ANDREWS UNIVERSITY SEMINARY STUDIES

Volume 53 Autumn 2015 Number 2

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BOOK REVIEWS

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The articles in this journal are indexed, abstracted, or listed in: *Elenchus of Biblica: Internationale Zeitschriftenschau für Bibelwissenschaft und Grenzgebiete; New Testament Abstracts; Index Theologicus/Zeitschrifteninhaltsdienst Theologie; Old Testament Abstracts; Orientalistische Literaturzeitung; Religion Index One, Periodicals; Religious and Theological Abstracts; Seventh-day Adventist Periodical Index; Theologische Zeitschrift; Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.*

 ISSN 0003-2980

Andrews University Seminary Studies, Vol. 53, No. 2, 253-277.

REVISITING GENESIS 5 AND 11: A CLOSER LOOK AT THE CHRONOGENEALOGIES

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The genealogies of Gen 5 and 11 are unique in the Scripture record. Gerhard Hasel's term *chronogenealogy* captures a major aspect of that uniqueness: they are genealogies with a major chronological component.[1] By including ages at the birth of each named son, the number of years each individual lived after begetting that son, and the stated or implied total years of life for each individual, the two genealogies appear to provide a means by which to calculate the approximate number of years from Adam to Abraham.[2] For

[1]Gerhard F. Hasel, "Genesis 5 and 11: Chronogenealogies in the Biblical History of Beginnings," *Origins* