye" in Mark 9:42-50; 449-456). So, what principles guide her in this process? When is a parallel an interpretive key and when is it not?

Collins's Response

Collins sees her task as one of filling in the background of the text of Mark so that it is seen within its historical setting. In agreement with Hans-Georg Gadamer, she argues for discovering the "horizon of the text" and for bringing our questions to the text, but insists that "unless we engage in a rigorous effort to understand the text historically we will fail to establish a conversation with those who originated the tradition that has come down to us" (*Response to Reviewers*).

Collins also helps clarify matters by her difference of opinion with Rikk Watts over the meaning of Jesus walking on the water in Mark 6. Watts proposes that this passage is reminiscent of YHWH walking on the sea as described in the OT and that, therefore, the Gospel of Mark teaches that Jesus is YHWH. Coffins disagrees, arguing that Mark differentiates Jesus from God. She sees Jesus' action of walking on the water as more parallel to the reports in ancient Greek texts of rulers and kings walking on water.

Rejoinder

I find myself somewhere between these two. On one hand, I think the theophanic overtones of Jesus walking on the water are stronger than Collins

suggests. I do not find the parallel to rulers and kings walking on water compelling, especially since these individuals are from a pagan tradition that Jesus opposes (10:41-45). In fairness, Collins states: "Although he [Jesus] lacked literal kingship, he was a true king. Whereas other rulers overreached in their claims to power, his ability to walk on water manifested his actual and potential power" (*Response to Reviewers*). However, I find it difficult to parallel Jesus to these kings in Mark 6 and then contrast him with them in Mark 10.

On the other hand, I agree with Collins that Mark differentiates Jesus from God and never explicitly calls him YHWH. But I do not find Mark's presentation incompatible with Trinitarian belief as she does. It is simply not the fully expressed Trinitarian teaching of later centuries. One can suggest that as Jesus' Messiahship is veiled in Mark, so is his divinity. In the end, I am closer to Watts than Collins on this topic.

This exchange between Watts and Collins illustrates the issues involved in my methodological question of intertextual influence. Always before us is the evidence of the passages in Mark, but the values and data expressed in Mark are weighed via the methodological yardstick of the interpreter and this leads to a determination of intertextual influence and, hence, Markan interpretation. Scholars will differ over what values predominate in Mark and what methodology best reveals them. Hence, they come to differing conclusions about intertextual parallels. I would have preferred that the Introduction contain a careful delineation of Collins's principles for assessing intertextual influence, paralleled with a description of her sense of the values expressed in the Markan text. This would have provided the reader of the commentary a useful measuring stick and guide for assessing the judgments made by Collins about individual passages.

The Question of the Pre-Markan Passion Narrative (PMPN)

Collins's Position

Collins makes the claim in her commentary that the content (not the wording) of the Pre-Markan Passion Narrative (henceforth, PMPN) can be deduced tentatively by careful observation of the wording and transitions within the current text of Mark (625-627; *Beginning of the Gospel*, 103-106).⁴ She argues that "it seems best to use literary criteria exclusively to recover the outlines of the source" of the PMPN (625). She posits that the PMPN consisted of the scene in Gethsemane, the arrest, the trial before Pilate, and the crucifixion, concluding with the rending of the veil at the death of Jesus. She sees these scenes manifesting clear spatial and temporal markers with a simple and straightforward narrative flow. The rest of the narrative she considers Markan composition or based on traditions that Mark makes use of. The difference between the PMPN and "traditions" is not spelled out by Collins per se, but

⁴Having more of this data in the commentary would obviate cross-referencing *Beginning of the Gospel* in order to be able to follow Collins's argumentation.

it is clear that the difference for her resides in the PMPN being a narrative whole.

Collins proposes that Mark 14:1-2, 10-11 does not belong in the PMPN for a variety of reasons (625-627, 635-636; *Beginning of the Gospel*, 104).⁵ Space does not allow in this review a discussion of all the points Collins and Bultmann make, but I address the terminology "One of the twelve." One reason Collins gives for exclusion of these verses is the repetition of the phrase "one of the twelve" in Mark 14:43 when Judas comes with the crowd to Gethsemane—"This introduction would not be necessary if he had already been introduced (as 'Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve') in the same document in what is now preserved as 14:10" (*Beginning of the Gospel*, 104).

In regard to 15:38 (the rending of the veil), Collins suggests that this points to Jesus' ascent to God (and possibly the rending of the barrier between God and humanity). She maintains that the earliest NT teaching on the resurrection (1 Cor 15) is that Jesus' resurrection was spiritual in nature, not physical or bodily in the sense of requiring an empty tomb to prove it (626-627, 635-639, 735, 759-764, and 781-801, especially the excursus on "Resurrection in Ancient Cultural Contexts," 789-791; and *Beginning of the Gospel*, 119-148). Paul, indeed, she notes, does not refer to the empty tomb and in describing the resurrection he indicates that flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 15:50). Furthermore, he parallels resurrection to the glory of stars (1 Cor 15:41), which Collins sees as parallel to Dan 12 and consistent with spiritual resurrection (784-785; *Beginning of the Gospel*, 123-127).

Collins appears to modify this view along the lines of the work of Jeffrey Asher,⁶ which she follows extensively (789-791). She notes that "The story of the empty tomb in Mark is compatible with Paul's view as expressed in 1 Corinthians 15 only if Paul's language of change and investiture signifies the transformation of the earthly body into a heavenly body" (791). Nevertheless, Collins still presents her position concerning 15:38 as the likely end of the PMPN with Jesus' ascent to heaven, as noted above, stating:

As the first to write such an extended account, Mark was faced with the challenge of expressing the proclamation of Jesus' resurrection in narrative form. He chose to do so by narrating the discovery of the absence of Jesus' body in the tomb because his understanding of resurrection, *unlike Paukr*, involved the revival and transformation of Jesus' earthly body, as well as the exaltation of his inner self (781, emphasis supplied).

As will become clear, Collins's position is that Paul teaches the "exaltation of the inner self," but not necessarily the revival of the earthly body. She parallels Mark 15:38 to the book of Hebrews' discussion of the heavenly

⁵She also references Rudolf Bultmann's discussion in *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh from the 2d German ed., 1931 (New York: Harper & Row, 1963; rev. ed. with additions from the 1962 supplement, 1968), 262-263.

⁶Jeffrey Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15*, HUT 42 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000)

sanctuary and the entry of Jesus into the presence of God (626-627). For the preservation of the PMPN she suggests a liturgical setting most likely linked with an annual commemoration of Jesus' death or with the Lord's Supper (638, 774; *Beginning of the Gospel* 118).

Collins argues that the burial and resurrection scenes should be excluded from the PMPN on the basis of vague spatial markers of the location of the tomb in Mark and because 15:40-41, referring to the women who came with Jesus from Galilee, seems like an afterthought (626, 773-774).⁷ She argues for 15:40-16:8 being traditional material added on to the PMPN and wishes to disconnect it from the previous section on literary grounds (626, 773-774; *Beginning of the Gospel*, 129-138). She maintains that the Evangelist may freely have invented 16:1-8 because he believed in the bodily resurrection of Jesus and made up the details to accord with his sense of what must have happened (626, 781; *Beginning of the Gospel*, 145-146). In support of this viewpoint, Collins (*Beginning of the Gospel*, 145) cites the words of the ancient historian Thucydides (*The Peloponnesian War*, 1.22) about constructing speeches in his history of the Peloponnesian War: "my habit has been to make the speakers say what was in my opinion demanded of them by the various occasions, of course adhering as closely as possible to the general sense of what they really said."

Critique

I question the content of the PMPN as reconstructed by Collins. I suggest that both 14:1-2, 10-11 (the plot against Jesus and Judas's perfidy) and 15:40-16:8 (the burial and resurrection) should be included. In line with Collins's argument, noted above, that literary criteria exclusively be used to determine the outline of the PMPN, my comments arise from the perspective of narrative analysis.

Aside from the fact that in 14:10 the phraseology is Ἰουδᾶς Ἰσκαριώθ ὁ εἷς τῶν δώδεκα ("Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve") is more specific, while in 14:43 the phrase is simply εἷς τῶν δώδεκα ("one of the twelve"), there is a storytelling reason for using the title "one of the twelve" in both locations in the PMPN. In 14:10, with the reference τῷ Ἰσκαριώθ ("Iscariot") and the use of the article, the phrase gives specificity to which Judas is being referred to - he is (possibly) from the town of Kerioth in Judea and he is the close associate of Jesus. But the use of the phrase also lends a certain gravitas to the entire scene - how could *one of the twelve*, the closest associates of Jesus, do such a deed? Collins notes this well in her translation of the phrase at 14:10 as "the

⁷Collins, it seems to me, undercuts this contention by a statement in *Beginning of the Gospel*, 141, when she says, "The focus on the tomb in Mark may have been inspired by the importance of the graves of the heroes in the Greco-Roman world. Even if the location of the tomb of Jesus was unknown to the author of Mark, and even if there were no cultic observances at the site of the tomb, it would still be important as a literary motif in characterizing Jesus as herolike." (emphasis original). But if the tomb is important as a literary motif for the Evangelist, why, in his editorial invention, did he miss the opportunity to create a specific place reference to the tomb (Collins's reason for excluding the passage from the PMPN)?

[notorious] one of the twelve" (644). The reassertion of the phrase in 14:43 in the Gethsemane scene serves the narrative role of reemphasizing the perfidy of one of the inner circle of Jesus in betraying him to his enemies. Thus, from a narrative perspective, the reintroduction of the phrase is not a problem and this literary reason for excluding the 14:1-2, 10-11 from the PMPN is removed. This statement does not address the question as to whether the PMPN included other material between Mark 14:11 and 14:43. Just the inclusion of 14:1-2, 10-11 would suggest the need for other material between the two passages since the jump from one scene to the other would be abrupt otherwise. But the exclusion of 14:1-2, 10-11 based on the use of the term "one of the twelve" does not seem to have sufficient grounds on a narrative level.

Interestingly, the plot against Jesus in 14:1-2, 10-11 is the outer story of one of Mark's intercalations and that may be related to Collins's rejection of 14:1-2, 10-11 from the PMPN (*Beginning of the Gospel*, 104). The inner story of the intercalation is of a woman who anoints Jesus with precious perfume (Mark 14:3-9). The point of the intercalation is that the woman illustrates true discipleship, while Judas, one of the twelve, illustrates a failed discipleship of perfidy.⁸ An interesting question we will return to later is the interface between historical occurrence and testimony in story. Does the use of a storytelling technique rule out historicity or inclusion within the PMPN? Does it make it less probable? If so, why? If not, why not? In other words, what is the relationship between what happens and what is told and the way in which it is told?⁹

Regarding the proposal of the PMPN ending at Mark 15:38, the question can be asked, who would preserve a passion-narrative ending simply with the rending of the veil? Collins refers to the PMPN as a "transitional text" that was "probably discarded eventually" (625), but this seems to beg the question. Although she links 15:38 to the book of Hebrews' discussion of the heavenly sanctuary and the entry of Jesus into the presence of God, the parallel to Mark is not as strong as she suggests. The reference to the veil is fine, but there is nothing more narrated beyond this in the PMPN as reconstructed by Collins. However, all other NT references to what happened to Jesus refer either to him being raised and/or alive again (Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15, 26; 4:10; 5:30; 13:30-37; Rom 4:24-25, 6:4, 9, 7:4, 8:11; 1 Cor 15; 2 Cor 4:14; Gal 1:1; Rev 1:18) or to Jesus entering the presence of God (Heb 6:20, 9:11-12), sometimes with both described or implied (Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20; 1 Thess 1:10; 1 Peter 1:21). It is striking that ending the PMPN at 15:38 does not narrate Jesus as risen, alive, or as entering the presence of God. That the action of 15:38 is done

⁸For more on the narrative definition and function of intercalation see Torn Shepherd, *Markan Sandwich Stories: Narration, Definition, and Function*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, 18 (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1993); and idem, "The Narrative Function of Markan Intercalation," *New Testament Studies* 41 (1995): 522-540.

⁹Cf. Richard Bauckham's interesting discussion of the meaning of testimony in *Jesus and the Eye Witnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 472-508.

by God with the veil torn "from above to below" is clear.¹⁰ But it is an action done to the veil and not to or by Jesus.¹¹ Standing alone, 15:38 hardly appears to suggest Jesus' entrance into the presence of God.

This sense of the incompleteness of 15:38 can be expressed in another way from a parallel passage that Collins notes (781-791; *Beginning of the Gospel* 123-127). In the description of the gospel in 1 Cor 15:1-8, Paul uses four main verbs to describe the content of the message—Christ *died* (ἀπέθανεν, 15:3), he was *buried* (ἐτάφη, 15:4), he was *raised* (ἐγήγερται, 15:3), and he was *seen* (ὤφθη, 15:5-8). It is exactly these ideas (though not always the same words) that are found in the Markan Passion Narrative (he *expired*, ἐξέπνευσεν, 15:37; Joseph of Arimathea *placed him in a tomb*, ἔθηκεν αὐτὸν ἐν μνημείῳ, 15:46; he was *raised*, ἠγέρθη, 16:6; you *will see* him, αὐτὸν ὄψεσθε, 16:7). The PMPN reconstructed by Collins contains only the first of these concepts.

In regard to the Pauline perspective on resurrection raised by Collins, Paul does not merely say that flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God. He also describes the *flesh* of various types of creatures and uses this along with other ideas to indicate that there is a spiritual *body* (15:39-49). Resurrection is never described as disembodied. Thus the reference in 1 Cor 15:50 to "flesh and blood" likely refers to the *earthly* body. Furthermore, the type of resurrection Paul describes does not occur for saints until the Parousia, at which time "we will be changed" (likely from earthly to spiritual bodies, 1 Cor 15:52, cf. Dan 12:1-3—"many who sleep in the dust will awake"). Thus these eschatological ideas also support a bodily resurrection, since a "spiritual" resurrection would more naturally be thought to occur at death. Furthermore, in Dan 12 (and *1 En* 91-104) the resurrected ones are described as shining like the stars, not as stars themselves. The saints will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever. The saints do not become these astral bodies or the expanse of the heavens, but rather they shine like them. Collins notes Dan 12:2-3 (784-785), but indicates that "the context does not say anything about the earthly bodies of 'the wise'" (785). One can counter that it does describe them when it says they will awake, and when referring to them as a group, they are described as being "the wise," "those who lead the common people to righteousness." It is their earthly deeds that mark them, hence a reference to them would imply their bodies. The concept, it seems to me, is fairly different from the deification of pagan heroes that Collins refers to in her commentary (791-794).¹²

¹⁰ ἐσχίσθη "it was torn is clearly a divine passive.

¹¹ Some commentators argue a parallel between the baptismal scene in Mark 1:9-11 and the scene at the cross in 15:33-39 and suggest that the rending of the veil is from the Spirit leaving Jesus. But Collins rejects this idea as problematic and bizarre (763).

¹² One of the major differences is the one deity of the HB and the NT versus the many gods of the pagans, and that, for the pagans, people/heroes can become gods. This is different than, for instance, angels who are at an order of being below the one God.

In regard to Collins's view on the burial and resurrection scenes, we can note that the vague spatial markers are at the end of the burial story and at the beginning of the resurrection story. This is significant, because the narrative emphasis of the two stories is on *the events* that take place and *the people* who observe them rather than on *the location* of the tomb. Indeed, the lists of women in the burial and resurrection scenes take up much narrative space and shift subtly from one scene to the next, emphasizing their importance. In regard to the spatial marker of the tomb, on a narrative level the location of the tomb is deemphasized (thus not mentioned specifically) as part of the thrust of the passage—"He is risen, he is not *here*." As to 15:40-41 being an "afterthought," these verses would probably be better described as a bridge. They refer back to the events of the women coming with Jesus from Galilee, but look forward to those who will be witnesses of the resurrection.

Collins, as noted above, suggests that 16:1-8 may be a Markan invention and that the Evangelist was doing something analogous to what Thucydides describes in his writing. However, this seems to me a poor fit. Thucydides not only delimits the extent of invention ("adhering as closely as possible to the general sense of what they really said"), he also goes on to indicate his rigorous attention to detail:

And with reference to the narrative of events, far from permitting myself to derive it from the first source that came to hand, I did not even trust my own impressions, but it rests partly on what I saw myself, partly on what others saw for me, the accuracy of the report being always tried by the most severe and detailed tests possible. My conclusions have cost me some labour from the want of coincidence between accounts of the same occurrences by different eye-witnesses, arising sometimes from imperfect memory, sometimes from undue partiality for one side or the other. The absence of romance in my history will, I fear, detract somewhat from its interest; but if it be judged useful by those inquirers who desire an exact knowledge of the past as an aid to the interpretation of the future, which in the course of human things must resemble if it does not reflect it, I shall be content. In fine, I have written my work, not as an essay which is to win the applause of the moment, but as a possession for all time.¹³

What Collins posits that Mark did is quite different _ free invention of a narrative because he *believed* it actually occurred.

Thus, on several levels, it seems to me unlikely that the PMPN would be preserved in the form Collins suggests. Its proposed ending in the tearing of the temple veil seems incomplete as a narrative and has no other precedent in the NT as a depiction of what happened after Jesus died. For example, in 1 Corinthians 15 Paul speaks of death, burial, resurrection, and appearance (found in Mark only with both the burial and resurrection narratives included), emphasizing the bodily nature of the resurrection.¹⁴

¹³Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, 1.22.

¹⁴A further indication of the difficulty of a proposed passion narrative without a resurrection scene is found in the difference between Jesus' death and that of

Thus the vague spatial markers in the burial and resurrection theme have a narrative purpose — emphasis on the resurrection. The liturgical setting of the preservation of the PMPN that Collins suggests seems reasonable, but that very setting, as we will note below, is counter to her reconstruction of the content of the PMPN.

Collins's Response

Collins maintains that there is a clear difference between the parts of the Markan Passion Narrative that she includes in the PMPN and those she does not. She refers to the spatial and temporal markers and the simple sense of flow that her reconstruction of the PMPN has, while the other parts of the Markan Passion Narrative contain episodic material not unlike that found in Mark 1-13 stitched together, in her view, with editorial links.

After 15:38, Collins sees a major shift in Markan composition, stating:

No longer do we have a seamless sequence of events with clear specifications of time and place. The statement that follows the rending of the veil portrays the centurion (who is suddenly introduced here for the first time) as recognizing Jesus as God's son. Since the idea of Jesus as God's son is a major theme in Mark, it is more likely that Mark composed this saying than that it was part of his source (*Response to Reviewers*).

In regard to 15:40-41 (the women who came with Jesus from Galilee), Collins maintains her view that this seems like an awkward afterthought. In her view, the women should be mentioned earlier in the Gospel of Mark and thus the reference to them in 15:40-41 seems editorial.

Regarding 1 Corinthians 15, Collins feels that if Paul had known the tradition of the empty tomb he would have mentioned it. In her perspective, Paul's view of resurrection is bodily as in Daniel 12, but it does not necessitate an empty tomb. She states: "The 'bare seed' seems to refer to whatever one would like to call the inner self, the personal identity that provides continuity between the earthly body and the spiritual body that God will give" (*Response to Reviewers*). She finds that the resurrection narrative in Mark has a much stronger sense of bodily resurrection and is more kerygmatic in nature than that described in 1 Corinthians 15. In her view, if the narrative in Mark were mere factual reporting it would list where the tomb was and would narrate the women reporting the resurrection to the disciples.

Rejoinder

Concerning the Pauline view of resurrection, I think there are elements that Collins and I have in common. The dispute may be more over the nature of the

Socrates as described by Collins (754). Whereas Socrates welcomed death and spoke of mundane matters as he parted life in calmness, for Jesus death was all darkness. Without the resurrection, darkness hangs over the cross and over the book of Mark, and we can add, over the PMPN.

spiritual body. She sees this in contrast to Mark's emphasis on the empty tomb, I do not. She does note, however, that "The story of the empty tomb in Mark is compatible with Paul's view as expressed in 1 Corinthians 15 only if Paul's language of change and investiture signifies the transformation of the earthly body into a heavenly body" (791). This is exactly what I suggest Paul teaches. In Rom 8:10-11, the Apostle speaks of "your mortal bodies" (τὰ θνητά σώματα ὑμῶν) that "the one who raised Christ from the dead will make alive." The reference to Christ's resurrection linked with the future tense points toward the eschatological resurrection of the saints, a resurrection of the "mortal body."¹⁵

It is interesting that Collins settles on the spatial *and* temporal markers in the Markan Passion Narrative as the criteria for inclusion in the PMPN. It is quite common in scholarship to see the passion narrative as a much more cohesive whole than the rest of the Gospel accounts. This cohesive sense clearly revolves around spatial and temporal markers. However, Collins's real concern in her reconstruction of the PMPN seems to be spatial markers. This is what she focuses on in excluding the scene of the burial and the resurrection. The temporal markers, in contrast, are quite specific both at the beginning of the Markan Passion Narrative with references to the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread in 14:1 and 14:12 and at the end with references to the Preparation, Sabbath, and First Day of the Week in 15:42 and 16:1.¹⁶

What are these specific spatial markers that Collins uses as indicators for inclusion in the PMPN? They are Gethsemane, the Praetorium, and Golgotha. It hardly seems appropriate to make these three specific locations carry such weight in determining the PMPN. While Collins argues for specificity of time and space and a "seamless sequence of events," one can as easily argue for the sequential nature of almost the entire Passion Narrative in Mark and for both specific and nonspecific spatial and temporal markers that link together to make a whole.¹⁷

Collins also contends that the absence of the location of the tomb in the text of Mark points toward editorial invention by the Evangelist. First, this suggests that the PMPN was consistent throughout in its use of spatial markers. Second, it suggests that any variance from this presupposed consistency is a sign of redaction and is consistent with invention of the entire passage. Both contentions are questionable—the first, since every written source can have variance in its approach to spatial and temporal markers and there is no way to test such variance since we do not have the PMPN, and the second, because it

¹⁵See Robert Jewett, *Romans*, Hermeneia Commentary, ed. Eldon Epp (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 492-493.

¹⁶The nonspecific temporal markers that occur elsewhere in the Markan Passion Narrative fall within the context of these more specific markers.

¹⁷One exception may be 14:3-9 (the anointing at Bethany), but this story finds its specificity through the intercalation device of story telling. See Shepherd, *Sandwich Stories*, 241-266. We also can note the rather specific spatial marker "Bethany" in 14:3.

is far too sweeping in its contention that exclusion of one point from a source would lead to a view of wholesale invention of a passage.

Collins dismisses the importance of the personal names that serve as markers of specificity in the burial and resurrection scenes (*Beginning of the Gospel*, 129-130). In response to her claim that the women in 15:40-41 should have been referenced earlier in the narrative of Mark, we can note that it is the typical pattern in Mark that characters appear in the narrative where they first play a role. In the narrative, the important role of the women is exactly at this point of the burial and resurrection.

Richard Bauckham has noted the importance of such specific names in numerous Gospel stories and posits that these names are present as markers of the eyewitness testimony of the individuals named.¹⁸ It is quite telling and important to notice the subtle shift in the names from 15:40 to 15:47 to 16:1. The one constant name always referred to in the same way is Mary Magdalene. In 15:40 she is joined by Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses and by Salome. But in 15:47 Salome is absent and the second Mary is linked only to Joses. Then in 16:1 Mary Magdalene is accompanied by Mary again, but this time linked only to James, and by Salome. In each case there are at least two individuals, but the specific details shift from list to list. The subtle shifts point to the importance these individuals play in the narrative and the Evangelist's concern with these details. While Collins is correct to insist that specific markers such as time and space be criteria for determining the PMPN, she has, nevertheless, failed to give due weight to the *variety* of markers that indicate such specificity. In regard to 15:40-16:8, she deemphasizes very specific temporal and personal markers. I suggest that the specificity of spatial markers has disappeared in 15:40-16:8 for the narrative emphasis that "He is not *here*" and that this is replaced with very specific temporal and personal markers that serve to emphasize the veracity of the account.

Collins rules out the burial and resurrection scenes as part of the PMPN based primarily on nonspecific spatial markers. However, she posits the preservation of the PMPN within a liturgical setting of commemorating Jesus' death annually at the time of Passover or in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. But this creates a problem that I think she is aware of. She notes that the PMPN was a "transitional text probably discarded eventually" and that in its liturgical usage the "resurrection or exaltation of Jesus was probably assumed, but not narrated in this early document" (625, 774). Here is the rub—the reconstructed PMPN does not contain the burial or resurrection scenes, but is used in a liturgical setting where the resurrection is presupposed and celebrated. This creates a tension between liturgy and text that Collins never fully resolves. Placed in the context of the rest of the NT's univocal testimony about what happened to Jesus after his death, and in light of the narrative characteristics of the Markan Passion Narrative noted above, Collins's reconstruction of the PMPN seems unlikely.

¹⁸See Bauckham, 49-51, 114-147.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to come back to the issue of the relationship between history and testimony in texts. In her response, Collins makes an interesting statement in this regard:

Mark has the *women* find the tomb empty since he has portrayed the disciples as having fled. His account of the finding of the empty tomb is more kerygmatic than historical or apologetic. If he were making a historical point, he would have indicated where the tomb was and probably would have included a report of the women conveying the news to the disciples (*Response to Reviewers*, emphasis original).

I find it significant that Collins distinguishes between historical discourse and kerygmatic address. Perhaps this indicates one of the underlying criteria Collins uses to determine the PMPN. The difficulty is that it applies a dichotomous perspective of history and testimony to a text that clearly does not share the same point of view. The problem, it seems to me, is well expressed by Richard Bauckham when he critiques the historiographic epistemology of R. G. Collingwood:

Collingwood's account of historiographic epistemology has seemed plausible to some historians, as well as to other readers, because it is not completely wrong. It is really a considerable exaggeration of the undoubted fact that modern historical work has not only developed more searching critical methods of assessing the reliability of testimony but has also come to depend greatly on asking questions the sources do not profess to answer and on enabling the sources to give evidence "in spite of themselves." This can make the historian feel in control of her material rather than dependent on it. Intelligibly, perhaps, this exaggerated sense of the historian's independence of the past has now been challenged by a postmodern view of historiography that finds it barely distinguishable from fiction freely created by the historian. As in other fields, Enlightenment individualism has led to postmodern skepticism.¹⁹

History is dependent on testimony. Testimony is transmitted in story. A PMPN that ends with the rending of the veil seems an unlikely story, particularly in comparison with the other ways early Christians shared their testimony concerning Jesus. This calls into question the usefulness of utilizing a dichotomous view of history and testimony in determining the underlying story of a text such as Mark.

Regardless of these disputes, Collins has clearly produced a monumental work that advances the study of Mark and brings to easy access ancient references that help illuminate the text of this Gospel. Its wealth of information from the ancient world, its thoughtful introduction, its textual notes, and its argumentation concerning the meaning of Gospel of Mark will make it an important voice in the continuing interpretation of this Gospel.

¹⁹Bauckham, 486.

**INVESTIGATING THE PRESUPPOSITIONAL
REALM OF BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL
METHODOLOGY, PART II:
CANALE ON REASON**

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2.1 Introduction

The first article of this series focused on Dooyeweerd's interpretation of Reason.¹ I intend to draw on Dooyeweerd's conception for the development of an exegetical methodology that does justice to the multiaspectual phenomena of the text as well as to the chosen hermeneutical presuppositions. As mentioned earlier, Dooyeweerd's conception must be critically reflected on if an unbiased application of his thought is to be made. In order to allow for a critical analysis of Dooyeweerd's thought I choose the work of the Christian philosopher Fernando Canale. Thus this article will present (for the first time) Canale's analysis of Reason. The third article of this series will show how Canale's and Dooyeweerd's work can be utilized in order to investigate the ontological foundations of specific methodologies. In the fourth and final article, I will critique Dooyeweerd's and Canale's conceptions and sketch my own basic portrait of the functionality of human reason. My aim is to inspire the reader to begin a critical and productive reflection on methodology in general and biblical exegetical methodology in particular.

The background of Canale's analysis of Reason² lies in the great variety of contradicting theological systems.³ This state, in which the contemporary theological debate finds itself, is most problematic since it seems to hinder mutual understanding and unity. Furthermore, the current state of theological disagreement challenges the very foundation of Christian theology. Consequently, Canale sees the need for an analysis of theological reason in order to discover the root of the problem of the many contradicting theological systems, all of which claim to be rational and reasonable.⁴ In his dissertation, "A Criticism of Theological Reason," he inquires into the general formal structure and condition of Reason by means of a phenomenological analysis. Besides this, he searches for a biblical interpretation of the primordial

¹Oliver Glanz, "Investigating the Presuppositional Realm of Biblical-Theological Methodology, Part I: Dooyeweerd on Reason," *AUSS* 47 (2009): 5-35.

²Throughout this text Reason, Logos, and Knowledge, when used in the specific Canalean sense, will be capitalized.

³Fernando Luis Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 10 (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1987), 10.

⁴*Ibid.*, 3.

presuppositions of Reason. Both the formal structure of Reason and its biblical interpretation on the level of primordial presuppositions allow him to develop the possibility for theological criticism.

In my presentation of Canale's thought, I will start with a description of his understanding of Reason's formal structure (1.2). Subsequently, I will describe how Canale sees the structure of Reason at work from a biblical perspective (1.3).⁵

2.2 Canale's Structure of Reason

2.2.1 Object of Phenomenological Analysis: Reason

Reason, the object of Canale's phenomenological analysis, is not meant in its narrow sense as an ability that pertains to human being, a typically human cognitive potential or characteristic. Reason goes beyond the intellectual activity or logical thought of the cognitive subject. Therefore, it is fundamentally different from Dooyeweerd's understanding of theoretical thought. The structure of Reason is not the structure of the epistemic; the interpretation of Reason is not an epistemology. Canale uses Reason more broadly as that which makes meaning possible. Reason, therefore, includes all processes and structures by which meaning is constituted.⁶ Thus Reason is not limited to, but includes, rational analytic thinking. Different levels, factors, and aspects may pertain to Reason. Canale speaks of Reason as being a *whole*, and the processes and frameworks it entails as being parts. This is important to understand because when Canale talks about the hypotheticity of Reason, he does not refer to epistemology alone, but to all levels and processes of Reason.

In *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, Canale uses "Logos" or "Knowledge" as synonyms of Reason. This may be confusing, but it shows the broad sense in which he analyzes Reason. Reason is understood hermeneutically. The primary function of Reason, then, is to create and formulate meaning, i.e., to provide unity and coherence for that which surrounds us and is in us—to provide unity and coherence to the variety of being (entities). In order to make this clearer, Canale explains that Reason as Logos can be described as that which enables the expression of "meaningful words."⁷ Theology, for example, tries to express meaningful words about God. Meaning and its expression in words cannot be separated; they belong together as aspects of

⁵The main source of my presentation is Canale's dissertation. However, his thought on the matter of Reason did not find full expression in his dissertation. Additionally, not all of his thinking had been published yet. For that reason not only Canale's publications, but also e-mail communication with him helped me to clarify crucial elements of his thought. Accordingly, not all the sources of this presentation will be found in the bibliography.

⁶Canale, 45, n. 1.

⁷Ibid., 20, n. 1.

the same rational activity. According to Canale, meaning is always logical in the broad sense of the term.⁸ Meaning is always a product of human Logos.

Consequently, Canale universalizes Reason to coincide with human knowledge. However, he does not want to be misunderstood as absolutizing Reason. The absolutization can only take place when it is made a particular capability of human beings. Like Dooyeweerd, Canale criticizes the absolutization of particular reason as observed in the history of philosophy and particularly in classical and modern interpretations of reason.

The central question of phenomenological analysis, then, is how Knowledge as Logos or Reason is possible. What is structurally demanded in order to be able to formulate meaning? This question is central, as Reason represents the human activity that generates meaning.⁹ Meaning is always constructed meaning. Consequently, there is no meaning outside of Reason, i.e., no meaning outside of Understanding.¹⁰ This implies that Knowledge can hinder further understanding, as Logos/Reason is the condition for understanding, misunderstanding, and even error. According to Canale, this allows for the experience of meaning in something that is not understood. This is because nonunderstanding takes place when interpretation according to Logos is generated. What is the structure of Logos that makes the expression of meaningful words possible? What levels, factors, and aspects are involved in Reason in order to make Reason function?

To analyze Reason, then, means to analyze the constitution of meaning as meaningful knowledge. In order to prevent the adoption of an ideological starting point, Canale specifies his question in terms of formal analysis. What is it that is structurally needed by Reason in order to construct meaning? He believes that one can discover the structure of Reason only by means of a phenomenological analysis that is concerned with the act of knowing.

Only a phenomenological analysis will make it possible to uncover the given structure of Reason apart from the actual interpretation of Reason. Thus the description of the structure of Reason is not the formulation of a theory of Reason (which necessarily takes place in the development of any ideology). In his phenomenological analysis, Canale seems to be constantly aware of the danger of including any ideology as a framework for interpreting Reason. Basically, he follows Hartmann's phenomenological analysis.

Canale sees an urgent necessity for a structural analysis of Reason because it is only on the basis of a good structural understanding that one can build a theory in the full awareness of its presuppositions. Although it is especially theoretical and scientific thinking that is the object of his critique, nevertheless the structure of Reason can be applied to both naïve

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., 10.

¹⁰Canale refers to "Understanding" in the most general way, rather than in a specific, concrete way.

and theoretical thinking. The difference is that the structure of Reason is made more explicit in theoretical knowing, while remaining implicit in naïve knowing.¹¹

2.2.2 The Structure of Reason

2.2.2.1 *A General Description of Reason's Subject-Object Relationship*

In order to create meaning, Reason needs a subject and an object. Both a knower (subject) and a known (object) are needed. This relational structure is *a priori* ontic condition for Reason. In any philosophical endeavor, the interpreted subject-object relation is a necessary fundamental of a detailed construction of a philosophical system. Thus the basic framework of Reason is the subject–object relationship, and it is this relationship that is the center of meaning. In the cognitive realm, i.e., Reason's structure, the subject-object relation is at work. By “cognitive realm,” Canale means the very basic setting by which understanding is generated in both its general and specific sense.¹² “At work” means that the subject and object sides need to contribute to their relationship in order to create meaning. There are two directions because of the two perspectives that are at work: the perspective of the object (direction: object \Rightarrow subject) and the perspective of the subject (direction: subject \Rightarrow object). From the perspective of the object, the communication of its ontic properties (which in biblical rationality are the lines of intelligibility, as I will discuss below) to the subject takes place. In this perspective, the subject is essentially receptive. From the perspective of the subject, the subject creates a logical image/idea of the object through its interpretative activity that enables it to grasp the object and create meaning. In this perspective, the subject is essentially active. The active interpreting of the subject supposes a framework by which interpretation is possible. Consequently, the contribution of the subject to the subject-object relation is presuppositional. This means that in order to generate meaning, the subject always contributes with some content in the form of an interpretational framework. This content basically entails a foundational understanding of the subject-object relation.

2.2.2.2 *Reason's Frameworks as Part of the Subject-Object Relationship*

The communication on the object's side is characterized by its ontic properties. The epistemic potentiality of the subject and the ontic properties of the object need to be complementary, thus need to unite in the same Logos. This is why the concept of the epistemic (epistemology) must unite with the concept of the ontic (ontology). One can characterize the subject-object relation as

¹¹Canale, 27, n. 4.

¹²By “general” I mean the world in its totality; by “specific” I mean any chosen aspect of reality.

communicative when the concept of the epistemic (epistemology) and the concept of the ontic (ontology) are complementary. The presuppositional content that the cognitive subject needs in order to make sense of the received ontic information of the object demands some basic frameworks for interpretation. In the phenomenological analysis of the structure of Reason, on the most basic level one can detect three main frameworks: a concept of reality (ontological framework); a concept of knowing, including a concept of the functioning of cognition (epistemological framework); and a concept of a system that provides unity and guarantees coherence (theological framework). The formulation “epistemological framework” indicates that Reason structurally needs a concept of the epistemic (epistemology) as a part of its realm (framework). The “ontological framework” points to Reason’s structural need for a concept of the ontic (ontology). The theological framework, or “system” as Canale puts it, holds together the epistemological and ontological framework in unity and coherence. Thus the structure of Reason demands that the ontic, epistemic, and theos need to be interpreted in order to make Reason function. Therefore, the *ontological*, *epistemological*, and *theological* frameworks of the phenomenological structure of Reason should not be understood as referring to an existing concept of the ontic, epistemic, or theos, but to the structural necessity of formulating a concept of the ontic, epistemic, and theos. Reason necessarily works by the “logicalization” or conceptualization of the ontic, epistemic, and theos. The interrelations between the three frameworks are “empty.” Their interpretation will bring forth structural interrelations.

The main feature of the subject is its potentiality to become cognitively active: to interpret and create a meaningful image of the object. In its cognitive activity, the subject is epistemically dependent on the object. The epistemological framework of the structure of Reason is mainly centered in the subject’s cognitive activity. Because of this, Canale understands the epistemological framework to be dominated by the subject. The main feature of the object in this fundamental relationship is its transobjectivity. Transobjectivity means two things: on the one hand, that the object exists in ontic independence from the subject, and, on the other hand, that the object is open in the sense that it does not hide, but communicates its properties within the structure of Reason. Because of this, the ontological framework in a way transcends the epistemological framework. The ontic can exist without the subject’s logic, but the epistemological framework cannot exist without the conceptualization of the ontic as ontological framework. This ontological transcendence, through which all knowledge can be generated by the cognitive activity of the subject, stems from projecting the content of previously experienced and mentally stored subject-object relations on the object. Thus the ontic properties that were communicated in past subject-object relationships constitute the content of the presuppositional contribution of the subject to the present subject-object relationship. In this sense, transobjectivity refers to the fact that the object’s ontic properties are materialized in the memory of the subject. Therefore, all knowledge that

originates from the cognitive activity of the subject includes the *objective contribution* of the past. Here one can see how the ontological framework, which is dominated by the object's side, structurally interconnects with the epistemological framework, which is itself dominated by the subject's side. Reason, then, is not subjective Reason, but embraces both subject and object in their interrelation.

Besides the ontological and epistemological, Reason's structure entails a third framework, the theological. To understand its function and place, I will introduce this framework after explaining the ontological and epistemological frameworks.

As we have seen, the basic structure of Reason needs both a subject and an object: the subject, having epistemic potentiality, needs an object that, having ontic potentiality, is complementary in its logic. The epistemological and ontological frameworks need to be complementary in order to have a relationship. Without an ontological framework, the potentiality of the subject cannot be activated. The subject is, therefore, dependent on the ontological framework and its complementarity.

The phenomenological analysis reveals that Reason's frameworks are not external to but intrinsic features of the structure of Reason.

2.2.2.3 *Ontological Framework*

The concept of ontic reality needs to include an understanding of how a being (entity) relates to other beings (entities). The concept of the ontic strives for unity and coherence among being-diversity in order to establish a meaningful understanding of the ontic. Here Canale emphasizes the "logical" characteristic of the ontological framework. He does not have a particular ontology in mind, but stresses that Reason's structure needs an interpretation of the ontic that corresponds to a certain logic: an ontology. The term "ontological framework" thus refers to the necessity of interpreting the ontic and not to any specific ontology. Consequently, the ontological framework is in need of an interpretation (a specific ontology) in order to let Reason's structure function. An idea of the ultimate as origin of the diversity of entity-beings is structurally needed in order to establish a meaningful concept of the ontic (ontology). The idea of the ultimate as origin allows being to be understood in coherence and unity. Ontology, therefore, needs a concept of Being, the ultimate ground of being from which coherence and unity flow (theos).¹³ Being as the ultimate ground of being is to be taken as that which allows for the existence of entities, i.e., what is necessary for the existence of being.

The ontological framework, on which the epistemological framework depends, is itself dependent on the theological framework. One could put it like this: the ontological framework communicates the ideas of coherence and unity from the theological framework to the epistemological framework. This outcome of the analysis leads Canale to the important conclusion that a

¹³Canale, 35.

criticism of Reason is in urgent need of a criticism of ontology since it is the “center of gravity of Reason.”¹⁴

2.2.2.4 *Epistemological Framework*

Whereas the ontological framework is part of the ontic realm of the structure of Reason, the epistemological framework belongs to the cognitive realm of the structure of Reason. From the object’s side, knowledge is made possible through Being. From the subject’s side, knowledge is made possible through the epistemological framework.

The cognitive activity that aims to construct an image of the object demands an interpretational framework, also referred to as “categories.” The categories of the subject enable knowledge and the constitution of meaning. They are the necessary concepts to enable the understanding of reality as it appears, and are, therefore, of presuppositional character. Categories can be understood as schemes that are needed to place the properties communicated by the object. Without the categories of the subject, a subject-object relationship is structurally seen to be impossible. The content of the cognitive categories of the subject is prior to the subject-object relationship.¹⁵ This content originates from previous cognitive activity in subject-object relationships. What the subject has received in the past from the object is stored inside the subject as presuppositions. The ontological framework then provides the categories for the constitution of Meaning and the definition of objectivity.¹⁶ Presuppositions, in their broad sense, refer to all the contents that are in the mind of the subject when the subject knows. Every new cognitive experience is incorporated in the existing presuppositional categories in the mind of the subject. These categories are not of logical character only, but involve the complete diversity of experience including, for example, sensations and social memories. In this sense, the subject projects the past onto the present. Through the phenomenological analysis that can uncover the three necessary and, therefore, structural frameworks among the many contents in the cognitive activity of the subject, Meaning, which is generated by the subject’s cognitive activity, always assumes a basic interpretation of these three frameworks. One can see that the structure of Reason (which embraces both subject and object) includes the interpretation of Reason’s structure in the subject! This is crucial to understanding Canale’s analysis: the epistemological framework of the structure of Reason includes an interpretation of the structure of Reason. To put it differently: the global structure of Reason includes a particular interpretation of the structure of Reason within the subject of Reason’s subject-object relationship.

¹⁴Ibid., 36.

¹⁵Ibid., 39.

¹⁶Ibid., 41-43.

The subject makes the subject-object relationship meaningful by applying its categories. In order to apply the three frameworks of Reason, they need to be made complementary through a basic common logic. Thus the same logic needs to be applied to all of the conceptualizations of the ontic, epistemic, and theos. It is, however, not only this common logic that characterizes all frameworks, but also the prior subject-object relationships that are stored in the subject's memory. Structurally, the concept of the ontic can not be established without any background in the subject-object relationship. Through the ontological framework, Reason finds the ground for its systematic nature in the actual content that is given to Reason's structure (interpretation of the ontic). That this is the case can simply be seen in the fact that all interpretations of the epistemological framework (epistemology) have a formulated concept of what the "object" or "objectivity" is. These concepts of the object are clear expressions of an interpretation of the ontological framework that is prior to any subject-object relationship.¹⁷ In this context, Canale says that the ontological framework is necessarily implanted in the epistemological framework, since the former provides the latter with the basis for the necessary (epistemological) categories.

Through the cognitive categories (three frameworks of Reason), unity and coherence are created in the process of creating images of the objects through the cognitive subject. This leads us to the important conclusion that although the epistemological framework is grounded in the ontological framework, the subject interprets the ontic. This means that the concept of the object finds its origin in the epistemic capacity of the subject—any concept is of epistemic character. Here one can easily see the circularity of the structure of Reason: the epistemic and the ontic do not exist without each other.¹⁸ This circularity or interdependence stems from the relational character of Reason itself. In any analysis of Reason, one will uncover the subject-object relation as basic presupposition. As Reason embraces both subject and object, the origination of Knowledge cannot be located in either the subject or the object. Knowledge has an intrinsically interdependent and relational character.

2.2.2.5 Theological Framework

As we have seen in the discussion of the ontological framework, the particular concept of unity and coherence is structurally rooted in the idea of the

¹⁷Ibid., 42-43.

¹⁸Canale does not formulate this clearly, but this conclusion flows naturally from his distinction between the "ground" and "form" of the systematic nature of Reason. The functioning of the systematic nature of Reason is determined by the epistemological framework, while the ground of the systematic nature of Reason is determined by the ontological framework.

ultimate as theos.¹⁹ The concept of theos is, therefore, the ground for any unity and coherence functioning in the subject's framework of interpretation.²⁰ The cognitive categories that establish unity and coherence through the interpretative act of the subject are derived from the concept of the ontic reality whose unity and coherence is founded in the idea of the theos. The phenomenological analysis goes beyond ontology as the ground of cognitive categories into the ground of ontology itself: the theos, as ultimate expression of the ontos (being rooted in Being). Again, we see how the concept of the ontic represents the "center of gravity of Reason."²¹

What can be concluded from this analysis is that Reason's systematic nature shows that the constitution of meaning flows from the concept of the whole (basic understanding of the ontic) to the concept of the part (understanding of an object) rather than the other way around. The phenomenological analysis of Reason reveals that the meaning of the whole is not determined by the meaning of any single part. Rather, every part finds its own particular meaning in relation to the meaning of the whole.²² Consequently, the cognitive subject needs to be backed up by a basic understanding of the whole (i.e., a worldview or cosmology) in order to establish a meaningful subject-object relation. Such a basic worldview enables the subject to create a meaningful subject-object relation because it can formulate a coherence and unified idea of the object. The ground of the cosmology is found in the ultimate idea of the origin, or theos as Being (as Dooyeweerd's terminology would put it).²³ The concept of the theos, the theological framework, ultimately guarantees and articulates the complementarity of the subject-object relationship because the theos is the origin of this relationship.

This dependent relationship, seen from the perspective of the theological framework (theos-ontos-epistemic), is one of the three possible formal directions of the circle of dependencies between the three frameworks of the structure of Reason. Here meaning starts with a concept of the theos (system), from which a concept of the ontic can be established, from which, in turn, the epistemic categories can be derived.

¹⁹Canale explains that "Theos" is just the theological expression of the secular philosophical concept of "the One." From a Christian perspective "the One" is called "Theos," while from a secular perspective "Theos" is called "the One." Canale, 63, n. 1.

²⁰Ibid., 48-49.

²¹Ibid., 36.

²²Ibid., 47.

²³"Being" is differently used in Dooyeweerd's writing. "Being" is not understood as a necessary characteristic that allows things to exist, but as the necessary origin that creates the existence of things. Therefore, to Dooyeweerd "Being" is a synonym for God.

Understanding the necessary grounding function of the theological framework of the structure of Reason, we still need to acknowledge that the theos is the ultimate expression of the ontological framework and implies ontological concepts. This acknowledgement is crucial to understand the second of the three formal directions of the circle of dependencies. In this direction, meaning starts with a concept of the ontic. Here the circle runs like this: the cognitive categories of the epistemological framework are formally grounded in the ontological framework, which again is formally grounded in the theological framework, which in turn is formally grounded in the ontological framework, since a concept of the theos implies basic ontic notions.

With this conclusion in mind, one needs to realize that even the concept of the ontic is a concept. Conceptualization itself points to the epistemological framework that allows the cognitive subject to start its interpretative and conceptualizing activity. Here we see the third of the three possible formal directions: meaning starts with a concept of the logos.

2.2.3 Beyond the Perspective of Any of the Three Frameworks

The phenomenological analysis of the structure of Reason so far revealed that every single framework builds upon the other two frameworks. The structure of Reason does not give priority in the sense of an absolute starting point to any of these frameworks. None of the frameworks is independent from each other and, therefore, none of them can become a starting point within the structure of Reason. Although the theological framework functions as the ultimate ground of being, it cannot represent the ultimate starting point since it conceals a logia and an ontos.²⁴ The reason for the complementarity of the three frameworks is found in the logic of the interpreting subject. The concepts of the ontic, epistemic, and theos as onto-logy, epistemo-logy, and theo-logy need to share in the same logic in order to be complementary. However, the complementarity does not result from the logical interpretation of the subject alone, but also from the structural interdependence of the three frameworks that have been referred to as the three possible formal directions in the circle of dependencies. Thus what makes the three frameworks interdependent is the fact that they structurally share in a common logic.

What should be clear so far is that the very presupposition of Reason is a subject-object relationship that establishes Knowledge. In order to understand this relationship, an interpretation of the three frameworks of Reason is necessary. Without such an interpretation, we cannot find understanding or express meaningful words since outside of Reason there is no meaning. The interpretation of the frameworks has an interdependent character: every framework depends on the other two frameworks. Although the theological framework formally functions as the source of coherence and unity for all concepts by articulating the interrelation between the frameworks of Reason,

²⁴Canale, 51.

it is not independent.²⁵ This is not to say that the theos is dependent, but that the concept of the theos is not independent since it implies a basic ontological content while functioning as the ultimate expression of the ontological framework. A further phenomenological analysis should, therefore, make this basic ontological content the object of study. Because of this, Canale's phenomenological analysis proceeds and reveals foundational ontology as the ultimate cognitive reference in the structure of Reason. This conclusion is argued in the following way:

All three frameworks (epistemo-logical, theo-logical, and onto-logical) are structurally built upon Logos. Consequently, what lies beyond the interpretation of all three frameworks is Logos itself.²⁶ Of what character must the minimum content of Logos be? And where does that minimum content come from—where does the logic of the Logos come from? Canale tries to answer this question by referring to Heidegger, who argues that “-logy hides more than just the logical in the sense of what is consistent and generally in the nature of a statement [. . .] In each case, the *Logia* is the totality of a nexus of grounds accounted for, within which nexus the objects of the sciences are represented in respect of their ground, that is, are conceived.” Of importance, however, is that “Ontology, however, and theology are ‘*Logies*’ [*viz*] inasmuch as they provide the ground of beings as such and account for them within the whole. They account for Being as the ground of beings. They account to the *Logos*, and are in an essential sense in accord with the *Logos*, that is they are the logic of the *Logos*.”²⁷

Canale argues that the logic by which we conceptualize the ontic, epistemic, and theos is grounded in a Logos that is basically identical to the ground of being. This Logos functions as the minimum content of the subject's logic. If one wants to find out what the content of that Logos is, one needs to search for the nexus that is present in all three frameworks. One needs to go beyond the three frameworks of Reason's structure by searching for that which they share as a unity. That which goes beyond any concept is Being. Through the theological framework, all frameworks imply a logic whose categories are grounded in the basic interpretation of the ontic as Being, i.e., an interpretation of that which is necessary for existence, i.e., *foundational ontology*. Because of their logical character, all three frameworks imply the same foundational ontology. Foundational ontology accounts for the complementarity of the frameworks.

²⁵It is important to see that in the phenomenological structure the theos cannot be seen as the origin of the ontic. Phenomenologically, the theos needs to be seen as the principle of articulating the ontological and epistemological framework. The understanding of the theos as the origin of the ontic reality belongs to the “material” side of the formal phenomenological structure of Reason. Formally, the theos functions as an empty concept that does not require the notion of creation.

²⁶Canale, 52, n. 2.

²⁷Ibid., 51.

Here the phenomenological analysis arrives at its most foundational point. Being as foundational ontology is the minimum content of being, and at the same time Being embraces all human concepts.

The meaning of Being can be found in every meaning of being, since it is the meaning of Being that provides the ground for any meaning, coherence, and unity.²⁸ But “Being” is not understood as a container within which reality takes place, but as “an overall quality shared by everything real.”²⁹ “Being” is “not a thing in which all other things have their being” and does not “appear or is given to us as a ‘thing’, but co-appears with all things as a basic characteristic of their being.”³⁰ Being cannot be understood as origin of what is, but as adjunct to all that exists (including theos).³¹ Therefore, Being does not exist “by itself nor apart from what-is.”³² When Canale refers to Being as *ground* or *foundation* for any interpretation of Reason, it should be understood as the necessary condition for the generation of Meaning.³³ Being should not be confused with the role theos is playing. Being is not the origin of the ontic, but a basic adjunct for the possibility of being. Nevertheless, one could say that Being as the primordial presupposition has the function of the theos in the sense that coherence is established from it.³⁴ The difference is that the dimensionality is not the logic by which all frameworks are interpreted, but the Logos of the logic. This means that Logos goes beyond the theological framework that functions in the interrelation with the other frameworks of Reason as origin of coherence and unity. The Logos then finds expression within the concept of theos.³⁵

One could say the concept of Being is the first and last concept on which all other concepts are built. There is no concept that can go beyond

²⁸Ibid., 68

²⁹Fernando Luis Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology: Scripture Replacing Tradition* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Lithotech, 2005), §38b.

³⁰Ibid., §38a.

³¹Byung-Chul Han, *Martin Heidegger: Eine Einführung* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1999), 11, 13. Canale does not exclude the possibility that there are more primordial presuppositions. But the fact that in philosophy there are at least two different primordial presuppositions at work is for him reason enough to set the stage for a criticism of theological Reason. See Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 74, n. 1.

³²Heidegger, cited in Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 71, n. 1.

³³Ibid., 72-73.

³⁴By “primordial” Canale means the basic characteristic that conditions our understanding of what is real. Canale, “Basic Elements of Christian Theology,” §38.

³⁵Theos-Being, then, is the necessary condition for any concept of being.

the concept of Being. The phenomenological analysis, therefore, finds the borderline between Being and the concept of Being. There is no reasoning beyond Being, but all reasoning starts with a concept of Being. The concept of Being functions as an unconditional *whole* to which all the other cognitive categories and frameworks of Reason relate as parts. This is why there is a necessary minimum concept of Being at work in the interpretation of being. As present in every understanding of being, the concept of Being has an overarching meaning. The presence of Being as concept in the human mind is necessarily assumed in the constitution of all meanings and the interpretation of all the presuppositional frameworks of Reason. The very nexus of all three frameworks is to be found in foundational ontology, because the Logos shares in all of Reason's frameworks. When one starts to uncover the different concepts of the foundational ontological level of the structure of Reason, one will discover the different contents it has been given in the history of philosophy. Canale's overview of the primordial presuppositions that have been adapted in history will be briefly discussed in 1.3.1 and 1.3.2.

Because the concept of Being functions as the first and all-embracing concept by which everything else is conditioned, it reveals the primordial, unconditional, or hypothetical character of Reason. The concept of Being, functioning as Logos, is not conditioned by any logic, since it is the ground for logic itself, but by a choice of the subject. In this context, Canale speaks of the spontaneity of the subject: the freedom of the subject to choose its primordial presuppositions that will guide the course of its thinking.³⁶

The spontaneity of the subject is the most profound philosophical responsibility of the human subject. Since the primordial presupposition both affects the nexus and ground of all three frameworks of Reason's structure and is spontaneously chosen, we can conclude that, at its very core, Reason is of a hypothetical character. Hypotheticity, thus, pertains to the whole of Reason's structure.

Consequently, Canale is correct in stating that ultimate meaning is not grounded in knowledge in the strict sense of logical deduction, but in a "postulate" or "faith."³⁷ This "postulate" or "faith" is necessary for Reason's functioning and therefore part of Reason's formal structure. It is this primordial presuppositional framework, or, differently called, "the dimensionality of Reason" or "ground of being," that the subject brings to the subject-object relationship and that predominantly determines the means and end of the process of creating an image of the object.

³⁶Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 24, 73. The spontaneity of the subject, however, is not only responsible for the choice of the primordial presuppositions, but also for the interpretation of all *a priori* conditions or hermeneutical presuppositions, i.e., the basic interpretation of Reason's frameworks, required on the subject side for the constitution of knowledge (see *ibid.*, 57).

³⁷*Ibid.*, 56, 65, 73.

So all frameworks (epistemological, theological, and ontological) find their source in the meaning of Being. The analysis of the meaning of Being leads us beyond metaphysics, that is beyond cosmology or worldview to the very ground.

The discussion of the phenomenological analysis ends here.

2.2.4 Doing Philosophy

In doing philosophy, the spontaneity of the subject is not only active when a concept of Being as primordial presupposition is to be chosen.³⁸ Creative philosophizing in general (e.g., interpretation of Reason's frameworks) can only take place due to the existence of a spontaneous subject. In its philosophical endeavor, the spontaneous subject can choose its own direction and complexity. The individually chosen dimensionality of Reason, however, functions as the starting point of philosophy. Starting with the primordial presupposition, which is the minimum knowledge that Reason needs to understand the theos, the ontological framework can be interpreted (as happens, e.g., in traditional metaphysics: dealing with beings as beings). After the ontological framework is developed, the epistemological framework can be established.³⁹

According to Canale, the phenomenological reality of the spontaneity of the subject explains the fact that there are different possible interpretations of the same things.

2.2.5 The Need for a Historical Analysis

In a further step of his phenomenological historical analysis, Canale shows what different interpretations have been given to foundational ontology in the course of the history of philosophy. Such a historical analysis is necessary since a further phenomenological analysis will not help to uncover the material interpretation of Being. The material content of the interpretation of Being can be discovered only through a historical analysis.⁴⁰

Time and timelessness will be uncovered as the two possible interpretations of Reason's dimensionality in which philosophy has thought so far.

2.3 *Canale's Interpretations of the Structure of Reason*

As the structure of Reason shows, there are two crucial decisions the spontaneity of the subject needs to involve itself in. One concerns the actual interpretation of Reason's dimensionality, the other the formal direction

³⁸Ibid., 31, 57.

³⁹It is, however, not necessary to develop a complete ontology before an epistemology can be constructed since the required ultimate ground is not found in ontology, but in foundational ontology.

⁴⁰Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 85, n. 1.

of the circle of dependencies. The second choice entails three options of perspective, i.e., ordo: the ontos-perspective, theos-perspective, or logos-perspective. The theos, however, always represents the ultimate horizon of the interpretational activity. The historical overview in this section is categorized in terms of these two decisions.

2.3.1 Classical Timeless Dimensionality

In the following, I present Canale's understanding of the classical interpretation of Reason's dimensionality. In doing so, I will abstain from evaluating his outline, as this is beyond the scope of this paper.

2.3.1.1 Interpretation from the Viewpoint of the Onto-theo-logical Ordo

The interpretation of Being in the early Greek philosophy of Parmenides set the ground for all further developments in Western philosophy. The reflection on being as imperfect and limited and the search for a theos that would provide coherence and unity led to the idea that Being is essentially timeless. This decision implied that perfection was defined in terms of timelessness, which meant that perfection was not considered under the influence of change due to time. Where time was excluded, the realm of the ideal, completeness, and immutable source of being could be located. As being was considered temporal and changeable, and Being timeless and unchangeable, Being could be defined as that which does "not come into being" because of its absolute perfection. An opposition was thus created between the timeless and temporal realms. The distinction was able to account for the wide diversity of the experienced temporal world, while preserving unity and coherence through the origin of all temporal being, i.e., timeless theos-Being.

The ontologically grounded timeless definition of Being as dimensionality of Reason was not only presented by Parmenides, but also adopted and further developed by Plato and Aristotle. It characterized almost all of classical Occidental philosophical thinking. Further, it exemplified an onto-theo-logical ordo. The reflection on the ontic became the starting point for the flow of meaning: from the ontos to the theos to the logos. From the logic of a timeless Logos, i.e., a timeless dimensionality of Reason, ontology, theology, and epistemology are constructed.

2.3.1.2 Interpretation from the Viewpoint of the Logical-onto-theo Ordo

The Cartesian paradigm and the influence of Kant changed the direction of the flow of meaning by grounding the interpretation of the dimensionality of Reason in the epistemological framework. Thus the ontological foundation of Reason's dimensionality was replaced by the transcendental-epistemological

foundation. The interpretation of Reason's ordo therefore changed, but Being was still interpreted as timeless. Starting with Kant, philosophy began to give Reason's structure a different ordo, but not a different dimensionality. Classical timeless Being was substituted by modern timeless Logos. Thus, with the change of ordo, there was not a corresponding change of dimensionality. The turn to the epistemological framework led to an immanent cognitive foundation, the so-called "turn to the subject."⁴¹ This "turn to the subject" was the consequence of grounding the categories of the subject in the epistemic realm rather than in the ontic.

2.3.1.3 Timeless Dimensionality and Its Consequence for Ontology and Epistemology

In order to clearly see how a timeless dimensionality of Reason affects the ontological and epistemological frameworks, they will be discussed individually.

2.3.1.3.1 Ontological Framework

When Being is defined as timeless, the ontological framework consequently conceives ultimate reality as timeless. The idea of timelessness is not to be confused with the ideas of "having no beginning or end," "not restricted to a particular time or date," or "not affected by time: ageless," but strictly refers to exclusion of time. Timelessness further implies that Being exists independently from the cognitive subject.⁴² This means that the interpretation of Being as timeless automatically creates a gap between being and Being, as they do not share the same time frame. This gap, albeit in different ways, exists in both the Platonic and Kantian line of thinking.

In the relation between Being as truth and being as *doxa*, the latter is the temporal expression of timeless Being. This means that, in the world of *doxa*, we do not encounter Being itself, but a phenomenon that stands in an analogical relation to Being. The world of *doxa* as the world of temporal imitation of its timeless essence relates to Being by participation in various degrees of analogy.

Timelessness, then, is the conception that ultimate reality (God) is essentially incompatible with time and space. In this line of thinking, reality necessarily transcends the world of *doxa* and appearance, which is bound to historical and analogical *doxa*-reality.⁴³

⁴¹Fernando Luis Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration: Searching for the Cognitive Foundation of Christian Theology in a Postmodern World* (Landham, MD: University Press of America, 2001), 17-19.

⁴²Ibid., 78.

⁴³Ibid., 37.

2.3.1.3.2 Epistemological Framework

From the viewpoint of timelessness, a *chorismos* is created between *doxa* and truth. This *chorismos* is also found in the epistemological framework. It enters cognitive activity when the obtainment of true knowledge requires transcending the temporal and sensory world. In order to enter the world of ideas or truth, cognitive activity needs to involve itself in a process of abstraction that seeks to overcome the temporality of being. If reason wants to reach into the realm of timelessness in order to come to true understanding, it must belong to the realm of timelessness itself. This need was the ground of the classical notion of the *agens intellectus*, an entity located in the timeless soul, able to abstract the timeless essence from the temporal and sensory world.⁴⁴

The classical interpretation of Reason as belonging to the timeless realm reveals its ignorance or unawareness of the hypothetical structure of Reason. It is this hypothetical structure that makes the different choices in regard to the dimensionalities of Reason and to the theos idea (having independence-status) possible.

As discussed, in the Cartesian and Kantian paradigm the timeless interpretation of Reason's dimensionality was not rooted in the ontic, but in the epistemic realm. Another difference in these traditions is that the cognitive access to timelessness was made impossible by making the *agens intellectus* temporal. Thus the *agens intellectus* did not enter the world of truth and ideas, or the things in itself, but only the phenomena.

Kant's attempt to ground Reason's dimensionality in the epistemological framework automatically resulted in a "turn to the subject." In this turn, philosophy lost the ability to acquire absolute knowledge, i.e., to reach the thing in itself, since the dimensionality of Reason was not grounded in ultimate reality anymore. The world of truth and ideas became inaccessible. In classical thinking, one tried to overcome the *chorismos* between the timeless essence and temporal appearance by timeless reason. In the modern paradigm, this *chorismos* could not be overcome anymore, as it was not certain whether the ontic world actually had a different dimensionality than the epistemic. The certainty of the complementarity of the two frameworks was lost, and thus the basis for objectivity. With this problem, the cognitive process of "abstraction" got a new limitation. Timeless Logos no longer gained absolute knowledge of timeless Being through abstraction, but gained objective knowledge of the temporal world as scientific knowledge. Later philosophical attempts were made to overcome this gap by seeking means to access the realm of Being. These attempts did, however, fail to fundamentally criticize the whole conception of timelessness. Canale's reference to Jaspers is a good example.⁴⁵ Jaspers thought that certainty about the existence of Being is somehow possible through the existential sensitivity of being: the subject is able to "hear" the transcendence

⁴⁴Ibid., 78.

⁴⁵Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 108-110.

of the timeless realm through a “metaphysical experience.” Knowledge of Being clearly lost its objectivity here, and timeless foundational ontology went uncriticized.

2.3.2 Postmodern Temporal Dimensionality

According to Canale, it took centuries until the classical and modern timeless understanding of the foundational ontic world were questioned and criticized. Husserl, and later Heidegger, started to interpret the ontological realm as basically temporal.⁴⁶ Heidegger’s temporal interpretation of the dimensionality of Reason provided a new definition of time. The character of time was no longer understood from the viewpoint of the timeless, but from the viewpoint of the temporal. This meant that time was understood from the viewpoint of its temporality, i.e., the flux of time. In this new setting, Being was not timeless anymore, but historical.

2.3.2.1 *Ontological Framework*

The consequence of the notion of temporal dimensionality was that entities did not receive their existence through their timeless essence anymore, but were fully temporal. Interpreting both Being and being as temporal meant to overcome the duality between form and matter, truth and *doxa*. Since both Being and being were temporal and historical, there was nothing beyond the phenomenon anymore. The realm of being and appearance was the realm of Being as well. In fact, *doxa* was Being. There was no reality beyond time. As the gap between subject and object was overcome, the distinction between the thing in itself and its appearance became unnecessary. What classical and modern philosophies meant by the “thing in itself” as ultimate reality became temporal.

2.3.2.2 *Epistemological Framework*

The epistemological framework also received a new interpretation through the temporal dimensionality of Reason. Mental categories were no longer derived from the immanent transcendental cognitive grounding of Reason’s dimensionality (Kant), or from the timeless transcendental ontological grounding (classical philosophy). Instead, the *Lebenswelt* provided the material for the consciousness of the subject.⁴⁷ This means that the *a priori* categories of the subject were derived from the historical past. The content of the categories and the creation of a unified and coherent image of the object are thus not determined by the participation in the timeless world of ideas, but by the temporal epistemological flow from past to present to future. Theos lost its timelessness. With this loss, temporal reason needed to redefine the

⁴⁶Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*, 7.

⁴⁷Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 118, 133-135.

theos and develop a new temporal metaphysics.⁴⁸ Further, concepts such as “objectivity” and “abstraction” needed a redefinition. Objectivity and abstraction needed to be understood from the viewpoint of temporal logos, which is in continuity with the *Lebenswelt*. Objectivity as the aim of abstraction did not refer to transcending the sensory-temporal world anymore. The essence of reality was not sought in the realm of timelessness, but in the realm of the flux of time. This new location of essence led to a new understanding of abstraction. Abstract thought would encompass less than the *Lebenswelt*, as the *Lebenswelt* could not be reduced to a final absolute idea. Thus, because of reduction, objectivity became less encompassing than the *Lebenswelt*.⁴⁹

2.3.3 Biblical Temporal Dimensionality

The content of the ground of Being as the first basic ontic concept, through which Being can be understood, is either subjectively guessed or objectively revealed. Only when the ground of Being is revealed can the subject start to uncover its dimensionality without depending on its own imaginative powers. Being a biblical Christian, Canale investigates the biblical expression of the ground of Being. On the basis of a phenomenological analysis of several biblical passages, he shows that the Bible expresses Being. What dimensionality does biblical Being express? Although the Bible does not systematically develop a theory of Being and does not give an explicit interpretation to Reason’s frameworks, the Bible as rational fact (as expressing meaningful words) must be structurally seen to contain an interpretation of the dimensionality of Reason. This means that one cannot discover the dimensionality of Reason through a phenomenological analysis of the Bible’s epistemological and ontological theory (since they do not exist), but can discover it through the passages where the biblical writer considers Being in a naïve way. At this point, Canale analyzes Exod 3:1-4:17 and Exod 6:2-7. The passage of Exod 3:1-4:17 utters Being prior to any expression of a theory of ontology or epistemology. The understanding of the biblical expression of Being should function as basis for any theorizing activity of Christians and Jews.

2.3.3.1 Biblical Interpretation of the Ground of Being

Canale’s phenomenological analysis shows that Exod 3 speaks about Being in the present tense and connects God’s existence with an understanding of Being. Canale shows that especially the meaning of the sound-name of YHWH as the God of Israel reveals the dimensionality of God’s being as grounded in an understanding of Being that is characterized by temporal openness.

Again, I will not argue for or against Canale’s exegetical analysis here because of the scope of this article series, but will simply present his—in my opinion convincing—results.

⁴⁸See the attempt to develop a new temporal metaphysic in *ibid.*, 141-153.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 135.

When God appears and explains his sound-name YHWH, the Bible depicts him as essentially a being-mission God. This being-mission character refers to the temporal openness of God's presence to past and future time. It means that God is concerned with and active in the many generations of his people, fulfilling the promises given to past generations. His being-mission identity extends through all three time ec-stasies. Canale understands this temporal extension (ec-stasies) as "temporal openness." "Extension" points to the fact that temporal Being cannot be reduced and frozen to a static reality. Thus extension points to Being's manifold ontic appearances that constitute the ontological basis for cognitive activity. In order to grasp the meaning of a subject matter, the cognitive subject must gather in "tension" the lines of intelligibility that flow from the temporal "extension" in which its object is found.

In Exod 3:2 and its context, the ontic presence of God springs from the self-revelation of God. This shows that God's presence is understood as YHWH himself appearing in time. The biblical verbal expression shows that there is no ontological gap between God's being and his appearance.⁵⁰ Thus the appearance of YHWH is YHWH himself. Being is here identified with appearance, and not with something that is behind or beyond appearance. This connection has the character of *co-appearance*: God's being necessarily *co-appears* with the ground of Being. Being appears through God's presence and self-revelation. In this view, ontology cannot precede the study of God because there is no reflection on Being prior to God's ontic presence. Regarding the interrelated frameworks of Reason, the Bible expresses a clear theo-onto-logical order within the flow of meaning. This implies that the ground of Being can only be interpreted when God appears or is present. Since the God of the Bible co-appears with and expresses the ground of his Being, his ontic presence can and should function as starting point for the interpretation of the dimensionality of Reason.

Since the biblical passages depict God's presence as open to all three temporal ec-stasies (past-present-future) while it co-appears with Being, the biblical dimensionality of Being is revealed as temporal.⁵¹

In the following section, I will briefly sketch how this understanding of Being's dimensionality affects the interpretation of Reason's frameworks, which all need to share structurally in the same temporal nexus.

2.3.3.2 *Ontological Framework*

The consequence of a temporal dimensionality is that being is necessarily temporal, as it is grounded in temporal Being. Consequently, temporal appearance can be considered real being that co-appears with Being. Meaning, then, is essentially connected with both past and future, as it is grounded in

⁵⁰The *Nifal* form of ראה shows that God himself is subject and object of the appearance.

⁵¹Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 393.

temporal Being and the meaning of “presence” is immediately filled by the “lines of intentionality” that come to it from its past and future extension.⁵²

The classical problem of the *chorismos* and solution of the *analogia entis* are overcome in biblical philosophy, inasmuch as biblical thought portrays the phenomenon as ultimate reality. Biblical thought, however, does not reject the *analogia entis*, but redefines it. In contrast to the classical timeless dimensionality, biblical temporal dimensionality requires a continuity between that which is given in the presence of appearance and that which is beyond the moment of presence, i.e., the temporal extension of being in past and future appearance. Biblical analogies thus refer to temporal extensions instead of temporal-timeless mediations.

The material character of the being-appearance is not discovered in one moment of present time, but in its temporal extension. The biblical text itself refers to this dynamic character, since it reveals a clear progression in time of the meaning of the sound-name YHWH.

2.3.3.3 *Theological Framework*

There seems to be a tension between the independent, unconditioned status of theos and foundational ontology, which conditions any interpretation of Reason’s frameworks—including the theological framework. The concept of God as grounded in the concept of Being seems to make foundational ontology more foundational than God. Does this relation not dissolve the independent status of God as origin of and condition for everything, since foundational ontology seems to condition our concept of God (theology)?

In response to this question, three important statements must be made. First, the nature of the structure of Reason is logical, not ontical. That is, for the existence of Reason the ontic existence of human being is required but the operation of the structure of Reason is logical and not ontical. Second, Being is not understood as an entity that could function as the originator of ontic reality; it is not perceived as a container within which reality takes place, but as a necessary adjunct to all that exists (cf. 2.2.3). Third, it is true that foundational ontology determines theology.

The first statement indicates that it is crucial to make a distinction between ontic and ontology on the one hand, and theos and theology on the other. Just as ontology is not reality itself but merely a concept of it, theology is not theos itself but just a concept of it. In any concept, logic turns an object (e.g., ontic reality or God) into a cognitive reality. As the ontic “calls” to be understood through an ontology, the biblical God “calls” to be understood through a theology on the basis of his revelation. Thus the ontic being of God is not determined by foundational ontology in the sense that the latter “creates” God, but that the latter allows for a conception of God.

Besides this, the formal structure of Reason would not allow for an understanding of Being as origin, as Being is not understood as a thing that has existence but as no-thing that necessarily co-appears with reality. Thus

⁵²Ibid., 377, n. 2.

foundational ontology has logical priority in the constitution of meaning. Therefore, foundational ontology only describes the most general characteristic of reality, which is merely one of the probably infinite characteristics of God. This excludes the idea that foundational ontology, which is revealed by God, could be independent from God.

2.3.3.4 Epistemological Framework

If Being, and thus theos, are temporal, Logos also needs to function as temporal Logos, i.e., the very ground of the cognitive categories must be temporal as well. This is not just logically deducible from Reason's structure. Exodus 6 explains that true understanding of God takes place when God's being is remembered, experienced, and hoped for in the three temporal ecstasies. Canale's analysis of Exod 3 shows that the text is concerned with who God is. In the analysis of Exod 6, Canale shows that the text is focused on how to know God.

The connection between the appearance and the knowledge of God in Exod 6 reveals their essential interrelation. Appearance and knowledge share the same ontological foundation or nexus. That all Reason's frameworks share the same nexus finds its biblical expression in Exod 6:3. This text first states that ontologically God's appearance provides the ground for man's knowledge of him. Then it stresses that epistemologically the meaning of the sound-name of God makes knowledge of God's being possible. Thus epistemologically Reason functions in the Being-meaning of the sound-name, i.e., in temporal extension. In the biblical understanding of the epistemological framework, the content of the cognitive categories that create meaning in unity and coherence is derived from past encounters with God's appearance.⁵³ Thus a prior understanding of (a) theos and (b) his ground of Being enables the epistemological framework to coherently conceptualize the ontic. The cognitive process has to proceed temporally in order to discover the meaning of being through a gathering process of past-present-future extensions of co-appearing Being-appearance.

The concept of temporal Logos demands a new understanding of the process of cognitive activity. Abstraction and objectivity need a new definition. If the ontic extension is the basis for the cognitive process, we need to think of a process that gathers the dynamic ontic extensions of an entity (this is the case both for naïve and scientific thinking).⁵⁴ Knowledge is always a construction that builds upon the past, is formulated in the present, and assumes a future. Thus abstract knowledge always takes place in the future,

⁵³Ibid., 371, n. 2.

⁵⁴See Oliver Glanz, "Time, Reason and Religious Belief: A Limited Comparison, Critical Assessment, and Further Development of Herman Dooyeweerd's Structural Analysis of Theoretical Thought and Fernando Canale's Phenomenological Analysis of the Structure of Reason and Its Biblical Interpretation (Master's thesis, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, 2006), 64-65.

or there where the knowledge of the future is accessible in the present time. It is in this context that prophecy and fulfillment play an important role in the redefinition of abstract knowledge. Whereas the classical understanding of knowledge involves a process of abstraction that eliminates the historical and temporal world in order to enter the timeless realm of ideas, the biblical temporal understanding of knowledge involves a process of cognitive extension-tension, i.e., gathering the lines of intelligibility (data) generated by the temporally extended subject matter. Here abstract knowledge is not what is timeless, but what is gathered from the temporal lines of a subject matter into a logical concept. Abstraction as the concept of the totality of theos's ontic extensions in logical gathering also includes what has not yet become present or past but is still part of the future ec-stasy of the subject matter. Abstract words are words of promise or prophecy that are generated by the subject matter (e.g., God) and come from its future extension. In this sense, the cognitive process always strives for what is not yet historical, i.e., abstract, not because it is timeless, but because the future temporal ec-stasy needs to become historical in order to arrive at true knowledge. In biblical rationality, abstraction in and of itself is not the end or aim of thinking, but a necessity to come to a full understanding of a subject matter. In this sense, the "abstract" divine predictions are striving toward their historical fulfillment. Whereas in classical thinking that which is abstract cannot become temporal but can only analogically find expression in the temporal world, biblical rationality expects that which is abstract to become historical. Thus truth is decided at the moment the abstract becomes historical, not when it becomes a-historical!

What is tensioned in the cognitive process is what is ontically extensioned. That which is extensioned in the three ec-stasies of time and that which can be tensioned in present time are, in Canale's understanding of the biblical interpretation of the epistemological framework, the lines of intelligibility of the subject matter.⁵⁵ The lines of intelligibility flow from the temporally extended subject matter. They can deliver information about the past (e.g., past actions) or the future (e.g., promises, prophecies) ec-stasies of the subject matter. This means that the biblical interpretation of Reason does not assume that the essence of a subject matter is a brute fact from which no lines of intelligibility flow to the cognitive subject. The cognitive subject is therefore not expected to create fully an image of the brute fact by his own hypothetical powers. On the contrary, biblical rationality understands the ontic presence of a subject matter as intellectually graspable, as its meaning can be found in the subject matter's temporal extension that generates lines of intelligibility.

2.3.4 Summary

We have seen that classical philosophy interprets ultimate reality as timeless, whereas the Bible considers reality to be temporal and historical. This difference has a major impact on the interpretation of Reason's frameworks.

⁵⁵Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 372, n. 2; 378.

In a timeless conception of Being, God's manifestation is consequently of nonhistorical quality. Both divine activity and human abstract knowledge belong to the realm of timelessness. Therefore, God's actions are reduced from true temporal reality to mere cognitive awareness (the epistemological level according to the classical paradigm).⁵⁶ Biblical rationality, in contrast, views reality as essentially temporal and historical. These crucial differences are rooted in different understandings of God's ultimate nature.

The meaning of YHWH gives us insight into the reasons behind two decisions made in the biblical interpretation of Reason. First, it introduces us to the temporal interpretation of the primordial presupposition and, second, it reveals the theo-onto-logical ordo this interpretation is rooted in. These two decisions of biblical rationality imply that ontology cannot precede the study of God.

⁵⁶Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*, 38.

DIVIDED BY VISIONS OF THE TRUTH: THE BIBLE, EPISTEMOLOGY, AND THE ADVENTIST COMMUNITY¹

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Background

A recent controversy at a Seventh-day Adventist university in relation to the teaching of biological evolution highlighted differences within the Adventist Church over how to read and understand the Bible.² A well-known church evangelist objected to some class materials and a syllabus that revealed that some of the university's science teachers were teaching the theory of "naturalistic evolution" as the actual description of the way life originated and developed. The evangelist protested in a letter to church leaders that the university's teaching was undermining his evangelistic efforts as well as the church's teaching on biblical creation.

The letter drew sufficient attention and concern that the president of the university wrote a public letter in response. In his letter, the president insisted that the university had been misrepresented. He asserted that the university did not teach "atheistic evolution," which he felt was implied by the charge of "naturalistic evolution." He assured the church at large that prevailing scientific views were being taught in the classroom in the context of the Adventist values of "biblical creation." To those reading carefully, it seemed that the letters did not reach the level of meaningful dialogue. The defense—we do not teach atheistic evolution—did not really respond to the charge—biblical creation is not being taught.

This was just the latest in a series of incidents that have highlighted both the growing divide in the church over biblical authority and hermeneutics, and the increasing inability of the contending sides to engage in meaningful dialogue. More often than not, both sides speak to their own constituencies within the liberal or conservative camps, rather than to the whole church. Within the church there seems to be a loss of common ground and shared commitments in discussing matters of biblical interpretation and authority.

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²Documentation, including the emails and letters quoted in this introduction, regarding the controversy at La Sierra University and its handling of the teaching of evolution in its science department can be found at <http://www.educatetruth.com>.

There are a number of reasons for the seemingly intractable nature of the debate, but this article proposes that an important one is a lack of understanding regarding the historical development and philosophical background of the fundamentalist/liberal divide that has riven much of Christendom during the twentieth century. The attention paid to this well-known split has generally overlooked some important commonalities between the two groups regarding epistemology, or theories of knowledge. It has also caused many to overlook an alternate approach to epistemology and spiritual knowledge that can avoid the pitfalls of both the liberal and fundamentalist camps.

This paper attempts to identify the historical and philosophical elements undergirding these debates, and to delineate briefly the alternative epistemological approach. It will help clarify the terms of the ongoing discussion over hermeneutics and biblical authority. This in turn will shed light on the recent discussion between the evangelist and the university president as well as on the larger debate in the Adventist community. But it will also serve as a case study for Christians and scholars of other denominations as to how one biblically conservative denomination has been impacted by the fundamentalist/liberal controversies of the last century. Adventism represents in microcosm the tussle in twentieth-century Christianity over how the Bible should be read and interpreted. The story outlined here will provide insights and comparators in relation to the experiences of other churches.

1. Introduction—The Pitfalls of Binary Thinking

Meaningful differences do exist in the Adventist theological world over biblical authority, as shown by the opening story above. However, it is the contention of this paper that apparent differences, and even many minor real differences, are at times unduly magnified because of some fundamental misunderstandings regarding the epistemological basis of the Adventist hermeneutical practices. A clearer understanding of this basis and its historical context may help focus discussions on real, rather than perceived, differences.

One of the ways in which this basic misunderstanding manifests itself is in the frequent attempts to divide basic hermeneutical/interpretive approaches into two camps: the historical-critical method,³ which focuses on the source

³The discussion is complicated by the fact that the historical-critical method of Bible study is hard to define. As the *Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation* states, “its definition is almost as controversial as its desirability” (John Barton, “Historical Critical Approaches,” *Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 9). The four elements listed by the *Companion* as characterizing the method are: genetic questions—questions about the authorship, sources and development of the books of the Bible; original meaning—the attempt to find the author’s intent and message for the readers of his day; historical reconstruction—a rebuilding of the historical context of the book and its writer; and disinterested scholarship (*ibid.*, 9-12). This is a very broad definition that many would say would be

and form of the text and the intent of the author; and the grammatical-historical method,⁴ which deals with the interpretation of the final form of the text and allows for truths beyond those envisioned by the human author. The former method has been accused of undermining the supernatural claims and basis of the Bible; the latter has been criticized for ignoring the historical and cultural contexts of the Bible. But this stark division overlooks important intermediate positions, some of which take both the historical nature and the truth claims of the Bible seriously.

Such an either/or approach causes groups to be lumped together that are quite different, and makes communication between the groups more difficult. Those to the right-of-center theologically, at times, accuse those on the left of holding views of the Bible that they may not actually hold, and vice-versa. What emerges is a series of attacks on straw men—with both sides convinced that they have demolished the opposition, while believing that they themselves remain unscathed.⁵

included in a definition of the grammatico-historical method of Bible study, which is generally viewed as an alternative to the historical-critical approach. It does, however, capture many of the central concerns of historical-criticism that are peripheral to the grammatical-historical method. We will further define the historical-critical method as we examine each of the four groups, as the definition changes slightly for each group.

⁴The grammatico-historical or historical-grammatical method is typically concerned only with the final version of the text, and uses the tools of grammar to interpret scriptural passages within the larger historical context found within the Bible itself to determine what the passage meant to the original audience. According to Robert L. Thompson in his book on hermeneutics, the scholar utilizing the grammatico-historical interpretation of Scripture “[Interprets] each statement in light of the principles of grammar and the facts of history. Take each statement in its plain sense if it matches common sense, and do not look for another sense” (*Evangelical Hermeneutics: The New Versus the Old* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002], 155). A good explication of the division between the historical-critical and grammatical-historical methods was recently published by Richard M. Davidson of Andrews University, whose outline and comparison chart provided some of the framework for my analysis in this paper. I largely agree with Davidson on his approach to Scripture. But I find that his lumping of all approaches to Scripture into two basic categories, while useful for some purposes, such as showing the extreme elements in the debate over scriptural authority, obscures some important distinctions and overlooks potentially moderating positions that this paper will explore (“The Authority of Scripture: A Personal Pilgrimage,” *Spectrum*, 34/3 [2006]: 38-45).

⁵A good example of one such exchange is the publication of Alden Thompson’s left-leaning *Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1991) and the right-oriented response to it, edited by Frank Holbrook and Leo Van Dolson, *Issues in Revelation and Inspiration* (Berrien Springs: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1992). See also Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*

Rather than two approaches, there have been, in the larger Christian world, at least four main ways to approach the historical-critical method over the last century or so.⁶ The differences in approach are driven in part by the different, underlying epistemological presuppositions of the various methods. Indeed, this paper is an overview of the epistemological underpinnings of biblical study methods, rather than a study of the methods per se, which are dealt with largely in an appendix chart to this paper.

This more nuanced division will help clarify the actual differences that exist between the various approaches to truth, reality, and biblical authority. The intended result will be a clearer understanding of the Adventist epistemological base. It will show how this base supports and encompasses many of the concerns found on the right, for objectivity and meaningful propositional truth, and on the left, for the importance of subjectivity and human experience.

The paper will proceed by briefly describing the four competing approaches to truth and biblical interpretation. It will then focus on the three of these having common roots in an epistemological view known as foundationalism—the view that all reliable knowledge must be rooted in absolutely verifiable or certain foundational beliefs. It will then describe the fourth approach, termed holistic biblical realism, which unlike foundationalism, requires only reliable beliefs at its base. Finally, we will look at the implications of biblical realism for Bible study methods generally, and for the Adventist biblical studies community in particular.

2. Four Main Approaches to Biblical Interpretation

The four main approaches to Bible study methods discussed here are described in two ways: first, by describing what presuppositions they have regarding the nature of reality and how one obtains reliable knowledge or truth; and, second, listing how they relate to the methodology, or tools, of historical criticism. (See the chart at the end of this paper where all four groups are laid out and analyzed according to their central components.)⁷

(Berrien Springs: Berean Books, 1996). The resulting stalemate seemed to open the door to even more radical, reader-response criticism of the Bible within the Adventist Church and to other postmodern approaches that resulted in more extreme forms of cultural relativizing of biblical teaching. See, e.g., Alberto Timm, “A History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on Biblical and Prophetic Inspiration (1844-2000),” *JATS* 10/1-2 (1999): 531-539; idem, “Historical Background of Adventist Biblical Interpretation,” in *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, George W. Reid (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2005), 10-11.

⁶These four do not all meaningfully exist in the Adventist Church, but their influences have been felt therein.

⁷My chart is somewhat modeled on the one designed by Davidson, but rather than two groups, I identify four and modify some of his categories, while adding

The first group accepts a naturalistic-foundationalist presupposition, which denies the possibility or existence of miracles, and fully embraces all elements of the historical-critical method. The second group replaces the naturalistic presupposition with what I term experientialist-foundationalist presupposition. This view does not entirely deny miracles and revelation, but emphasizes personal experience as central and controlling in the search for truth. This group also accepts a robust version of the historical-critical method.

The third group uses what is termed the propositional-foundationalist presupposition, which stresses the avenue to truth found in inerrant statements of propositional truth found in an inspired writing. This group rejects historical-critical methods almost entirely, substituting for them something it terms the grammatico-historical method.

The fourth and final group has presuppositions that I call holistic biblical realism, a central tenet of which accepts a basis for truth that is something less than objectively certain. This group rejects a full-scale version of the historical-critical method, although it uses some of the tools considered part of the historical-critical arsenal, such as versions of literary and form analysis, and discussion of cultural context and authorial intent. This group uses a sort of expanded grammatico-historical approach, and thus is labeled the expanded grammatical-historical school (or HCM+) on the appendix chart.⁸

All four groups will be discussed in greater detail below.

2.1 The Foundationalist Schools: Groups One to Three

Groups one to three, the historical-critical method with naturalistic foundations, the historical-critical with experiential foundations, and the grammatical-historical method with propositional foundations, are quite diverse in their views of method and biblical authority. But they are united by one important point: they all have presuppositions rooted in what has been termed the foundationalist view of knowledge and truth that is associated with the philosophy of modernism.⁹ Put simply, foundationalism is the system of

others of my own. See Davidson, 40.

⁸At least one scholar has called this the historical-biblical method (Davidson, 40). This may be a good name for it, but as this paper is focusing on the presuppositions rather than comparing the methods themselves, I do not want to complicate the paper by injecting new terms that require further definition.

⁹I am indebted for this observation to Nancey Murphy and John Perry. Murphy's book *Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism: How Modern and Postmodern Philosophy Set the Theological Agenda* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity International, 1996) sets out in detail how a modernist conception of truth, known as foundationalism, served as the criteria by which both the liberals and fundamentalists structured their theology (ibid., 11-35). John Perry applied Murphy's insights specifically to the issue of inerrancy

modern philosophy that grew out of the skepticism of Descartes and which insists on a demonstrable and certain base for knowledge.¹⁰

As theologian Nancey Murphy put it:

from Descartes' time, the ideal of human knowledge focused on the general, the universal, the timeless, the theoretical—in contrast to the local, the particular, the timely, the practical. In short, it is the quest for universal knowledge that drives the modern quest for *indubitable* foundations.¹¹

Foundationalism does not merely imply that one is building a tower or structure of knowledge on particular basic truths and assumptions. Any system of beliefs requires certain basic assumptions and presuppositions to support it. Foundationalism also makes a claim about the quality of reliability and assurance of those foundations, requiring them to be certain, secure, and demonstrably verifiable. As the *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* puts it, foundationalism says that knowledge must be seen as a “structure raised upon *secure, certain* foundations.”¹²

Descartes was a rationalist, but his method has become associated generally with both rationalism and empiricism, and with the scientific method generally. Under this schema, only those things demonstrated, either empirically or by certain reason, are taken as established and true.¹³ There are various manifestations of foundationalism in modern thought, such as forms of empiricism, logical positivism, rationalism, and scientism. Many Christians, most of whom would reject these systems of thought as universal systems of truth, have nevertheless accepted the foundationalist standard of knowledge upon which they are built. Different Christian groups have built on it in different ways. Three of these epistemological methods are described below.

2.1.1. *The Fundamentalists—Propositional Certainties*

Examining the third group listed above, most conservative Bible scholars object to the historical-critical method of Bible study. They reject its application of skeptical, scientific methods to the Bible. What would surprise many of these same scholars, however, would be to discover that Christian fundamentalism,

in evangelical circles (“Dissolving the Inerrancy Debate: How Modern Philosophy Shaped the Evangelical View of Scripture,” *Quodlibet: Online Journal of Christian Theology and Philosophy* 3 [Fall 2001].

¹⁰Murphy, 12-13.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 13, emphasis original.

¹²*Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, s.v. “Foundationalism,” ed. Simon Blackburn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 145, emphasis supplied.

¹³Murphy, 13.

most notably with its verbal inerrancy view of the Scriptures, shares a common philosophical assumption with their opponents—an acceptance of foundationalist standards of truth and knowledge.¹⁴

John Perry and Nancey Murphy convincingly argue that nineteenth-century evangelicals, confronted with the modern philosophical standard of truth, one that required absolute certainty in its foundational truths, insisted that the Scriptures could meet the standards of this model. They took on the burden of showing that the Scriptures were reliable and could serve as the foundation of theology, not only because there was evidence that they were “inspired” by God, but because they were impeccable in detail, entirely unified, and inerrant in all areas.¹⁵

The fundamentalists made the criteria of true conservatism the affirmation of verbal inspiration and inerrancy of all parts of the Bible. They made the Bible the heart of a system of “propositional foundationalism,” a system of truth built squarely upon the objective propositions of Scripture.¹⁶ But to play this role under the modernist test for truth, every teaching, every text, every word of the Bible must be inerrantly the words of God. Only this could provide certainty under the modernist, foundationalist standard for Christian theology.

They took upon themselves the burden of demonstrating that the Bible met this standard. As one biblical conservative of the nineteenth century put it:

I wish to shew that the contents of the Bible are revealed to us, not as temporary and occasional, true at one age, but admitting modification at another, but as certain facts, true once, and for ever, and for all men. To do this, . . . I must show that the Bible is one complete book, of which all the parts are interchangeably bound together, and then the character which is asserted of one part will be applicable to the whole. Nay more, the very proof of this unity will go far to shew, that the doctrines of the Bible are not parts of a progressive, human science, but of fixed and divine revelation.¹⁷

Based on this position, these conservative fundamentalists essentially rejected both the ideology and the tools of the historical-critical method. Any sense that the text may have developed or been based on existing sources, whether written or oral, detracted from the Bible as coming from the mouth

¹⁴Perry, 1-3.

¹⁵Murphy, 15-19; Perry, 2-3.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Boyle lecturer Edward Garbett wrote this in 1861; cited in John Sandys-Wunsch, *What Have They Done to the Bible* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 300, emphasis supplied.

of God to the ear and pen of the prophet.¹⁸ Copying and transcription errors were acknowledged to exist, so a very limited form of textual criticism was accepted as being a necessary part of making sure the most adequate text was being dealt with. But even this was viewed with some level of apprehension and fear.¹⁹

In some ways, the fundamentalists have lost the argument, at least in the eyes of larger society, by tacitly agreeing to have the debate on foundationalist terms. One can never affirmatively prove all or even most aspects of the Bible as empirically or positively true, or even that it is completely internally consistent and free from discrepancy. Harold Lindsell, theologian, editor of *Christianity Today* in the 1970s, and apologist for inerrancy, is famous in evangelical circles for trying to reconcile the different Gospel accounts of Peter's denial of Christ by creating a scenario where Christ made two predictions, which unfolded just as he had said: the cock crowed three times, and Peter made six denials.²⁰ But even this accounting does not resolve all the problems, but rather makes all the accounts seem even more inadequate and incomplete.

Even the most died-in-the-wool inerrantist has to admit that, autographs aside, the Bible today certainly has variations and mistakes due to copying and translating. But this has not prevented the fundamentalist project from continuing, and the battle for the Bible on the playing field of modernist standards of truth continues to the present.

2.1.2. *The Liberals—Naturalistic Commitments*

Other Christians, in the first of the three groups described above, confronted by the same, modernist standard of truth, reacted differently than their conservative brethren. They accepted that the Bible did not meet this new, scientific test of truth. They went looking for another foundation for certainty and truth, and believed that they found it in “experience.”²¹ The philosophical roots of this approach are to be traced to German idealism, especially starting with philosophers Immanuel Kant and G. W. Hegel, whose

¹⁸A chief theological spokesman for fundamentalism on this point in the early twentieth century was J. Gresham Machen, whose chief contribution to the public debate was *Christianity and Liberalism*, which has been described as the “chief theological ornament of American Fundamentalism” (Roy A. Harrisville and Walter Sundberg, *The Bible in Modern Culture: Theology and Historical-Critical Method from Spinoza to Käsemann* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 190-192).

¹⁹This fear probably helps to account for the rise and persistence of the KJV-only movement within fundamentalist circles. In a sense, it is a backdoor way to have copies of the original autographs—one can have a relatively modern version that God has blessed and ordained as the true, “received” version.

²⁰Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976).

²¹Murphy, 22-24.

philosophies effectively denied the possibility of special revelation of divine truths, and moved the search for truth inward to intuition and experience.²²

These philosophies were mediated to the theological world by German theologian F. D. Schleiermacher, termed by many the “father of modern Protestant theology.”²³ Schleiermacher moved religious truth from consisting of a system of biblical propositions to being defined by an experience and feeling of utter dependence on God. He proposed that “human experience—specifically the feeling of absolute dependency—rather than authoritative propositions about God were to be seen as the source of theology.”²⁴ In this framework, the Bible was a human construct, produced perhaps by the best of human reflections on God, but understood as entirely produced within history by humans. It was thus to be analyzed as a purely historical document. The flowering of the higher-critical method of Bible study thus occurred in Germany, cultivated by figures such as Ferdinand Christian Baur, David Strauss, and Julius Wellhausen.

Those Christian thinkers influenced by the German idealists and the higher critics can be roughly divided into two main camps. The first was comprised of those whose insistence on empiricism and scientism was so strong that they denied the validity of all experiences not presently repeatable. They thus embraced an essentially naturalistic view of Scripture, denying all miracles and supernatural intervention. They also rejected notions of creation, the fall, and the need for a substitutionary atonement. They were the true skeptics, such as Bauer, Strauss, and Renan.²⁵ These were joined by those who did not deny a spiritual world as such, but denied the possibility of miracles, or at least historical knowledge of them, such as Bultmann and Käsemann.²⁶ These are the classic liberals.

2.1.3. *The Neo-Orthodox—Experiential Certainties*

The other experientialist camp, the second group identified above, arose largely in response to these liberals. This group, primarily consisting of the movement labeled as neo-orthodox, did not deny miracles and God’s ability to act in history. They also embraced concepts of man’s fallen nature and need for redemption. But they viewed the Bible as primarily, if not exclusively,

²²Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *Twentieth Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1992), 25-40.

²³Ibid., 39-40, 44.

²⁴Ibid., 44.

²⁵Charles Davis, “The Theological Career of Historical Criticism of the Bible,” *Cross Currents* 32 (Fall 1982): 275-276 (on Spinoza’s skepticism); Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “Historical Criticism: Its Role in Biblical Interpretation and Church Life,” *Theological Studies* 50 (1989): 246-248 (on Spinoza and Strauss).

²⁶Fitzmyer, 253-254.

a record of nonpropositional, spiritual experiences that was to guide readers to have similar experiences. This stood in contrast to the Bible as a bearer of propositional truth. They, too, accepted the higher-critical method in its fullness.

Their new mantra, though, was that the Bible “contains” the word of God rather than the Bible’s “being” the word of God.²⁷ It contains the historical record of God’s dealings with the faithful in the past, but is much like other historical records, and thus should be treated in essentially the same manner as other documents.²⁸ The Bible becomes the word of God to us as we are guided and inspired by those experiences to have our own experiences with God today.²⁹

As the emphasis was placed on subjective experience, objective, historical reality became less important. Indeed, some in the experientialist camp believed that it was irrelevant as to whether ancient biblical stories were actually true. Rather, what was important was the power of the ideas they conveyed.³⁰ Thus, where it could be shown that the Bible was in conflict with positive, scientific truth, it did not need to be taken literally. One could still believe in the essence of the experience that was being conveyed. In all areas where science apparently showed the Bible in error, the findings of science were to be accepted, as the Bible was concerned with spiritual truths, not historical or scientific matters.³¹

Thus it is that groups known for battling one another in the theological arena, the fundamentalists, the classic liberals, and the neo-orthodox, are joined by their acceptance of the modernistic terms and definitions of the terrain upon which they fight—that of foundationalism. But this is not the only ground upon which to approach either the Bible or other truths about God and the world. To this alternate approach we now turn.

2.2. Holistic Biblical Realism: Group Four

The fourth and final group accepts an expanded version of the grammatical-historical method and holds to a presupposition termed here holistic biblical realism.³² This approach challenges the notion of foundationalism, that only

²⁷Ibid., 249.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., 257-258; Murphy, 23-24.

³⁰Sandys-Wunsch, 250-251.

³¹Ibid., 301-303.

³²Holistic biblical realism is a phrase coined for this paper. It describes a methodology implicit in much of Adventist Bible study and scholarship over the last century or so. The phrase is a description of an epistemological position and not a hermeneutical approach, although it has implications for hermeneutics. This method

absolutely verifiable, empirically demonstrable truths can serve as the basis for obtaining useful and important truths about God and the world.

In the world in which we live, no one holds beliefs or makes choices in life based on standards of absolute, empirical, demonstrable certainty. Rather, we all live based on likelihoods and the preponderance of the evidence. All of us, saints and skeptics, live lives of faith—based on rough-and-ready experience—whether to fly in jet airplanes, drive complicated vehicles on busy freeways, or marry the spouses we choose. Occasionally planes crash, cars break down, and marriages disintegrate. Yet we do not allow our very imperfect and incomplete knowledge of how these mechanisms and institutions function to prevent us from flying, driving, or marrying. Indeed, philosophers of science have come to understand that the conclusions of science itself rest on inadequate, incomplete, and imperfect information.³³

has some relationship to the epistemological emphasis of the Scottish Common Sense philosophy strongly influenced by the writings of Thomas Reid, who opposed the classical version of foundationalism for an epistemology of knowledge based on standards short of absolute certainty and on sources other than empirical observation. Mark Noll, “Common Sense Traditions and Evangelical Thought,” *American Quarterly*, 37/2 (Summer 1985): 220-221; Terence Cuneo and Rene Van Woudenberg, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Reid* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 8. It does not embrace all that is associated with common-sense philosophy, however; especially its ethical and methodological aspects that generally restrict the search for truth to a Baconian/Lockean empirical inquiry (*ibid.*, 221-222). Thus holistic-biblical realism is not interchangeable with common-sense realism. Holism (or rather its variant “wholism”) has already been used by at least one Adventist scholar to describe Adventist theology more broadly. See Julius Nam, “‘Quo Vadis, Adventism?’ An Appeal for ‘Wholism’ as an Integrative Principle for Adventist Theology,” a term paper originally submitted at Andrews University in 1996 that can be found at <<http://progressiveadventism.com/2007/10/19/quo-vadis-adventism-an-appeal-for-wholism-as-an-integrative-principle-for-adventist-theology>>.

³³Indeed, philosophers have come to realize that it is the same kind of imperfect evidence that scientists use in carrying out experiments and coming to scientific conclusions. A group of leading philosophers in epistemology and philosophy have elaborated a school of thought known as “Reformed Epistemology,” which has as a main contention that a belief in God is no less rational and warranted than scientific beliefs, which are based on similar kinds of “basic” proposals that support belief in God (Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff, eds., *Faith and Rationality* [Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1983]; Christian Smith, ed., *The Secular Revolution* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003], 11). The arguments have impressed even atheist philosophers, one of whom, Richard Rorty, conceded that now “we atheists should stop praising ourselves for being more ‘rational’ than theists. On this point they seem to me quite right” (cited in Stephen Louthan, “On Religion—A Discussion with Richard Rorty, Alvin Plantinga, and Nicholas Wolterstorff,” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 27/2 (1996): 179).

Why should spiritual truth claims be held to higher standards than truths about living, or even those of science? Biblical realists think they should not. They believe that their standard for accepting the Bible as truthful is no less certain or reliable than the standard used by all people to make fundamental, yet practical decisions in life. Indeed, the evidences available for the inspiration and authority of the Bible are often more reliable than the evidence upon which we base these other decisions that we make every day.

There is a large amount of external, observable evidence that supports the belief that the Bible is not an ordinary book produced by purely human means. This evidence includes fulfilled prophecies of the fate of kingdoms and empires; many accurate claims about history; profound insights into the human condition and nature; the consistency of its teachings across 1,500 years and more than two dozen authors; and the extraordinarily powerful and influential ethical and spiritual nature of those teachings, qualities that seem well beyond the ken of the fishermen, farmers, and primitive tribesmen who were its authors. None of these points are absolute proof of divine authorship, either singly or in combination. But the combination of them does offer external, observable, meaningful evidence that is objective in the sense that it can be shared and commented upon by and to others, that the claims of this book to divine origination should be carefully considered.³⁴

In other words, biblical realists do not have indisputable or absolute or certain proof that the Bible is the inspired word of God. But they do have substantial evidences that the Bible is more than the product of human endeavor. These evidences, when matched against its claims to divine authorship, give them a meaningful basis to test by experience its claims to being the Word of God. This objective, or external, evidence is then confirmed and made certain by the experiences and fruits of the Christian life: the peace, joy, and love that following its precepts brings. This assurance

³⁴Representatives of this school of thought are Gerhard Maier, *The End of the Historical Critical Method* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1977); Richard M. Davidson, "The Authority of Scripture"; Carl F. H. Henry, "The Use and Abuses of Historical Criticism," in *God, Revelation, and Authority* (Waco, TX: Word, 1979); Grant R. Osborne, "Historical Criticism and the Evangelical," *JETS*, 42/2 (1999): 193-210; Fernando L. Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001); and Ekkehardt Müller, "Guidelines for the Interpretation of Scripture," *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, George W. Reid (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2005), 111-134. Most Adventist theologians, I believe, would be in this category, although as with all categories, there is overlap and imprecision. I do not claim that any of those listed here hold to *all* the positions I set out for this group in this section or on my chart. But these positions tend to cohere among this group. A good summary statement that is generally reflective of this view, though it focuses on hermeneutical rather than epistemological issues, is the "Methods of Bible Study" document, voted by the General Conference Committee at Annual Council on October 12, 1986 in Rio de Janeiro (<<http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/documents/Method%20Bible%20Study.htm>>).

is not a demonstrable or objective certainty, but one for which evidence does exist, and which provides a personal experience that can be witnessed to and testified about.

C. S. Lewis once said that “the very *kind* of truth we [moderns] are often demanding was, in my opinion, not even envisaged by the ancients.”³⁵ The specificity and certainty of truth the modern mind demands—or often thinks it demands—is not the kind of truth the Bible offers. We should beware of measuring the Bible by standards of truth that it itself does not accept. If we accept the modernist standards of truth, we will either make unwarranted claims of certainty and objectivity regarding biblical truth; or we will abandon biblical truths for those of our own experiences and wisdom. Ultimately, biblical realists have confidence in this probabilistic rather than absolutist approach to epistemology because they believe that it is supported by the Bible itself.

3. Holistic Biblical Realism—A Biblically Supported Model

To deal adequately with the topic of the epistemology implicit in the Bible would require an entire article, or book, of its own. All that can be done here is to sketch briefly some of its broad contours. The Bible contains an implicit philosophy of realism—of the existence of a real, external world that the mind of man has been created to understand meaningfully, although not completely or perfectly, but “as through a glass darkly” (1 Cor 13:12). The world itself “declares” (Ps 19:1) the glory and existence of a Creator who placed a physical and moral order into it that the mind of man can understand, “so that men are without excuse” (Rom 1:20).

It recognizes that these truths are so fundamental to reality that to deny their existence is ultimately to deny reason itself. The Bible says that the “fool has said in his heart, there is no God” (Ps 53:1), not merely because it is unwise to live without reference to eternity or divine judgment. Rather, the denial of a Creator and an ordered creation also makes impossible any reasonable confidence that human reason can engage with reality at all. Yes, there is no absolute proof of God’s existence and involvement with the created order. To deny his existence, however, is to reject the very ground of reason that forms the argument for denial.

How can a person know if he or she is making true statements about the universe if they have no basis of knowing whether their observations and thoughts have any meaningful connection with that universe? To make an argument that denies a universal intelligence is to become agnostic about the basis or effectiveness of my own intelligence—hence it is to embrace my own irrationality or foolishness. On the other hand, our ability to interact meaningfully with both the physical and moral universe is ongoing evidence that our minds have been constructed to engage reality. It is evidence that the

³⁵C. S. Lewis to Prof. Clyde Kilby of Wheaton College, 7 May 1959, *Letters of C. S. Lewis*, ed., W. H. Lewis (San Diego: Harcourt, 1988), 480.

Word of wisdom, the Son of reason, is indeed the light that “lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9).

3.1. Reliable External Evidence

The Bible anticipates that acceptance of its truths will not be based on absolute certainty but rather on meaningful, observable evidence, that is confirmed by experience. The “foundation” of its truth system is one that “no man can lay . . . other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 3:11). Not only is Christ the logos of reason and understanding that has undergirded human reason since creation, but he is also a historical person for whom external, observable evidence exists.

His life and work are not “cunningly devised tales,” because of the testimony of the “eyewitnesses of His majesty,” which are enhanced by the external “more sure word of prophecy” (2 Pet 1:16-19). These eyewitness accounts and fulfilled prophecies do not provide absolute proof of the truth or divine inspiration of the Bible. Absolute proof would dispel the need for faith, which the Bible indicates is the “assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb 11:1). If all were seen and demonstrated, faith would not be needed. Christ rebuked all foundationalists when he told doubting Thomas, “because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed” (John 20:29).

In telling Thomas this, however, Christ did not undermine the importance of evidence as the basis of belief. Indeed, his life was filled with signs and miracles that attested to his heavenly origins and helped those listening to him accept his otherworldly claims. It was he who said when it came to matters of salvation, “come now, let us reason together” (Isa 1:18). He met Satan on the grounds of temptation with appeal to the propositional truths of God’s word—“It is written” was his repeated refrain. He talked about his death and resurrection as being the great sign of his claims of divinity (Matt 12:39).

3.2. Confirming Internal Experience

Evidence and propositional claims on their own, however, are not enough. If the spirit of the message of the prophets is not imbibed, “neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead” (Luke 16:31). Jesus refused to perform miracles for their own sake, even when it could have saved his life when facing Herod (Luke 23:8-9). He knew that a knowledge of and total commitment to God’s word divorced from a real experience with God would produce selfish and rigorous zealots. “In them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me” (John 5:39). It is the subjective, personal experience of the objective truths of God’s word that provides the only safe assurance of truth and knowledge: “O taste and see that the Lord is good” (Ps 34:8).

It is the combination of probabilistic evidences for truth and the meaningful experiences of fellowship with God and man that provides the biblical realist with his or her grounds of certainty. It is the certainty that John describes as based on God’s Word of truth *and* the internal witness of

the Spirit. He begins his first epistle by speaking of his objective, concrete encounter with the Divine reality: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life” (1 John 1:1). He ends the book emphasizing the internal, subjective experience of God: “The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself” (5:10). Finally, he can announce the certainty that comes with this divine combination of objective evidence and subjective experience: “these things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order *that you may know* that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:10, 13; emphasis supplied).

To summarize, biblical realists know that in this world there is no such thing as an objective spiritual certainty—that would nullify faith. However, a mere subjective certainty would lead to a merely relativistic outlook. Rather, they hold to a combination of objective evidences and subjective experience that might be referred to as a “holistic certainty.”

4. *Biblical Realists and Interpreting the Bible*

For the biblical realists, both objective evidences and subjective experiences play a fundamental role in discovering truth. This approach impacts hermeneutics, or methods of Bible study and interpretation. Biblical realists are able to approach the Bible with a greater freedom than those who require every portion of the Bible to be an empirically provable and demonstrably certain basis of their faith. The biblical realist believes that the Bible is true, even infallible,³⁶ in those things that the Bible itself holds itself out as an authority on—as a teacher of doctrine, correction, instruction in righteousness, and in the reporting of salvation history. They also believe that the Bible places its doctrines in historical contexts and narratives that are inseparable from those doctrines. Thus it also provides authoritative and true reports of the events of creation and history.

The fall of man, the entry of sin, and the need for Christ’s atonement presuppose the kind of perfect beginning and rapid fall from grace that are described in the Genesis account of creation. Also, the rapidity of the world’s descent into sin, given the sinful tendencies of man, along with the history-based nature of the scriptural narrative, underscores and supports the short-chronology of human history that it records. The competing scientific story of evolution, with its story of development by means of death and extinction over long periods of time prior to the fall or even the creation of Adam, is wholly at odds with this theological and narrative history of the Bible, and is thus rejected by proponents of this view. Likewise, God’s covenant promises to Noah, in connection with the rainbow, presuppose and are only meaningful in the context of a universal rather than a local flood.

³⁶Ellen G. White states: “The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of his will” (*Great Controversy*, 1911, [Ellen G. White Estate, *The Complete Published E. G. White Writings*] vii, emphasis supplied).

Realists recognize that, whether through human errors in observation, copying, or translation, minor discrepancies exist in biblical accounts.³⁷ However, they believe that these are unimportant to the teaching or material meaning of the text, and view them much as a lawyer treats nonmaterial discrepancies in the testimony of truthful witnesses to the same event—as indicia of the lack of collusion or artificial manipulation of the text or memory.³⁸ In this way, the minor discrepancies actually become supportive evidence of the reliability of the copying and transmission of biblical texts.

Biblical realists also believe that the Bible authors usually wrote using their own words, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to express ideas and thoughts given to them by the Spirit.³⁹ They believe all the Bible actually teaches or claims, whether doctrine or history, but they do not believe in verbal inspiration, and do not feel compelled to defend every word or expression in the Bible as being that of God himself.⁴⁰

³⁷Ellen G. White states: “Some look at us gravely and say, ‘Don’t you think that there might have been some mistake in the copyist or the translators?’ This is all probable . . . [But] all the mistakes will not cause trouble to one soul, or cause any feet to stumble, that would not manufacture difficulties from the plainest revealed truth” (*Selected Messages* [Ellen G. White Estate, *The Complete Published E. G. White Writings*], 1:16).

³⁸Maier notes: “Keep in mind that dissimilarities may be due to minor errors of copyists, or may be the result of differing emphases and choice of materials of various authors who wrote under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit for different audiences under different circumstances. It may prove impossible to reconcile minor dissimilarities in detail which may be irrelevant to the main and clear message of the passage” (“Methods of Bible Study,” 70-72, par. O).

³⁹It may be too limited to refer to this as “thought inspiration,” as that rubric implies that the prophet, once given a thought, is left to his or her own devices in expressing it, whether in writing or speaking. But the Holy Spirit is involved here also, as inspiration does not work merely on the thoughts or words, but on the whole person, influencing all capacities and actions. “It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man’s words or expressions *but on the man himself*, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of men are the word of God” (White, *Selected Messages*, 1:21, emphasis supplied). Also, “God has been pleased to communicate His truth to the world by human agencies, and He Himself, by His Holy Spirit, qualified men and enabled them to do his work. *He guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write*” (White, *Great Controversy*, vi-vii, emphasis supplied).

⁴⁰“The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God’s mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic,

These discrepancies do not affect the substantive doctrinal and historical claims of the Book. Any discrepancies, realists believe, are nonmaterial due to the Holy Spirit's oversight of the Book that God has ultimately authored through his prophets. They believe this not because they have proven it, but because the evidence for God's authorship is sufficient for them to believe it when it says it is useful for "doctrine, reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim 3:16).

Realists will use certain tools that have become identified with the historical-critical methods, such as literary and form analysis, insofar as it aids in understanding the text and the intent of the author.⁴¹ They are interested in the historical context also as an aid in understanding the author and his audience.⁴² They seek to understand the intent of the author, as well as the understanding of the original audience. But they do not stop here, and believe that the biblical authors often spoke, under the guidance and direction of the Spirit, things the author did not fully comprehend, as described in 1 Pet 1:10-11. Thus they hold to a kind of *sensus plenior*, where the writings of the prophets hold a fuller meaning than the prophets themselves understood.⁴³

Other tools of the historical-critical method they are less interested in, such as the genetic and redaction questions. They believe that the final form of the text is the important question. They can believe that prophets and biblical writers drew on sources, written and oral, and combined that with their own writings under the guidance of the Spirit. Where these other sources came from is very often impossible to determine, and the question becomes irrelevant if one believes that the Spirit directs the final form.⁴⁴

5. *Adventism and Biblical Realism*

The Adventist community has been privileged to have a prophetic voice that has kept it closer to the biblical standard of truth than some other faith communities. Ellen White, in her widely influential *Steps to Christ*, described the nature of Christian truth claims with amazing balance. Writing as the fundamentalist/liberal wars were heating up, she avoided both extremes. She touched first on the probabilistic nature of the objective evidence for Christianity:

in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not his pen" (White, *Selected Messages*, 1:21).

⁴¹Grant R. Osborne, "Historical Criticism and the Evangelical," *JETS* 42 (June 1999): 193-210; Davidson, 40; Maier, 84; Müller, 117-119.

⁴²Davidson, 40; Maier, 82; Müller, 116.

⁴³Davidson, 41; Maier, 87-88.

⁴⁴Davidson, 40-41; Maier, 87-88.

God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration.⁴⁵

She then in the same chapter turns to the experiential component of the Christian's knowledge and certainty:

There is an evidence that is open to all—the most highly educated, and the most illiterate—the evidence of experience. God invites us to prove for ourselves the reality of His word, the truth of His promises. . . . And as we draw near to Jesus, and rejoice in the fullness of His love, our doubt and darkness will disappear in the light of His presence.⁴⁶

These quotes, and others like them, helped most Adventists avoid the more extreme elements of fundamentalism and liberalism of the larger Christian world. Still, Adventism has not been immune from the larger currents in the wider world, and fellowship in the Adventist community of scholars has eroded over the last two or three decades to the detriment of the church.

The model of truth underlying the methods of Bible study represented by holistic biblical realism contains both objective, propositional elements as well as subjective, experiential elements. Almost all Adventists would agree that both elements are necessary for a balanced Christian view. But personality type, stage of life, and individual needs and interests often cause each of us to emphasize either experience or proposition, sometimes at the expense of the other.

A community of scholars can help provide a balance that each individually might not be able to attain. However, if suspicions and distrust—even if driven by the very legitimate concern of the inroads of liberalism and fundamentalism from the larger Christian community—splinter the Adventist community of scholars, that balancing can no longer take place. A mutual distrust can drive those on either side to align with the foundationalist Christian communities that they have most in common with—whether it be the experientialists or the fundamentalists. This then hardens the distrust on the other side. In staking out polemical positions, the common-middle ground of holistic biblical realism can easily be overlooked.

Another paper could trace the swerving of a portion of the Adventist scholarly community into the fundamentalist camp in the 1920s, and the overcorrection into the experientialist camp in the 1960s and 70s.⁴⁷ Both

⁴⁵Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Ellen G. White Estate, *Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings*), 105, emphasis supplied.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 111-112.

⁴⁷Indeed, quite a fine overview of this story can be read in Alberto Timm, "A History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on Biblical and Prophetic Inspiration (1844-

extremes, it seems, are always with us—it is just a question of relative proportion. As a community, we may find it helpful and constructive to reaffirm our heritage of what I here term as “Holistic Biblical Realism,” which incorporates both propositional and experiential concerns.

Choosing to share and fellowship with only those who hold and embrace one’s particular emphases will only lead to further groupthink in the divided wings of an already partially fractured theological community. The opposite extreme, where all variety of opinions, no matter how extreme or unbiblical, coexist under a big tent labeled “Adventist community,” is equally problematic. It disregards the basic premise of a community—which is shared value commitments—and overlooks one of its most important functions—providing meaningful accountability to and for its members. Adventist members should not have to worry that their children are being taught things at Adventists universities that undermine central beliefs of the church.

Neither option can be the vision that Christ has for his church. These scenes would, however, confirm the beliefs of those who claim that the principles of Protestantism—especially those regarding the authority of Scripture—lead inevitably to a fracturing and fragmenting of truth and spiritual community, or to a disregard for the very notion of truth.

Adventist Christians rightly have a high regard for truth. We believe that God sanctifies through truth, and that truth is found in his Word. “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth” (John 17:17). But sometimes we overlook how this truth is demonstrated to the world—which is mentioned in the next few verses: “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:21). Rather than being divided by secular philosophical visions of the truth, may this community yet be united by our shared and holistic beliefs and experiences of the One who is Truth.

APPENDIX A Summary of Four Approaches to Bible Study and Interpretation*				
	Naturalistic Foundationalism Historical Critical Meth.	Experiential Foundationalism Historical Critical Meth.	Biblical Realism Grammatical Hist. Meth.	Propositional Foundationalism Grammatical Hist. Meth.
Definition	Tests claims and understands data of Bible according to strict standards of empirical, positive scientism on purely materialistic grounds.	Subjects Bible to scientific standards, though allows for God's acts in history. Sees truths of the Bible in the experiences described rather than in its claims.	Seeks reasonable evidence to support divine claims of the Bible, and then to understand the historical and theological claims of the Bible according to its own criteria of reliability.	Seeks to verify and establish truth claims and data in Bible as absolute and inerrant in all respects, thus verifying the authority of Scripture and its divine authorship.
Objective	Dissects Bible to understand its formation and transmission as a purely human cultural artifact and expression.	To understand experiences of people with God in the past in order to guide modern encounters with God.	To understand truths taught <i>and</i> experiences in the Bible to provide a framework and test for beliefs and experiences of Christians today.	To define objective truths of Bible as clearly and exactly as possible so that orthodox belief may be achieved and maintained.
Presuppositions	Naturalistic norms/correlation—no possibility of non-material causes.	Experiential norms—miracles may or may not have happened, what is important is the subjective experience of the people involved.	Miracles can occur. Although the Bible record is a combination of divine and human authorship, it exhibits some of the limits that the latter entails.	Miracles occur and the Bible is almost entirely a divine product with little or no human contribution—writers were basically transcriptionists.

<p>Criticism</p>	<p>Criticism—methodological doubt; if it cannot be seen or shown today, it should be disbelieved.</p>	<p>Skepticism—factual “truth” is largely irrelevant; experience is important.</p>	<p>The Bible, the believer, and the community of Christ are in a dialogue that seeks to gain fuller views of biblical truth and deeper experiences with God and each other.</p>	<p>The Bible says it, I believe it, that settles it.</p>
<p>Analogy</p>	<p>Analogy—if it cannot be verified by reason and experience today, it cannot be believed.</p>	<p>God can act in ways we have not experienced, but today we “know” that many people in past have mistakenly attributed natural acts to him, and we can sift the true from the false in the Bible.</p>	<p>Experience, tradition, and human reason provide reality checks that can cause one to examine the Bible more closely to see if one is correctly interpreting it, but Scripture is the ultimate authority.</p>	<p>Our present experiences can provide no insights into the truths of Scripture or how to understand and interpret Scripture. Only the Bible can be used to understand the Bible.</p>
<p>Unity</p>	<p>Disunity—Scriptures are disparate collection and not a unified whole. The intent of each author is a separate, distinct thing that is not reconcilable with other authors and, at times, even with his own views internally.</p>	<p>Unity of Scripture is not in teachings or beliefs, but in experiences of encounters with God. Authors may or may not agree with each other in beliefs and factual claims.</p>	<p>The Bible is a unified collection of books, each of which make a unique contribution to the larger whole. Each book should be understood on its own terms, as well as how they combine into a unified, whole picture of God and truth.</p>	<p>The Bible is essentially a single, perfectly consistent, and unified book, thus no need to be concerned with emphases or theologies of individual authors or books—results in cut-and-paste theology.</p>

Time/Place	Time/culture conditioned—Scriptures are entirely a product of their own time and place. The only thing to discover is the human author's communicative intent.	Time/culture conditioned—Yes, although narratives and stories reveal universal relational experiences and principles.	Time/culture—The Bible shows a progressive revelation of God to humanity of his character and principles; however, new truths do not contradict, but amplify and supplement the old.	Time/culture—Except in a few obvious instances, time and place are largely irrelevant to inquiry. Truth is truth, whatever the time and place. Further, all God's people at most times understand most Bible truths.
Research Tools	Full panoply of HCM, including historical context, source/literary, form, and redaction criticisms.	Basically uses HCM, although principles of analogy and correlation not fully accepted, as authors are viewed as being guided by or at least experiencing the divine.	Uses some of the methods associated with HCM, such as types of literary and form analysis, and also accepts role of prophet as acting, at times, under guidance of Spirit, as editor/redactor of existing materials that are reworked into new forms and messages. However, the focus is on the message of the final form.	Basically rejects HCM, except for textual analysis (evaluate variant readings) and some very limited literary analysis.
*The chart should be relatively self-explanatory given the content of the paper. Any chart and creation of categories in this area will be both under-inclusive and over-inclusive, as well as imprecise. Each of the categories could be divided and subdivided into further categories. But the four are sufficient to illustrate the paper's main points. The categories represent ideal types, and not precise checklists of real-world identification. Thus some theologians will not fit clearly in any category. The categories represent characteristics often found together, and are a helpful division for the purposes of this paper in understanding how the Bible has been approached by various groups in the larger Christian world and how those approaches relate to their underlying epistemologies.				

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF JOHN HICK'S RELIGIOUS PLURALISM IN LIGHT OF HIS ESCHATOLOGICAL MODEL

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Date completed: April 2009

The philosophy of John Hick, who is famous for his religious pluralism, has received vigorous study in terms of its epistemology, authority, concept of God, and Christology. However, less attention is given to his paseschatology. As explained below, initial investigation shows that there is a need for in-depth study of Hick's religious philosophy in this area.

Based on preliminary research, Hick's religious pluralism seems to reveal a critical problem with external correspondency, as follows. His paseschatology, which is an attempt to accept all eschatologies of major world religions as valid, may as a consequence tend to invalidate them all in the end. Moreover, other factors may indicate the presence of inconsistencies in Hick's paseschatological model, which may reflect upon the adequacy of his overall model of religious pluralism.

The purpose of this dissertation is to address and critically evaluate the external correspondency and internal consistency of Hick's eschatological model, which may provide the basis for a critical evaluation of his religious pluralism as a whole. The evaluation of John Hick's religious pluralism in light of his paseschatology will be accomplished through the lenses of the correspondency and coherence theories of truth.

Hick's paseschatology, as discussed in detail in chapters 4 and 5, and summarized in chapter 6, is open to various criticism when judged by correspondency and coherence theories of truth. From my research of Hick's paseschatology, I uncover and present reasons that back twenty criticisms of Hick's concept of paseschatology. Based upon these twenty criticisms, the first general conclusion of my dissertation is that Hick's notion of paseschatology does not show sufficient internal coherence nor is it fully coherent with his pluralistic model of world religions. The second general conclusion is that there is lack of external correspondency with the noumenal Real and with the phenomenal paseschatological manifestations of religious experiences in particular religions. As a result, questions may be raised whether Hick's paseschatological model can be regarded as a convincing theological-philosophical scientific construct. These considerations have important implications for Hick's religious pluralism that lead to the final conclusion of my dissertation. I find Hick's religious pluralism as a whole to be weakened by the problematic condition of his paseschatology.

BOOK REVIEWS

Alomía, Merling, et al., eds. *Volviendo a los orígenes: Entendiendo el Pentateuco. Ponencias teológicas presentadas en el VI Simposio Bíblico-Teológico Sudamericano* (Returning to the origins: Understanding the Pentateuch. Theological papers presented at the VI South American biblical-theological symposium). Lima, Perú: Universidad Peruana Unión, 2006. xxx + 680 pp. Paper, \$20.00.

The Pentateuch has a long and strong appeal to Seventh-day Adventist scholarship. Therein are found the biblical foundations of important biblical teachings such as creation, the Sabbath, the Great Controversy, and the sanctuary. It is not a surprise, then, that the organizers of the VI South American Biblical-Theological Symposium chose the Pentateuch as the object of their reflection. The symposium met at the Universidad Peruana Unión (Lima, Peru) from 22-25 July 2004. This book contains a selection of 27 papers organized in seven sections: “Creation and the Pentateuch,” “Family Relationships and the Pentateuch,” “Health and the Pentateuch,” “Legal Issues in the Pentateuch,” “The New Testament and the Pentateuch,” “Current Issues in the Theology of the Pentateuch,” and “Miscellany on the Pentateuch.” The wide range of the sections attests to the broad focus of the symposium, which has been one of its distinctive and more appealing characteristics since the beginning.

The book also includes the text of the inaugural address, the voted declaration of the theological convictions of the symposium regarding human origins, helpful author and scriptural indices, and convenient summaries both in English and Spanish to every article. The indices and the summaries greatly facilitate access to the information and the editors should be commended for providing them. Other editorial tasks, however, should have been better performed. The book contains numerous orthographical and editorial mistakes. A quick reading of the list of abbreviations (xiii–xxii) exposed seven orthographical errors plus several others in the formatting of the text. Likewise, the English summary for the first article, written by a scholar from a non-English-speaking institution has six orthographical mistakes in nineteen lines of text (50). There are several passages where a wrong translation is evident (e.g., “criticismo” on p. 75 does not fit the context. It probably translates the English “criticism,” whose correct translation is “crítica.” On p. 315, the Spanish words “fundación” and “fundamento”—probably translating the English word “foundation”—are mistakenly used as synonyms. The phrase on p. 525, “desde Gén 12–50” should be translated “a Gén 12–50) and several others where the murkiness of the argument makes the reader wonder if it is the translation that has contributed to their opacity (e.g., the first sentence of the first paragraph on pp. 256, n. 25; 290, paragraph 1, lines 6-11). The book gives the impression of having been assembled hastily and carelessly. These shortcomings sadly detract from the effectiveness of the book and are unacceptable in a work of this nature. There is, however, valuable information in the book.

I will briefly evaluate *Volviendo a los orígenes* following the order of its sections, emphasizing only its more significant aspects.

Creation and the Pentateuch

Richard Davidson (“Volviendo a los orígenes: Génesis 1–3 y el centro teológico de las Escrituras” [Returning to the Origins: Genesis 1–3 and the theological center of the Scriptures]) proposes that Gen 1–3 provides a multifaceted theological center for Scripture and that this should not be understood as an “organizing principle” for biblical theology, but as the “orientation point” from which to understand the rest of Scripture. This multifaceted center involves four concepts that should guide the Bible reader: God is the creator; God is a personal relational being; the existence of a great moral controversy; and God’s promise of redemption.

Merling Alomía (“¿Cuán contradictorios son los dos primeros capítulos del Génesis?” [How contradictory are the first two chapters of Genesis?]) argues, against the supporters of the Documentary Hypothesis of the Pentateuch, that the different accounts of the creation in Gen 1 and 2 are complementary and not contradictory. Each chapter introduces a different aspect of the person of God and the history of creation: the almighty God of creation in chapter 1 and the personal God of the covenant in chapter 2, as well as a movement from the general and distant to the particular and near. This article complements the inaugural address by the same author (“El Pentateuco en las lides académicas” [The Pentateuch in academic struggles]) where the last two centuries of debate regarding the authorship of the Pentateuch are traced.

Norman Gulley (“¿Es el Génesis un relato literal de la creación?” [Is Genesis a literal account of creation?]) clearly shows that the rejection of Gen 1–2 as a literal account and the acceptance of evolutionary views of the origin of the universe and life are inconsistent with the message of the rest of Scripture. Among other things, evolution negates the reality of sin and, therefore, the need for Jesus’ death on the cross and his gift of salvation. It also refutes the love and justice of God, together with his omnipotence and omniscience. Otherwise, why would he use the tortuous and cruel process of “natural selection” for the creation of species in our planet?

Kwabena Donkor (“El ‘escándalo de la historicidad’ en los estudios pentateucanos” [The “scandal of historicity” in the studies of the Pentateuch]) explores the “structural hermeneutical conditions” that inform the tendency of contemporary scholarship to deconstruct the historical accounts of the Pentateuch as myth or metaphor. He argues that critical scholarship has imposed on the reading of the Pentateuch secular philosophical presuppositions (predominantly Aristotelian-Platonic) that are alien to the biblical worldview of history. As a result, critical scholarship cannot accept those accounts as historical. He suggests, then, that the Pentateuch should be read and interpreted according to its own philosophical presuppositions (ontological and epistemological) and that these presuppositions can be found in passages such as Exod 3:14 and 6:2-7.

Family Relationships and the Pentateuch

Joel Peña writes a sociological analysis of Cain's conduct and that of his family. Jessica Romero ("Duelo y luto en el Pentateuco" [Grief and mourning in the Pentateuch]) reviews grief and mourning customs and their basic notions and compares them to that of other peoples from the ANE. In describing Hebrew customs of mourning, however, she does not appropriately distinguish between what we find in the Pentateuch and what is found outside of it (e.g., the Talmud). Juan Torrealba ("Características, delimitaciones y estructura del sistema familiar en el Pentateuco" [Characteristics, limitations and structure of the family system in the Pentateuch]) explores the original design of the family system and the impact of the fall on it.

Health and Pentateuch

Jaime Romero ("La salud y la curación en el Pentateuco" [Health and healing in the Pentateuch]) explores how different laws favorably impacted the health of the Hebrews in comparison to that of other nations—the Egyptians, for example. Similarly, Joel Leiva ("La dieta del Génesis y la esperanza de vida" [Diet in Genesis and life expectancy]) studies how changes in the diet right after the fall and then again after the flood affected life expectancy. Daniel Sumire ("Principios de Sistemas de Inocuidad para alimentos establecidos en el Pentateuco" [Principles of safeguarding systems for food established in the Pentateuch]) briefly surveys the purity rules of the Pentateuch and their importance for the prevention of disease.

Legal Issues in the Pentateuch

Gerald Klingbeil ("La perla perdida [o escondida] del Pentateuco: relevancia, significado y función del ritual bíblico" [The lost (or hidden) pearl of the Pentateuch: relevance, meaning and function of biblical ritual]) provides a brief introduction to the theory of ritual with a description of its main characteristics and limitations. He defines ritual as "repetitive actions and behaviors that are understood by a particular group or community as the expression of something that goes beyond the mere understanding of its individual actions" (225). Gerald also includes reading strategies for ritual texts. Toward the end of the article, he suggests several ways in which ritual can contribute to preaching, teaching, and pastoral ministry, suggesting that ritual can be especially effective in strategies for pastoral counseling, liturgy, and mission. This is one of the most thought-provoking studies in the book. I hope further studies will make possible the realization of the seminal ideas of this article into innovative solutions and strategies for the life and mission of the church. Yet, further study is necessary. Is Klingbeil's definition of ritual specific or accurate enough to be helpful? What criteria should control the use of ritual in the life and mission of the church?

Jo Ann Davidson ("La expiación según Moisés" [Atonement according to Moses]) contributes a narrative analysis of Gen 22. In a carefully guided process, she uncovers little-explored aspects of the text and spells out their

theological import. She closes the study with an analysis of the impact of Gen 22 on Paul's teaching of the atonement provided in Christ.

Carmelo Martínez ("El falso testigo (Deuteronomy 19:15-21): Un caso de jurisprudencia hebrea y su presentación tipológica" [The false witness (Deuteronomy 19:15-21): A case of Hebrew jurisprudence and its typological import]) analyzes the law concerning witnesses and testimony (Deut 19:15-21) and explains the typological dimension of this law in the judgment and punishment of Satan, the "accuser," in Rev 20.

The New Testament and the Pentateuch

Ekkehardt Müller's "Jesús y el Pentateuco" (Jesus and the Pentateuch) studies how Jesus used the Pentateuch and focuses on an analysis of Jesus' direct quotations of the Pentateuch according to the four canonical Gospels. Admittedly, the task is too great to be treated in an article; yet, he is able to keep the focus of the work and to conclude it with a fitting evaluation of the import of Jesus' use of the Pentateuch for modern readers.

Martín Klingbeil ("Exclusivismo o inclusivismo: El concepto de ciudadanía en el Pentateuco y su uso metafórico en Efesios" [Exclusion or inclusion: The concept of citizenship in the Pentateuch and its metaphorical use in Ephesians]) studies the concept of citizenship and its development throughout Israel's history. He argues that the biblical concept struck a balance between inclusion and exclusion, but that this was not observed in Israel's experience. He suggests that Paul in Ephesians provides the elements for the restoration of that balance in the cross of Christ; finally he extrapolates lessons for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as a multicultural and multiethnic movement.

Roberto Pereyra ("Visión deuteronomica de la historia de Israel: un estudio de 1 Tes 2:16c" [A Deuteronomic vision of the history of Israel: A study of 1 Thessalonians 2:16c]) rejects the interpretation of 1 Thess 2:16c, one of the difficult passages of the NT, which sees the verse as a reference to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. He suggests that Deuteronomic language is the key for understanding the "wrath of God" in this instance as the "absence of salvation." This wrath corresponds to the "wrath that is coming" (1 Thess 1:10)—the punishment at the end of time.

Raúl Quiroga ("El binomio altar/sacrificio como centro teológico del Pentateuco y su significado y simbolismo para el Nuevo Testamento" [The binomial altar/sacrifice as the theological center of the Pentateuch and its meaning and symbolism for the New Testament]) suggests the binomial altar/sacrifice as the organizing element or integrating topic of the Pentateuch on the basis of its ubiquity, though it is not clear why this criterion is sufficient.

Current Issues in the Theology of the Pentateuch

Mario Veloso ("Antropología del Pentateuco ¿Historia real sobre los orígenes de la humanidad?" [Anthropology of the Pentateuch: Is it an actual history about the origins of humanity?]) seeks to answer the question of whether the Pentateuch accounts are simple myths and metaphors. He proposes a negative answer from the perspective of anthropology. Víctor Figueroa ("El sábado:

una perspectiva escatológica” [Sabbath: An eschatological perspective]) explores the eschatological dimensions of the Sabbath, explaining how it prefigures the consummation of salvation after the final liberation.

Jorge Torreblanca (“Los ‘cinco quintos de la ley’: implicaciones de una estructura teológica unitaria” [The “five fifths of the law”: implications of a united theological structure]) defends the theological unity of the Pentateuch and proposes “the revelation of the character of God” as the central theological theme or *mitte* of the Pentateuch. He bases his proposal on the acceptance of the structures of the Pentateuch in general and Leviticus in particular, and, as suggested by Richard Davidson and William H. Shea respectively, that have Lev 16 at their center (436-438).

David P. Gullón’s article, “El Mesías en el Pentateuco: la esperanza mesiánica en el libro del Génesis” (The Messiah in the Pentateuch: The messianic hope in the book of Genesis) seeks to provide a study of the promise of a future deliverer in the Pentateuch. (The author should not use the term “Messiah” to describe or name his article. The word “Messiah” [lit. anointed] does not appear in Genesis. Similarly, the verb “to anoint” appears just once [Gen 31:13] and does not refer to a person. An imprecise use of this term confuses categories and contributes to a skewed reading of the text.) The article provides less than that. It analyzes only the promise of Gen 3:15. The promises of a seed to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are studied superficially and the blessing on Judah (Gen 49:8-10) is not dealt with.

Carlos Mora (“Implicaciones teológicas de los usos del Pentateuco en el libro de Daniel” [Theological implications of the use of the Pentateuch in the book of Daniel]) shows how the theological argument of Daniel presupposes and requires an understanding of the Pentateuch and its theology. This is an insightful article.

Miscellany on the Pentateuch

Teófilo Correa writes “El motivo del pacto y elección en Deuteronomio 10: Breve estudio del libro y análisis contextual de Deuteronomy 10:1-11” (The covenant and election motif in Deuteronomy 10: A brief study of the book and a contextual analysis of Deuteronomy 10:1-11). David Merling (“El libro de Génesis: sus preocupaciones y contextos internos” [The book of Genesis: its concerns and internal contexts]) studies the chronologies of Genesis and how the consistency of their nature and purpose throughout the book of Genesis suggests the literary unity of the book and how incongruous it is to consider Gen 1–11 fiction, while treating the rest of the book as nonfiction. Edgard Horna (“Balaam y el Mesías guerrero” [Balaam and the warrior Messiah]) provides an interesting analysis of the oracle of Num 24:17-19 and its interpretation in the book of Revelation. Daniel Rode (“Misión a todas las etnias en el pacto con Abraham, Isaac, y Jacob” [Mission to all the ethnic groups in the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob]) studies the promise made to Abraham about his seed as a blessing to “all the nations”—which is repeated five times in Genesis—and its meaning for the mission of the church. His reading of Matt 24:14, which requires the conversion of persons

from all ethnic groups before the end comes, does not have appropriate textual support (585). In fact, the parallel of Col 1:23 seems to undermine this reading. At any rate, his point that God's plan for the mission of the church has always been inclusive of all ethnic groups on earth is well made. Jiri Moskala ("Concepto y noción de la iglesia en el Pentateuco" [The concept and notion of church in the Pentateuch]) provides a brief introduction to the idea of church in the Pentateuch, beginning with an analysis of the vocabulary and including a sketch of the development of this theme throughout the Pentateuch. The article is insightful and provides a good starting point for a fuller study of the topic in the Bible.

Volviendo a los origenes conveys the vibrant voice of the Seventh-day Adventist theological movement in South America, which is full of energy and ambitious to be heard and to weigh in on the theological debates of the Adventist Church. Its appeal and major success resides in its ability to add a variety of perspectives from different fields of thought to the study of the biblical text and its implications. Though eclectic in its approach, the views and convictions of the authors are clearly unified in a high view of Scripture and in their rejection of the Documentary Hypothesis. The book is of uneven quality. It contains articles that stand out for their lucidity and clarity, while the argument of others is more difficult to follow and their contribution more tenuous. The book remains, however, an example of the reward that can be obtained when people from different disciplines think together about the Bible and its meaning for the church today. We can only hope that the South American Biblical-Theological Symposium will continue to prosper, publish, and grow in its ability to convene the voices of people from different parts of the world and from different disciplines.

Universidad de Montemorelos
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FELIX CORTEZ

Desplan, Fabrice, and Régis Dericquebourg, eds. *Ces protestants que l'on dit Adventistes*, Collection: Théologie et vie politique de la terre. Paris: l'Harmattan, 2008. 250 pp. Paper, €23,27.

Two State institutions dominate higher education in France: The Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (National Center for Scientific Research), and l'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (School of Higher Studies, a specific department of the famous Sorbonne University in Paris). Since 1995, they have joined their efforts in a research group named *Society, Religions and Laicizations*. The book under present review, *Those Protestants Who are Named Adventists*, is the outcome of the yearly colloquium of this group, held in Paris on 3 May 2007. It is dedicated entirely to the study of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In the French setting, this sudden interest in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a result of a specific event that occurred on 11 March 2006, when the Adventist Church was accepted as a full member of the Fédération Protestante

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In the French setting, this sudden interest in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a result of a specific event that occurred on 11 March 2006, when the Adventist Church was accepted as a full member of the Fédération Protestante

de France (French Protestant Conference). Although not a super church, the Fédération Protestante de France is a general organization bringing together historical Protestants (Lutherans and Calvinists) and many other evangelical churches. Its main goals are, according to its Constitution and bylaws: to bear witness to the sovereignty of the living Christ, to bring the different churches into closer relationship and to try to coordinate their respective actions, to be the voice of French Protestantism for the government, and to protect religious liberty. The admission of the Adventist Church in this Conference was a long and rather painful process. Describing why and how it eventually happened is the purpose of this book.

The book is divided into ten different contributions, an introduction, and an appendix. Seven presentations were written by non-Adventist scholars. The logical flow of the book is not obvious and the chapters are independent of each other.

The shortest chapter is by Dominique Kounkou, a lawyer and President of the African Evangelical Churches (137-141). In five unreferenced pages, Kounkou asks and analyzes a political question: What was behind the admission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and other small evangelical churches into the Conference? According to his analysis, Kounkou believes that the Conference was experiencing major difficulties in retaining its influence. The historical churches—the core of the Conference for decades—did not have the influence on French society they had enjoyed in previous years due to declining membership. By way of contrast, the evangelical churches are growing rapidly. Thus for Kounkou, “the center has called for help from the margins, in order to survive” (138). It is the end of elitist Protestantism and the beginning of mass Protestantism. While a rescue measure for the Conference, the admission is an opportunity for the Seventh-day Adventist Church and other small organizations—as members of the Conference, these churches will no longer be considered sects.

Sébastien Fath considers the relationship between Protestants and Adventists (19-27). As with evangelicals, Adventists see a strong correlation between orthodoxy and orthopraxy. They appreciate action more than spiritual quest, conviction more than doubt. More than evangelicals, however, Adventists develop structures of plausibility: schools, youth camps, potlucks, and different means of socialization. Their belief in the soon coming of the Savior creates what Fath calls “the utopia of the kingdom to come” (23). Nevertheless, in French Protestant historiography, Adventism does not feature on the first page for the following reasons: the role of Ellen White, an ongoing suspicion of supposed legalism, and a sheep-stealing mission style (26).

Jean-Paul Willaime (89-97) also considers the admission process, making some parts of his chapter redundant with Fath's. Willaime also returns to the issue of Ellen White. He believes that in order to enter the Conference, Adventists went through a protestantization process, at the end of which they clearly admit that the Bible is their only creed (93). Acceptance of open communion was also important for the Conference, but not a major issue for the Adventists. Not a small surprise, the Conference acknowledged the value

of the Sabbath doctrine. As noted by the President of the French Reformed Church, “Sabbath observance may raise the question of the necessary distance with the consumerist society” (95).

Jean Baubérot, honorary president of the *Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes*, considers the story of the *International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR)* (121-136). Independent from the well-known *International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA)*, but closely linked to it, the *AIDLR* has published its journal *Conscience and Liberty* since 1946. Baubérot lists the many VIPs who were members of the Association, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt being not the least. Studying the topics considered in the review from a political perspective, Baubérot states that, compared to the *Liberty* magazine of the *IRLA*, *Conscience and Liberty* is more toward the left of the political spectrum and more pluralist than its American counterpart (125). Among the many significant actions undertaken by the *AIDLR*, a letter was sent by its founder Jean Nussbaum, in January 1965, to General Franco, pleading for a new law in favor of religious liberty in Spain (126).

Régis Dericquebourg focuses on the role of Ellen White in Adventism (143-166). Despite some unwarranted statements (she had no visions after 1855!), his chapter deserves great consideration. Dericquebourg begins with a negative definition of White’s ministry, stating that “She is not a reformer, nor a mystagogue, nor a moral master (*gourou*). . . . She does not conform to a typical prophetic image, as God’s channel, announcing a new vision of the world” (163). White’s mission is twofold: to give a supernatural validity to the theological choices made by her fellow pioneers, and to integrate extrabiblical truths (e.g., the health message) into a coherent and unified religion of salvation and health (165). Dericquebourg’s conclusion will certainly please many Adventists. He states: “Ellen White belongs to the core nucleus of the Adventist representation. To touch her would destabilize the representation” (165).

Fabrice Desplan deals with the conversion process (167-219): How does one become a Seventh-day Adventist? However, this interesting study does not really fit into the general project of the book. Desplan interviewed 125 new Adventist believers in five-hour-long sessions. He creates five different genres of new believers from his interviews: continuous heirs, prodigal heirs, pilgrims, rational neophytes, and conquered neophytes. These differences demonstrate a significant diversity among Adventist believers, but in order to be totally relevant, this study should have included a comparative side. How does the conversion process in the Adventist Church differ from or resemble the conversion process in the evangelical churches?

Olivier Régis compares the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the French Caribbean islands (La Martinique and La Guadeloupe) with Jehovah Witnesses (219-232). However, his chapter is too short and does not go further than general considerations.

The longest Adventist contribution to this publication is Jean-Luc Rolland’s chapter (29-88). Rolland, the director of the Ellen White Research Center for Western Europe, provides a well-documented but verbose study. More care should have been given to the outline of this chapter to avoid

useless repetitions with other chapters. Rolland offers a sound and sensitive scholarly apology of the Adventist Church, but it is more a general overview of the church in the world than a French-focused presentation. For example, Bert Beach, John Harvey Kellogg, and Ben Carson, all outstanding American figures, feature with but a few French Adventist characters. A good deal of Rolland's study deals with the concept of present truth. With (too many and too long) quotations, sometimes coming from unpublished manuscripts of Ellen White, Rolland asserts that the Seventh-day Adventist Church supports a dynamic understanding of the concept of truth. His historical presentation is quite helpful, however, showing how reluctant the pioneers were to the idea of a creed. However, again, what is the link between this description and the Adventist Church in France? Generally speaking, one wonders if this idyllic description of an open church, willing to discover new truth, corresponds to the current reality in the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Last, but not least in the book, is Richard Lehmann's chapter (101-119). Lehmann published a general presentation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1987 that is still considered a valuable reference guide. In addition, he served as President of the Adventist Church in France during the admission period into the Conference. His chapter is a useful testimony from inside, written by a theologian. At the end of the admission process, Lehmann asks pertinent questions: What, in the end, is the mission of the Adventist Church? Should the church further develop its relationships with other Christian entities, sharing common doctrines and practices? Or should the church maintain a constant confrontation/opposition with others (119)? In dealing with these questions, Lehmann contends, the church in France showed its capacity to remain alive.

Ces protestants que l'on dit adventistes is a unique contribution not only to the history and sociology of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in France, but it is also relevant for a wider understanding of the church in general. As mentioned in its foreword by the non-Adventist editors, it is an innovative publication, a major contribution no serious sociologist or historian of religion will ignore.

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JEAN-CLAUDE VERRECHHIA

Du Preez, Ron. *Judging the Sabbath: Discovering What Can't Be Found in Colossians 2:16*. Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2008. xv + 190 pp. Paper, \$19.99.

Colossians 2:16 has been interpreted by the vast majority of scholars as evidence that the seventh-day Sabbath has been abolished and is no longer a day Christians need to observe. Sabbatarians, however, see this text as referring not to the seventh-day Sabbath, but to the OT ceremonial sabbaths that Christians are no longer obliged to keep. Du Preez, in *Judging the Sabbath*, critically analyzes the "anti-Sabbatarian apologetics" (viii). He supports his conclusions through an extensive analysis of the terms "festival," "new moon," and "sabbath" with helpful diagrams. Four extensive appendices

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provide a wealth of data from his research, again arranged in diagrams. An index of authors and texts concludes the book.

The book is divided into two parts: the first part is for “educated lay persons and seminary-trained pastors;” the second part is oriented more to “the professional scholar of biblical studies and languages” (x).

The author begins this study with a short historical overview of the interpretations of Col 2:16 and provides the rationale for his analytical textual approach. He admits that in order to get a full understanding of this text it would require a detailed understanding of wider questions about Colossians, such as its main purpose and the heresies Paul is combating. The author cites recent scholars who, because of the lack of unanimity in NT scholarship, express doubts about the possibility of understanding these questions and the heresy that Paul was trying to combat (5-7). Consequently, the author proposes to concentrate his study on the text itself and follow the rule that “Scripture is its own best interpreter” (7). Thus he proposes to study the text with an “inter-textual, semantic, hermeneutical approach, allowing Scripture to interpret itself” (90), which avoids “extra-biblical reconstructions, assumptions, or speculations” (8). From this perspective, the author investigates each of the major arguments built upon this text by proponents in favor of the abolition of the seventh-day Sabbath. The following are some of the significant findings of his approach that support the view that the text warns believers against those insisting that it is necessary to continue observing the OT ceremonial rest days.

The author begins his approach by investigating the view that the word “sabbath” in Col 2:16 cannot refer to ceremonial sabbaths because this word by itself is never used in the OT for such sabbaths (17). From an extensive textual analysis, with the help of syntactical and linguistic markers of the 111 occurrences of “sabbath” in the OT, he concludes that in 94 instances this word refers to the seventh-day Sabbath. However, in 17 instances the word can refer to the Day of Atonement, weeks, or Sabbatical Years. (23). Thus he notes that *sabbata* in Col 2:16 could mean ceremonial sabbaths.

The author’s further analysis of the free-standing Hebrew word for “sabbath” and its Greek equivalent *sabbata* in the LXX reveal that it was also used for the Day of Atonement, sabbatical years, and, in some Greek manuscripts, for the Day of Trumpets (51). These findings, the author says, need to be taken into account to arrive at the best translation of *sabbata* in Col 2:16.

Du Preez responds to the argument that of the 60 times the word “Sabbath” is used in the NT 59 times it clearly refers to the seventh-day Sabbath and thus its use in Col 2:16 should obviously mean the seventh-day Sabbath, by engaging in a statistical analysis of the Greek terms *sabbatōn* and *sabbata*. His findings are that these terms appear a total of 69 times in the NT. Fifty-nine times they refer to the seventh-day Sabbath. Of the ten remaining instances, nine are translated as “week.” The one still to be identified is *sabbata* in Col 2:16. Because of the lack of any well-recognized linguistic markers and clear contextual indicators, the author concludes that it would appear that here the Greek term refers to something different than the seventh-day Sabbath or week.

In dealing with the assumption that all the ceremonial sabbaths are included in the term “festival” in Col 2:16, and therefore, the term “sabbath” must refer to the seventh-day Sabbath, the author presents compelling arguments from the Hebrew that this term refers to the three great sacred, joyful festivals of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. This pattern he sees supported by the LXX translation of the religious festivals. By contrast, the Day of Atonement and the blowing of the trumpets, both being ceremonial sabbaths, are not referred to as festivals or feasts. These differences among ceremonial sabbaths, the author observes, justify why the text makes a distinction between “festival” and “sabbath,” pointing to a two-fold division of ceremonial sabbaths. Thus the term “festival” he applies to the joyful pilgrim festivals of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, while the word “sabbath” comprises the other ceremonial occasions of the blowing of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Sabbatical Years (72-78).

As nearly all commentators viewed the three terms of “feast day,” “new moon,” and “sabbath” in Col 2:16 as a description of a yearly, monthly, and weekly calendar sequence, summarizing Israel’s feasts prescribed in the Torah, the author investigated 110 Bible commentaries as to how they came to this conclusion. The texts supporting this view were 1 Chron 23:30-31; 2 Chron 2:4; 8:13; 31:3; Neh 10:33; Ezek 45:17; and Hos 2:11. It is assumed that Paul used this same calendar cycle, and as the seventh-day Sabbath is part of the weekly cycle, so it is part of Col 2:16. The author’s thorough investigation found that of 92 commentaries commenting on this text since 1861, none did any “serious exegesis” of these three terms (56-58). He observed that none of the OT passages have the same progression and nature as in Colossians. Instead, these passages deal with sacrifices and not with actual days. Therefore, none of these OT texts can legitimately be used to support the view that Paul was using these texts in Colossians.

The author concludes his arguments in favor of the idea that in Col 2:16 Paul was referring to the Mosaic ceremonial services because he described these services as a “shadow of things to come,” namely Christ. And when Christ came, the ceremonial rest days came to an end, not the seventh-day. The author, therefore, concludes that any view that this text refers to the abolition of the seventh-day Sabbath is invalid.

The second part of the book, written especially for scholars, addresses the use of the OT in Paul’s epistles. Here he makes a case for Paul’s use of Hos 2:11 in his letter to the Colossians. In the rest of part 2, the author analyzes the linguistics and literary structure of Hos 2:11. He sees evidence that the three-part phrase “her festival, her new moon, and her sabbath” forms a chiasmic structure. The word “festival” he refers to the three annual joyous festivals, while the term “sabbath” alludes to the three nonseventh-day religious occasions (annual Trumpets, Atonement, and Sabbatical Years), not the seventh-day Sabbath (111, 125, 146). Then he analyzes the literary structure of Col 2:16 and concludes that the phrase “festival, new moon, and sabbath” is also part of a chiasmic structure. He comments that if Paul was quoting the OT, he would “most likely have chosen to use the phrase from Hosea 2:11 in Colossians 2:16” (136). The

author finishes his research with the observation that both parts of the book help to demonstrate that “the compelling weight of inter-textual, linguistic, semantic, structural, and contextual evidence demonstrates that the *sabbata* of Colossians 2:16 refers to the ancient Jewish ceremonial sabbaths, and not the weekly Sabbath” (148). Thus, he states, this text cannot be used as evidence that the seventh-day Sabbath of the Decalogue has been abolished.

The author’s intertextual hermeneutical approach leads to valuable discoveries about the meanings of the single words “festival,” “new moon,” and “sabbath” of Col 2:16 that should be given serious attention. However, I do not think this unique approach fully identifies the significance of these expressions. The fact that NT scholarship is not united on the context of Colossians, the issues Paul is fighting against, or the Colossian heresy is not an excuse for not carefully studying these aspects unless we assume *a priori* that all views on the type of conflict Paul is dealing with are wrong.

The author is very critical of the exegesis practiced by 88 commentaries with different hermeneutical perspectives. From his analysis, he finds that nearly half of them did not engage in exegesis, the others practiced some exegesis, while none did any exegesis of these vital three terms (56). He discovered four commentaries that interpreted the “sabbath” in Col 2:16 as ceremonial Sabbaths, but again these “nowhere engage in any serious exegesis of the crucial three terms” (57). Unfortunately, the author nowhere defines what he means by “exegesis,” so it is difficult to evaluate the validity of his criticism.

Exegesis, as it is generally defined, includes questions of the intention of the writer, the understanding of the message by the original audience, and the issues the document tries to settle, all of which impact the outcome of the interpretation of the text. Paul’s strong exhortation and caution in Col 2:13-17 did not take place in a vacuum, but in a powerful conflict with opponents he most likely had been facing in other places. In Gal 4:10-11 and Rom 14:5-6, Paul also dealt with the issue of observance of days and times. A study of these challenges could provide further support of the author’s arguments. However, simply criticizing the exegesis of others—while avoiding the contextual and exegetical study of the text in the immediate and larger context of Colossians and other Pauline letters because there are so many different interpretations—begs the question.

With this minor criticism, I fully recommend this book for anyone who wants to be informed about the latest research on one of the most challenging texts of the letter to the Colossians.

Andrews University

P. GERARD DAMSTEEGT

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Ron du Preez is a man of strong convictions. He is also a careful Bible scholar with a passion to help people resolve theological and ethical issues.

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Ron du Preez is a man of strong convictions. He is also a careful Bible scholar with a passion to help people resolve theological and ethical issues.

The difficult topic he engages in this book is one he has been working on for several years and which is now the topic of his Ph.D. dissertation in New Testament studies at the University of the Western Cape, Republic of South Africa. Du Preez has already earned a D.Min. from Andrews University and a Th.D. in theological ethics from the University of South Africa.

Du Preez's book is an important contribution to ongoing studies on a very difficult passage. It will no doubt not end the discussion, but it does significantly further the discussion, pressing the case for careful reading and interpretation not only of the text itself but also of its scriptural backgrounds and historical and literary contexts. It raises some very important textual issues.

According to the preface, Du Preez began his study with presuppositions. He states in the first paragraph, "My own plain-sense reading of the immediate context of the passage had long since satisfied me that whatever else Paul may have been addressing, he clearly was not discussing the seventh-day Sabbath of the Decalogue" (vii). In support of this interpretation, he offers four points of "relatively simple" "logic" (ibid.). He notes that "most of the scholarly interpretation chose to bypass that context and logic, and instead made a case against the plain-sense reading through other interpretive methods" (ibid.). This introduction will probably not endear him to many of his readers.

After reviewing a selection of the evidence of scholarly interpretation in chapter 1, Du Preez observes that "the vast majority of scholars, now and in the past, have come to the conclusion that Colossians 2:16 clearly indicates that the observance of the weekly Sabbath is not obligatory for Christians because it has allegedly been abrogated" (9-10). Yet he still raises the question, "Where does the weight of biblical textual evidence lead?" (10). Clearly, he is convinced of the soundness of his own intuition against the weight of scholarship, having surveyed the positions of 110 commentaries and found them all lacking in a careful study of the biblical evidence (55-56). He cites F. F. Bruce as asserting that "the *onus probandi* lies on those who argue that the weekly sabbath is not included in this reference" (10). He is ready to take up the challenge—and he does it with a zeal that leaves few stones unturned.

The book is divided into two parts. Part 1 addresses basic issues of language and context that Du Preez believes will resolve the matter for the average reader. Part 2 considers additional issues that are of interest to scholars who would probe the matter more deeply. Following a summary and conclusions, he provides appendices with charts of the hard data used in his study.

Part 1 begins in chapter 2 with a study of the use of *šabbāt* in the Hebrew Bible. He shows that of 111 occurrences of *šabbāt*, 94 have contexts that require interpreting them as the seventh-day Sabbath. He identifies linguistic markers that identify the seventh-day Sabbath but are otherwise absent or have other markers to indicate types of sabbaths such as the Day of Atonement, the sabbatical years, or the week. These data are pretty straightforward and noncontroversial. Du Preez cites a number of scholars who have achieved similar results.

In chapter 3, Du Preez examines the translation of the Hebrew expression *šabbat šabbātôn* into Greek in the LXX, thus preparing the way for

understanding *sabbatōn* in Col 2:16. After comparing the seven occurrences in the Hebrew Bible, he concludes that it is used four times with reference to the seventh-day Sabbath, two times with reference to the Day of Atonement, and once with reference to the sabbatical year, so “it cannot function as one of the uniquely identifying linguistic indicators” for the seventh-day Sabbath (29). Further, the LXX translates the expression only once as *sabbata sabbatōn* (Lev 23:32, referring to the Day of Atonement), making that reference “a completely unique interpretation” (29). Thus the claim of various scholars that *šabbat šabbātōn* is always rendered by *sabbata sabbatōn* in the LXX is shown to be incorrect. This seems to bolster Du Preez’s case against the scholars.

In chapter 4, Du Preez studies *sabbaton* and *sabbata* in NT Greek, showing that the neuter singular *sabbaton* appears 44 times and the neuter plural *sabbata* appears 25 times. However, he argues that *sabbata* is not always used as a plural. It is rendered 17 times as a singular, once as a plural (based on context), and six times as a “week.” He cites other scholars and various English versions in support of these statistics. He also offers evidence that already in the LXX *sabbata* can be either singular or plural. He argues from J. B. Lightfoot, and buttressed by the testimony of others, that “*sabbata* is derived from the Aramaic . . . שבתא [šbtʾ] and accordingly preserves the Aramaic termination in *a*” (35). Thus it is normally a singular but is often mistaken for a plural. Du Preez follows the argument of many scholars that this is the basis for reconsidering *sabbata* in Col 2:16 as a singular rather than a plural, and that linguistic and theological context are crucial for determining its real meaning. What is generally overlooked in this regard is that the ambiguous *sabbata* does not appear in Col 2:16. The word in Col 2:16 is *sabbatōn*, which is not ambiguous: it is a genitive plural and it cannot be singular. Here, scholars, including Du Preez, indulge in a careless substitution of something from outside the text for what is actually in the text. Du Preez then follows through the rest of his argument with this false assumption, weakening the rest of the argument. This is a weak link in his study, casting doubt on some of his other conclusions.

Also in chapter 4, Du Preez looks for linguistic markers used with *sabbaton* and *sabbata* in the NT to see what is being referred to in the context. He concludes that, of 69 occurrences of the two terms, 59 refer to the seventh-day Sabbath, nine refer to a week, and only Col 2:16 lacks the linguistic markers and contextual indicators to refer either to the seventh-day Sabbath or to a week. Therefore, the reference in Col 2:16 must refer to a ceremonial sabbath or to something else.

Chapter 5 functions to demonstrate the incorrectness of the assertion of some scholars that the Hebrew word *šabbāt* when used alone, and its Greek equivalent in the LXX, *sabbata*, is used exclusively for the weekly Sabbath and never for ceremonial sabbaths. Du Preez sets forth evidence that this language is, in fact, used for the Day of Atonement, for sabbatical years, and even, in some Greek manuscripts, for the Day of Trumpets (Lev 23:24). This evidence counters the argument that *sabbata* (purportedly) in Col 2:16 must necessarily refer to the seventh-day Sabbath.

Du Preez gets into the issue of the calendar sequence in chapter 6, namely, that in Col 2:16 *heortē* designates yearly feasts, *neomēnia* designates feasts at the beginning of each month, and *sabbata* designates the weekly holy day. Many scholars have cited the strong OT precedent for this interpretation, though a few have challenged this interpretation. Du Preez analyzes six of the OT texts that have been cited as containing the yearly-monthly-weekly sequence and finds significant differences between them and Col 2:16. One difference is that Du Preez finds a four-part sequence in these passages as opposed to a three-part sequence in Col 2:16, though he admits that the four-part sequence “is at times difficult to recognize in some Bible translations” (60). (One should not too glibly assert that lack of a fourth element in Col 2:16 negates the allusion entirely.) He also points out that the sequence is reversed in these passages, so they cannot be alluded to by the alternative sequence in Col 2:16. (Again, various scholars see this as inadequate evidence to deny the strong allusive character of the sequence.) Further, he adds that the subject of these six passages is the offerings offered on these days, whereas he contends that there is no context of offerings in Col 2:16. This is a debatable argument. In fact, Paul Gies, whom he cites several times, actually makes the case that that is exactly what Col 2:16 is about, as parallels with Heb 10:1 and the OT strongly suggest. Additionally, Du Preez argues that the terms used in these six passages are all plural, whereas the terms in Col 2:16 are singular. This, of course, is not quite true, since *sabbatōn* in Col 2:16 is, in fact, unquestionably genitive plural. Further, Du Preez’s own study of Ezek 45:13-17 and 46:1-15 in this same chapter shows a mix of singulars and plurals in a similar context, which offers precedent for the same in Col 2:16. Du Preez opts to leave Hos 2:11 out of consideration in this chapter, though Hos 2:11 offers the best parallel with Col 2:16 in a similar context, listing the same calendar sequence as in Col 2:16, in the same order, and in the singular. He reserves the study of Hos 2:11 for Part 2.

In chapter 7, Du Preez presents the case from the OT, LXX, and NT for a distinction between the use of *heortē* and the use of *sabbata* when referring to festivals or holy days. He shows that *heortē* was consistently used to translate the Hebrew *hag*, referring always to one of the three annual pilgrim festivals, whereas *sabbata*, as shown in chapter 5, was used—besides for the weekly Sabbath—for the Day of Atonement, the Day of Trumpets, or sabbatical years. Thus there is no justification for the argument of some scholars that all ceremonial festivals are referred to by the term *heortē*, thereby requiring that the use of *sabbata/sabbatōn* in Col 2:16 must refer to the seventh-day Sabbath.

Chapter 8 closes Part 1 with a discussion of the use of the term “shadow” (*skia*) in Col 2:17, showing the cultic context of the language of the verse parallels with Heb 10:1-4. This is the first time Du Preez makes any attempt to touch on the actual context of *sabbatōn* in Col 2:16, and he does not discuss it in its own larger literary context, aside from the reference to *skia* in v. 17, except in the context of another NT book. This is one of the great weaknesses of Du Preez’s contribution. As extensive as his word studies are, there is little attention given to literary context, which should play a significant

role in interpretation. As valuable as the parallel to Heb 10:1 is, he uses it for his own purposes, ignoring the fact that Heb 10:1 states that the (ritual) law, which is a shadow of coming good things, can never by those sacrifices which they offer continually year after year make perfect those who bring them. In other words, the sacrifices offered throughout the calendar year, whether daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly, are at the heart of the ritual law, which was a foreshadowing of the One who is to come, who is the body or substance, the reality to which the shadows pointed. This detail needs to be brought into the context of Col 2:16-17, whereas Du Preez ignores and even denies it, insisting that there is nothing in Col 2:16 that suggests that sacrificial offerings are part of the context. Yet in the OT context of the various festivals, whether daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly, the sacrifices were always at the heart of what was being celebrated.

Du Preez summarizes his findings in Part 1, concluding that “The interpretation that is best supported by the comprehensive weight of careful biblical research reveals that the *sabbata* of Colossians 2:16 refers to the ceremonial sabbaths of the ancient Israelite nation. This passage does not address the seventh-day Sabbath of the Decalogue, and cannot reasonably be used in anti-Sabbatarian apologetics” (94).

In Part 2, Du Preez attempts to add weight to this conclusion by a series of additional arguments. First, in chapter 10 he argues that the eight OT passages cited in chapter 6 should not be considered as background for Col 2:16 because Paul never quotes from 1 or 2 Chronicles or Nehemiah and has only allusions to or paraphrases of Ezekiel. However, if there is an OT source for Paul’s comment in Col 2:16, “the book of Hosea is the more obvious candidate” (102), since he quotes from Hosea several times.

In chapter 11, Du Preez studies the linguistics of Hos 2:11 (v. 13 in Heb.) and compares the verse with Col 2:16, concluding that there are at least six correspondences between the two texts. It is not difficult to agree that Hos 2:11 is probably the best literary background for Col 2:16. However, Du Preez makes a leap here that he does not make with the other eight similar passages. Whereas he clearly states regarding the other eight passages that “The word *sabbata* in the above eight passages does refer to the seventh-day Sabbath” (98), he proposes that here “the *šabbāt* in Hos 2:11 may actually refer to these annual and septennial sabbaths” (109). He offers support for this thesis by noting that the text speaks of “her sabbath,” referring to Israel’s sabbath as opposed to God’s Sabbath, paralleling “her [pilgrim] festival” and “her new moon.” This seems to be a good argument, but given the context of the passage, it may be that God is merely saying that what he had ordained has all been turned from its original intention to serve self instead of to serve him by what was done on those occasions. God is speaking to Hosea about his wife Gomer, a harlot who became an enacted parable representing Israel. God says in vv. 8 and 9 that he will take back from her the gifts he gave her because she was spending them on her lovers and using them to worship Baal. What was God going to take back? Did Israel have her own separate pilgrim festivals different from those three ordained by God? No. Did Israel have

her own separate new moon festivals different from those ordained by God? No. Why then must we conclude that the sabbaths here should be different from God's Sabbaths, which are represented in all of the parallel passages? It is not necessary. Israel had merely perverted God's Sabbaths so that they had become self-serving, and God calls them Israel's rather than his own. There is a clue to that effect when God states that he will cause all their merrymaking to cease. The festivals and holy days have lost their intended function and have become merely an opportunity to feast and party at God's expense. The sacrifices and offerings, which were an essential aspect of the worship at the festivals and holy days, have become an offense to God because they are being misused. Verse 13 points out that the festivals have become "the days of the Baals, to which she burned incense." "But Me she forgot," God says. So there is no good reason contextually to conclude that *sabbattāh* in Hos 2:11 is other than the rituals offered on the seventh-day Sabbath, just as on the new moons and pilgrim festivals as in the other eight parallel OT expressions, even if the rituals or sacrifices are not explicitly mentioned in this verse.

In chapter 12, Du Preez attempts to clinch his argument by proposing a literary structure in Hos 2:11 that will confirm his interpretation once and for all. He cites evidence for other parallelisms and chiasms in Hosea, then argues that 2:11 forms a chiasm in which the sabbaths parallel the annual pilgrimages and are therefore annual ceremonial sabbaths rather than weekly Sabbaths. There are several problems to his line of argumentation. One is that there are five things that God says he will cause to cease: all her merrymaking, her pilgrim festivals, her new moons, her sabbaths, and all her set feasts. Du Preez reduces these to three, with a "prologue" and an "epilogue." The three central terms, which he arranges chiastically, are really all parallel, equal examples of the times during the year when they had special occasions of worship and sacrifice. They are not an exhaustive list, so God adds, "and all her set feasts," to cover the rest. The three central terms, if not all five, should be seen instead as a simple list of things that God will put a stop to, rather than a chiastic structure in which "her new moons" forms the center of a chiasm. One has to ask if the center of Du Preez's chiasm meets his own test: "Whatever the writer intentionally placed at the literary center can thus be recognized as pivotal in the overall chiastic structure" (118). It is hard for me to see how "her new moons" can be pivotal in explaining the meaning of the whole structure, but he makes an effort, arguing that "These lunar observances were extremely crucial for the religious practices of the entire ancient Israelite nation. Hence, the monthly new moons stand at the peak of this chiastic structure" (124). He tried to explain this in the previous chapter in terms of the appearance of the new moon as the basis for the entire Hebrew calendar. However, in view of the dearth of evidence for any actual celebration of the new moon festival worship services, as opposed to merely the implicit importance of the viewing of the new moon at the beginning of each month for dating purposes, one must question the overall importance of the new moon festival as the dominant one in the trio. The purpose of this purported chiasm is to make "her Sabbaths" parallel with "her [pilgrim] festivals" and thus refer to ceremonial sabbaths rather than weekly Sabbaths.

Since Hos 2:11 is held up to be the only legitimate OT passage alluded to by Paul in Col 2:16, this is supposed to clinch the argument that the sabbaths mentioned in Col 2:16 are ceremonial sabbaths. In my view, Du Preez has failed to make this case convincingly.

He goes on in chapter 12 to argue not only for his chiasm, but also for an “augmented inverted parallelism” (122). His conclusion is that “sabbaths” in Hos 2:11 includes the “rest” times of Trumpets, Atonement, and sabbatical years, and is therefore an augmentation over the pilgrim festivals, which are all annual, whereas the sabbatical years are septennial. This argument is based on changing the language of the text from the singular to the plural. If, as he earlier argued, these terms are singular, what ground is there for making them represent plural entities? There is too much manipulation of the text here, and too much speculative reasoning.

Chapter 13 contributes little to the line of argumentation, but attempts to show evidence for literary parallelisms and chiasms in Colossians. The formation of “Do not touch, Do not taste, Do not handle” (2:21) into a three-part augmented inverted chiasm is less than convincing. Again, it seems to be a simple listing of three elements of prohibition. What would make “Do not taste” pivotal for the meaning of the structure?—though Du Preez asserts, without support, that it is so. All of this is supposed to lend credence to making Col 2:16 form an augmented inverted parallelism, like its OT background, Hos 2:11, confirming that the “sabbaths” in Col 2:16 are ceremonial sabbaths. There are simpler solutions that require less speculation.

It can no doubt be said that Du Preez has conducted one of the most extensive studies on the “sabbaths” in Col 2:16 that has been undertaken. He has established a lot of good data and has successfully undermined some careless scholarly assertions. While this reader has not found his line of argument to be convincing in several areas, I would note that his general conclusion regarding the nature of the sabbaths in Col 2:16 is in harmony with long-standing published Seventh-day Adventist interpretation. I do recommend that the interested student of Scripture obtain Du Preez’s study and read it carefully and thoughtfully. It will not be possible to explore this topic seriously in the future without considering Du Preez’s contribution. At the same time, his subtitle suggests the real contribution of his study: *Discovering What Can’t Be Found in Colossians 2:16*. I agree that it is much more difficult in the light of Du Preez’s study to find the seventh-day Sabbath per se in Col 2:16. However, he has not convinced me that the passage is not discussing ritual observances, especially sacrifices, offered at different times in the Jewish ritual calendar, including the burnt offerings offered on weekly Sabbath days, as repeatedly mentioned in a variety of OT passages. Parallels in Heb 10:1-4, along with Heb 9:9-12, strongly seem to support that interpretation. There may yet be room for more work in this area.

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EDWIN REYNOLDS

Flemming, Dean E. *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005. 344 pp. Paper, \$26.00.

Contextualization is currently an important topic in Seventh-day Adventist missiology. Dean Flemming, writing from his own multicultural background and a Wesleyan-Arminian perspective, makes a major contribution to the understanding of this topic. He holds a doctorate from Aberdeen. He is currently a Lecturer in New Testament and Intercultural Communications at the European Nazarene College in Büsingen, Germany. He previously served on the faculties of the Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary and the Asia Graduate School of Theology. References to these settings pepper his book.

Flemming demonstrates a careful scholarship that blends together theological and missiological perspectives, never diminishing one or the other, yet asserting that intercultural mission is the cause of theological reflection. The community thus becomes a major setting for such reflection.

In his treatment of contextualization in Paul's letters, Flemming carefully works through the focus, framework, and formative elements of Paul's writing, taking note of the richness of Paul's vocabulary as evidence of Paul's contextualizing genius. Thus, "The diversity of metaphors and symbols expressing the meaning of Christ's death is perhaps excelled only when Paul describes the believer's experience of the new life in Christ. Paul's salvation language draws upon a wealth of images from both Scripture and secular culture" (107). The Apostle can use the same image in multiple ways, or with different emphases as the context demands. Thus Flemming maintains the authenticity of the entire Pauline corpus.

For Flemming, Paul's contextualization never takes place at the level of the basic content of the gospel itself, but rather when he articulates, interprets, and applies it in the light of real human needs. Thus the Pauline paradigm challenges the worldwide church to enable the gospel of a crucified Christ to address and transform people within their various cultures and times. "Only then will we have a truly missional theology."

The sole focus of the Gospels, for Flemming, is Jesus. Nevertheless, the Gospels were written with the cultural-historical milieu of the community in mind. When Flemming turns to the book of Revelation, he treats it as a radical contextualization, challenging twenty-first-century Christians to question seriously their own capitulation to the materialistic world, its rampant consumerism, and the "emperor worship" of the religious right. He notes the contextual differences between Paul (Rom 13) and John (Rev 13); both faced the reality of the Empire, but from differing perspectives. There are times when Christians are called to take a costly prophetic stand against the dominant order and times.

In the concluding chapter, Flemming proposes the tautology, "All theology is contextualized theology, from the creeds of the early church to the modern 'Four Spiritual Laws.' All theology is done from a particular location and perspective, whether we are conscious of it or not. Contextualization is not just desirable; it is the only way theology can be done" (208). He then raises two questions: "First, is there not a danger of Christian theology splintering

into a thousand different pieces? What holds these variegated theological reflections together? Second, how do we know which contextualized expressions are authentic and which have distorted the gospel?" Interactive, multicultural sharing is offered as a counterbalance to tendencies toward not only syncretism, but also ecclesial and natural individualism.

Active mission practitioners, missiologists, and theologians will benefit from and enjoy this excellent volume.

Andrews University

BRUCE CAMPBELL MOYER

Terian, Abraham. *Macarius of Jerusalem: Letter to the Armenians, A.D. 335*. Avant: Treasures of the Armenian Christian Tradition, 4. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press and St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, 2008. 184 pp. Cloth, \$30.00.

Based on the work of the philosopher of science Karl Popper, Robert Taft has written, "knowledge in a field advances not by the accumulation of new data but by the invention of new systems; not by hypothesis verification but by hypothesis negation" ("An Essay in Methodology," in *Beyond East and West*, Robert Taft [Rome, 1997], 190). Former Andrews University professor, now professor emeritus at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, New Rochelle, New York, Abraham Terian, in this translation and study of the famous document, "Of the Blessed Macarius, Patriarch of the Holy City Jerusalem: Canonical Letter to the Armenians concerning the Regulation of the Ordinances of the Catholic Church Which it Is Not Right to Transgress by Definition or Command," has advanced the field of early liturgical scholarship and early Armenian studies in both ways noted by Taft. That is, on the one hand, he has analyzed a document long viewed by scholars (due to the work by N. Akinian) to be a sixth-century document authored by Macarius II, and has demonstrated conclusively that this letter dates to the year 335, in Jerusalem, and comes from Macarius I in response to questions asked by Armenian bishops who had been in Jerusalem for the famous dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in 325. Hence, there is a real sense in which this critical edition (Armenian texts in differing manuscripts), translation, and study *does* present us with the "accumulation of new data," a new source for study, an absolute rarity in the field of *Liturgiewissenschaft*. On the other hand, this is also a work of "hypothesis negation" in that the existence of this "new data" means that previous scholarly approaches and conclusions regarding the document are necessarily refuted and that what has been thought, for example, about the state of Jerusalem liturgy in the early fourth century must now be reevaluated critically.

With regard to early Jerusalem liturgy specifically, the contents of this letter indicate that already in 335—*before* Cyril of Jerusalem's *Baptismal Catechesis* (c. 348) and a *long* time before the *Mystagogical Catecheses* (attributed either to Cyril of Jerusalem in the late 380s or to his successor, John, even later)—there was in Jerusalem a Rom 6 theology of baptism, as well as both pre- and

into a thousand different pieces? What holds these variegated theological reflections together? Second, how do we know which contextualized expressions are authentic and which have distorted the gospel?" Interactive, multicultural sharing is offered as a counterbalance to tendencies toward not only syncretism, but also ecclesial and natural individualism.

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postbaptismal anointings, the second of which has long been thought to be an innovation by Cyril (or John) himself! Of this Terian states:

The notion of baptism as participation in Christ's death . . . goes back to Paul (Rom 6:4-5). While this notion was commonplace in the early churches in the West, it was not as common in the churches of the East, where the font and the water were perceived more as a womb or an embryonic sack. . . . The Letter of Macarius shows that the two notions were part of the baptismal theology of the Jerusalem Church before Cyril, but that it remained for the latter to articulate them in his exceptional way (123).

That "Cyril" would later articulate a theology of the postbaptismal anointing as the "seal of the Holy Spirit" in his "exceptional way" would also not be a compelling argument, since the pneumatic emphasis on the postbaptismal anointing is more implicit than explicit in the *Letter*.

Further, the *Letter* indicates that the Church at Jerusalem knew not only Paschal (Easter) Baptism in the early fourth century, but also Pentecost and Epiphany (also called "Nativity") Baptism as well, thus giving us now one of the earliest pieces of liturgical evidence for Epiphany Baptism in the Christian East! It would be no surprise that in the time of Cyril (John), Paschal Baptism would have become dominant as it does in the late fourth century throughout both East and West.

For those of us in the field of early Christian liturgy, this letter thus represents a goldmine of new information. Terian's dating, of course, now puts it rather close to the earliest date often given to (at least the Greek original of) the *Canons of Hippolytus* from Egypt (330) and a few years before the *Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis* (ca. 350), thus expanding our potential comparative knowledge of Christian liturgy for the early to mid-fourth century in both Egypt and Jerusalem. Also Juliette Day, without knowledge of Terian's work, has recently suggested that some form of the so-called *Apostolic Tradition* may have also been influential (*The Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem: Fourth- and Fifth-Century Evidence from Palestine, Syria and Egypt* [Aldershot and Birmingham: Ashgate, 2007]). For example, the way of administering the postbaptismal chrismation described in *Mystagogical Catechesis* III.4 on the forehead, ears, nostrils, and breast seems to be paralleled by the statement in the *Letter of Macarius* that "since they [the Armenians] do not have sufficient oil of sealing, which is from the Apostles and is kept here, they do not anoint the infant's entire organs of sense" (105). Together with the *Canons of Hippolytus*, the *Letter of Macarius* would then be one of our first Orthodox witnesses to the postbaptismal anointing of the senses, known to us in its earliest forms only through Gnostic rituals.

With all of this Jerusalem liturgical evidence, even the question of the authorship of the *Mystagogical Catecheses* can be addressed anew. That is, against those scholars who have argued that the baptismal liturgy in the *Mystagogical Catecheses* is different from that in Cyril's *Baptismal Catecheses*, and so cannot be from the same author, the *Letter to Macarius* suggests that whatever differences there may be liturgically between them, the overall baptismal rite known to the author of the *Mystagogical Catecheses* was already in place much earlier. What may be different is the *theology* of various elements of the rite. There is, then,

no reason whatsoever to assume a date any later than the final years of Cyril's episcopate for this interpretation. This, it would seem, is an *interpretation* of a rite, perhaps at least as old as the 330s in Jerusalem, not the development of a *new* postbaptismal ritual *after* the time of Cyril of Jerusalem himself!

This is a work of first-rate scholarship and merits wide attention from scholars in various disciplines. I highly recommend it!

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MAXWELL E. JOHNSON

Tonstad, Sigve K. *Saving God's Reputation: The Theological Function of Pistis Iesou in the Cosmic Narratives of Revelation*. Library of New Testament Studies, no. 337. London: T. & T. Clark, 2006. xvi + 232 pp. Hardcover, \$168.00.

Sigve Tonstad is Associate Professor in the School of Medicine and Associate Professor of Theological Studies in the School of Religion at Loma Linda University. Judging from the eloquent prose in *Saving God's Reputation*, he could also be an associate professor of English or journalism. The book was a pleasure to read not only for the way in which he unpacks the essence of the book of Revelation, but also for the articulate way in which he expresses the ideas in beautiful prose. He clearly has a gift for writing.

Tonstad takes a unique approach in this study. Instead of beginning with a careful exegesis of his major passage, Rev 14:12, he first develops the narrative context by tracing the storyline of the book of Revelation to demonstrate that "the meaning of *pistis Iesou* in Revelation is best understood when Revelation is read as a theodicy of God's handling of the reality of evil from its inception to its demise" (3). He aims to show that "within this comprehensive narrative context, the term *pistis Iesou* expresses 'the faithfulness of Jesus' in the unveiling of the character of evil and his faithful disclosure of God's character" (ibid.). The key to understanding the call for *pistis Iesou* in 14:12 is understanding God's method of unmasking the deceiver in the drama who has challenged God's ways and authority. "Since the issue in the conflict revolves around the kind of person God is, the winner of the battle is not determined simply on the basis of power and might" (ibid.). God accomplishes his victory through the slaughtering of the Lamb. "This Lamb is the definitive manifestation of God's character in history. Moreover, the expression *pistis Iesou* (14:12) is inextricably linked to, and defined by, the slaughtered Lamb" (ibid.).

After outlining his method and attempting to clarify the literary parameters of Revelation in Part 1, Tonstad launches into the storyline of Revelation in Part 2. Again, he does this in a unique way, starting from the end of the storyline in Rev 20, where the great deceiving dragon, that ancient serpent called the devil and Satan, is first bound for a thousand years, then released for a brief period, in which he resumes his work of deception and destruction, then is destroyed in the lake of fire. The important question is raised as to why Satan is released from his prison to deceive the nations again. Some proposed answers are surveyed, but each is rejected. The answer will be developed after

no reason whatsoever to assume a date any later than the final years of Cyril's episcopate for this interpretation. This, it would seem, is an *interpretation* of a rite, perhaps at least as old as the 330s in Jerusalem, not the development of a *new* postbaptismal ritual *after* the time of Cyril of Jerusalem himself!

This is a work of first-rate scholarship and merits wide attention from scholars in various disciplines. I highly recommend it!

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the storyline has been more fully examined. But the importance of the figure of Satan in the plot of the storyline is clearly pointed out at this juncture.

Tonstad next moves upstream to Rev 12, exploring the setting and sequence of the storyline from this central perspective. Here he points to the connections between this passage and the language in Rev 20, as well as significant OT backgrounds in Gen 3 and Isa 14, which connect the storyline in Revelation with the storyline found elsewhere in Scripture. He concludes that the plot in Revelation “*is precisely the action of the plot that is developed and illuminated by the Old Testament passages in question*” (79, emphasis original).

Still working in Rev 12, Tonstad identifies the main characters in the storyline as Jesus and Satan, and he develops the plot more thoroughly, carefully comparing details of Rev 12 with Isa 14:12-20; Ezek 28:11-19; and Gen 3:1-6. He concludes that the storyline of Revelation, in the middle as at the ending, “gives ‘the ancient serpent’ a central role in the narrative” (107). That serpent, Satan, in the plot beginning on earth in Gen 3, attempts to cast doubt on God’s motives and impugn his character in order to supplant the government of God on earth as he attempted to do first in heaven, according to the poems in Isaiah and Ezekiel. All of this OT context is brought undiminished to the narrative plot of Revelation. It pertains to “what must take place.”

Tonstad then moves to the first half of Revelation and begins to explore the storyline from that perspective, considering the allusions to the fallen “Shining One” of Isa 14 and the chaos he produces on earth in Rev 8 and 9, and comparing with the orderly throne-room setting in heaven in Rev 4–5, highlighting the function of the slaughtered Lamb as he prepares to break the seals on the all-important scroll. The worthiness of the Lamb to open the scroll is pronounced in such a way as to suggest that “*absolutely no one else would have solved the cosmic conflict this way*” (141, emphasis original). “The all-absorbing issue facing the heavenly council in Revelation should also be construed in such a way that freedom is the issue on which the decision will turn. . . . The slaughtered Lamb that is worthy to take the scroll and break its seven seals embodies God’s self-giving love made manifest in the interest of preserving the freedom of the universe” (143).

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EDWIN REYNOLDS

Wright, Christopher J. H. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006. 582 pp. Paper, \$30.00.

Christopher Wright is the director for international ministries for Langham Partnership International, known in the U.S.A. as John Stott Ministries. Most of the material in this book appeared in basic form in previous works such as *God’s People in God’s Land: Family, Land, and Property in the Old Testament*; *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*; the trilogy *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament*; *Knowing the Holy Spirit Through the Old Testament*; *Knowing God the Father*

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Through the Old Testament, the commentaries on *Deuteronomy* and *Ezekiel*, and *Salvation Belongs to Our God: Celebrating the Bible's Central Story*.

The titles of Wright's publications quickly provide evidence that his interest and area of expertise is the OT. *The Mission of God* is no exception. The book is full of textual exegesis, with almost everything falling under God's mission, including ecology and AIDS. Unfortunately, previous works on mission theology in the OT are barely mentioned.

In this work, Wright proposes that mission is the basis for the entire Bible instead of just one of the themes in it. His goal is to read the Bible missiologically, with a missional hermeneutic. Although most of the book deals with the OT, the author tries to preserve the big picture by making frequent reference to the NT. He admits he reads the OT in the light of the NT, "in submission to the One who claimed to be its ultimate focus and fulfillment" (18). The author is trying to recreate the biblical worldview by emphasizing the great themes of biblical theology rather than simply offering support for what mission practitioners are doing in the field.

Wright divides the book into four major sections: "The Bible and Mission," "The God of Mission," "The People of Mission," and "The Arena of Mission." "The Bible and Mission" discusses the relationship between the concepts of mission, as understood today, and the Word of God. Wright reads the Bible missiologically in order to understand the Bible in light of God's mission rather than merely finding support for Christian mission and creating a biblical theology of mission. The result is a combination of the two, with an emphasis on creating a hermeneutic that will allow the mission of God to become the framework for reading the Scriptures. In his view, "mission is a major key that unlocks the whole grand narrative of the canon of Scripture" (17).

Analyzing the definitions of the terms related to mission, Wright proposes that the term *missional* gains precedence over *missiological* because the term *missionary* is associated with the colonial era. The whole Bible is considered a missional phenomenon, being the "product of and the witness to the ultimate mission of God" (22). Human mission derives from the mission of God. Because of the centrifugal meaning associated with the word *missionary*, Wright prefers not to use it in association with the OT. This is the main presupposition of the book: "Israel was not mandated by God to send missionaries to the nations" (24). The term *missional* allows the reader to pour his or her own meaning into the word and to avoid the centrifugal aspect. Thus Israel is no longer a missionary to the nations, but has only a missional role. By substituting for the term "missiological," Wright has managed to avoid looking for a missionary mandate for Israel to go to the nations.

When dealing with biblical hermeneutics, one has to check the assumptions and principles employed to approach the text. Unfortunately, Wright does not seem to pay much attention to his own assumptions. He assumes his reading of the NT is safe enough and satisfactory for understanding the OT. However, the results do not seem to agree. There is always the danger of distorting the text by imposing a certain framework on it. In Anthony Billington's words,

“The question is more what sort of *control* the framework exercises over the text, and whether the text is ever allowed to *critique* the framework at any point” (26). Wright is quick to admit that “in searching the Scriptures for a biblical foundation for mission, we are likely to find what we brought with us—our own conception of mission, now festooned with biblical luggage tags” (37).

Wright believes that the OT writers should be included in the “hermeneutic of coherence,” together with the NT authors. The only problem is the difference Wright makes between the messianic reading (up to Christ) and the missional reading (from Christ on) that separates the Scriptures and creates two different hermeneutics. The unity of the Bible is affected.

The author assumes that Israel as God’s chosen people represents the instrument for mission. Since Israel manifested a visible centripetal tendency with negative connotations, should this be considered God’s plan for them? Although Wright admits that Israel existed for the sake of the nations, he believes that the nations were supposed to simply be spectators to what God did in and for Israel and to the way Israel responded. Israel understood its role as a passive one, expecting the nations to come to Jerusalem if interested.

Surprising is the frequency with which Wright, although looking for a missiological hermeneutic, finds almost none in the OT. For example, he cites Paul in Acts 13:47 (quoting Isa 49:6) identifying with the missiological hermeneutic of the OT, but then adds “if ever there was one.” (67) Such surprising statements reveal the author’s presuppositions behind the conclusions: there is no missional hermeneutic in the OT, at least in the NT’s form.

The second section, “The God of Mission,” presents a God whose authority comes from his uniqueness. Israel’s monotheistic religion, based on this uniqueness, describes God as gracious and just toward both Israel and the nations. God is the author of mission, and people just share in his mission: “Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission—God’s mission” (62). However, the author claims that YHWH intervenes in the life and fortunes of pagan nations and that he is able to do it without Israel’s help, thus justifying his centripetal view of mission (85). Any “exception” (i.e., Isa 66:19) is dismissed as an eschatological expectation (90-92).

Monotheism is clearly linked to mission. Wright builds a strong case against the idols as being “nothing” compared with the real God, but he also stresses that worshiping such “nothings” robs the true God of his glory. Worship becomes the corollary of mission in both the OT and the NT. “So there is a close link between the monotheistic dynamic of Israel’s faith and the glorious richness of Israel’s worship. . . . And this, in a nutshell, is a missional perspective, even though there is no centrifugal missional mandate” (132). Wright’s presuppositions against centrifugal mission surface again even when the topic does not call for such a qualification.

In the third section, the author focuses on the people of mission. His view of such people is most interesting, starting only with Abraham. God’s covenant with Abraham is for him “the single most important biblical tradition

within a biblical theology of mission and a missional hermeneutic of the Bible.” However, a careful reading of Genesis reveals that when it comes to God’s mission in which humans take part, the covenant at the gates of Eden (Gen 3:15) stands out as pivotal. Wright describes the arch that covers the time span from Gen 12 to Rev 22. However, he misses an important segment that is key to understanding mission in the rest of the Scriptures: Gen 1–11.

God’s mission to restore a sinful earth does not begin with Abraham. Paul speaks of the plan made before time. Noah already had a mission for the nations, while Abraham’s choice by God was clearly not an afterthought or a solution to the crisis of sin. Noah, Abraham, Israel, and the church are only chapters in God’s mission. In order to preserve Abraham’s role as the founder of mission, Wright suggests that Gen 10:31, which mentions languages, indicates that the next chapter, 11:1, “is not chronologically sequential” (196, n. 6).

Wright’s insistence on the gathering of the nations at Jerusalem seems to be based on a dispensationalist reading and on the concept that at the end Jerusalem and the temple will be rebuilt and the nations will gather there. The limitations that he imposes on the reading of the OT shape the results of the study from the beginning. He notes: “Our focus here is not on all texts that refer in any way to YHWH and the nations but on those that articulate some element of universality, either directly or implicitly echoing the Abraham promise” (223). Such limitations restrict God to only one method of dealing with the nations, blessing them through Israel. For Wright, Israel’s story is not about deliverance, but about blessing, and so he misses the importance of curses in Genesis and Deuteronomy.

The author seems to be impressed by the volume that Israel’s history covers in the OT. However, Israel’s story only proves what sinful humans can do to God’s mission: distort it. The exegesis of some passages in the Psalms and Prophets reveals God’s ideal for humanity, not only for Israel. Wright admits the psalmist talks about realized eschatology, not only the future one. What if it was not eschatology at all, but simply Israel’s present understanding? The identity of Israel is merged with that of Egypt and Assyria as in Isa 19:24–25, where these nations are described as a blessing on the earth, like Israel. Wright shows that this is one of the missiologically most significant texts in the OT and recognizes the inherent universality that is programmed into the genes of Israel (236). Ethnicity is not the issue because these nations are interrelated from Noah.

Although Wright recognizes the balance between particularity and universality in the OT (as in Gen 12 and Exod 19), he does not see the same balance in the centrifugal-centripetal model. Abraham is seen as the only recipient of blessing, and the nations have to come to him if they want to be blessed. It is not difficult to see why the author places such an important role on ethics and the value of it for today’s mission. He quotes Deut 4:6–8 and Isa 51:4, showing that the nations are watching Israel, waiting for the “light” to shine on them.

In Wright’s understanding, the Exodus is a model for God’s redemption. However, he misses the initial perspective found at the beginning of Genesis.

If the Exodus becomes the “prime lens through which we see the biblical mission of God” (275), he also misses the centrifugal aspect of the Exodus. Wright emphasizes that for him, “the totality of God’s redemption . . . includes all that God has done—from the exodus to the cross” (279). The question remains: were there any redemptive acts before the Exodus? If the Exodus is God’s model of redemption, the jubilee is presented as God’s model of restoration. Wright links land and covenant and declares that “divine *judgment* eventually meant expulsion from the land, until the *restored relationship* was symbolized in the return to the land” (292). He shows that the jubilee had two thrusts: release/liberty, and return/restoration (Lev 25:10).

The author is supporting the unity of the Testaments when asking why Christians think they are absolved of the OT commands. The issue is vital and pointed. However, his answer lacks consistency. Wright now declares that the OT type of mission is not negated by the NT, but when addressing the clean/unclean food issue he states that Jesus “turned the clean-unclean distinction inside out. . . . He declared forgiveness to people on His own authority, completely bypassing the normal route for such benefit, namely, the official sacrificial cult at the temple” (310). For Wright, the distinction between clean and unclean animals and food was only a symbol of the national distinction between OT Israel and the nations.

God’s covenant with Israel is presented as one of the core themes of OT theology and of Israel’s self-understanding. The sequence of covenants offers the best way to read the OT: “This grand narrative embodied Israel’s coherent worldview, a worldview that included their own sense of election, identity and role in the midst of the nations” (325). However, Wright begins the chain of covenants with Noah (“the first explicit reference to covenant-making in the biblical text”) because of the universality in the Noachic covenant that includes humans and all creation. Again, he misses the covenant in Gen 3:15, believing that the Sinai covenant and God’s covenant with David are practically the Abrahamic covenant adapted to new circumstances.

Wright considers the covenants in the OT as eschatological and developing in a trajectory that “leads to the missionally charged language of fulfillment in the NT.” He seems surprised that Jesus and Paul do not use the term “covenant” frequently, but he notices that they took it for granted “as the baseline for their thinking” (351). The author also believes that the story and worldview of Israel should be ours today. Because of this eschatological view, even the Noachic covenant is seen as “harnessed to the certainty of God’s promise of future blessing for his people.” Concluding his study of the covenants, he finds that “The mission of God is as integral to the sequence of the covenants as they are to the overarching grand narrative of the whole Bible” (356).

God’s main purpose, acknowledges Wright, is “the rolling back of the curse.” He indicates that Lev 26 is full of echoes of the Genesis portrait of creation. The tabernacle symbolically covered God’s presence with humans from the gates of the Garden to the gates of the New Jerusalem. At the same time, the sacrificial system and Levitical ritual reflect the fundamental missional orientation of Israel (and also of God).

Wright introduces ethics as people's response to God's challenge, "the mid-term between election and mission, as the purpose of the former and the basis for the latter." Election is supposed to produce a people committed to ethically reflecting God's character. Election implies ethics, not as an end in itself, but "a means to a greater end of the ingathering of the nations." The author's emphasis on ethics as mission is understandable in the light of his centripetal view of mission in the OT. He reduces the mission of Israel "to live as God's people in God's land for God's glory" (394).

The last section of the book deals with the arena in which God's mission takes place. Wright focuses on the land received by Israel and the responsibilities to take care of it as a testimony for the surrounding nations. Care for the earth constitutes one aspect of mission needed today, and the author emphasizes that glory should be given to God by our attitude toward creation. The creation was initially declared good, and God wants also to redeem and restore it. Anyone who loves God and wants to be obedient to him will manifest care for the earth. Such attitudes also reflect our priestly and kingly roles given at creation.

The author analyzes the human being as reflected in the Scriptures and why the good news has to be carried to all who share God's image without regard to ethnicity: "To be human is to have the capacity of being addressed by the living Creator God" (422). Wisdom has been given to all people, not only to Israel or the church. As a bridge and a missionary tool, "wisdom is remarkably open and affirming." Special attention is given to the church's mission to HIV/AIDS-affected people, based on the teachings in the OT, since "God's mission is the eradication of everything that attacks every dimension of human life" (439).

At the end of the book, the author reserves room to discuss the nations. He notices that the nations are always present in the biblical story, sometimes being the focus of God's attention, other times lingering in the background. However, he believes that the nations appear only after the flood. Wright takes the book of Jonah as an example of God extending his forgiveness and mercy to the nations. The emphasis is on God, the greatest missionary, and on his character. He concludes that "God's mission is to bless all the nations of the earth. . . . There is no favoritism in God's dealings with Israel and the nations" (462).

It is interesting to note that the author applies the covenant to the nations as a two-way relationship: you are mine, I am your God. The other nations simply belong to God, but they do not know God. There is no covenant reciprocity involved. But how did the magi find out about Messiah? Did they know God? What about Melchizedek? What about Job and his friends? Wright does not answer such questions. Instead, he claims that God did not manifest his wrath on Israel because the nations watched and God wanted to preserve his reputation. This raises more questions about God and his character. Is God sweeping the dirt under the rug? Has Israel not already shamed God by what they have done? Are not the nations aware of Israel's misdeeds? Would God present such an unbalanced picture of himself? Should we read the

OT with cheap-grace lenses? Wright acknowledges that what the prophets said about God's name being dishonored in front of the nations and their mocking of him is a problem. However, the prophets were part of Israel. The punishment of Israel was a clear demonstration that God is not like other gods who can be manipulated by people. God is in charge.

The author expects both Israel and the nations to worship and obey YHWH as a response to his blessings. However, Israel's praises for blessing had a missional edge. It is impossible not to see that missional praises imply centrifugal mission. Wright's statement that Israel's mission was only centripetal demands further scrutiny. He prefers to think that the way Israel is supposed to fulfill its duty "remains a mystery" (478). He believes that, in the end, the nations will share Israel's identity, while ethnic and geographic boundaries will be removed. The name "Israel" will be redefined and people will belong to YHWH only if they join Israel.

Comparing Israel's mission to the nations with the church's mission, Wright concludes that "the centrifugal dynamic of the early Christian missionary movement . . . was indeed something remarkably new in practice if not in concept. . . . It seems to me that there is no clear mandate in God's revelation to Israel over the centuries for them to undertake 'missions,' in our sense of the word, to the nations" (502-503). Any centrifugal mission instance in the OT is thus declared "eschatological." For Wright, Israel was simply supposed to be, not to go anywhere.

In spite of the presuppositions with which Wright approaches the study of mission in the OT, *The Mission of God* stands as one of the best and most detailed works on the topic. It offers a synchronic view of the OT, as well as a diachronic examination. The book might not be an easy read for laypeople, but it is highly recommended for scholars and seminary students, as well as for those who would like to do an in-depth study of mission in the OT. Certainly, as well, field missionaries will discover a way to read and interpret the Bible in order to fully justify their missionary mandate.

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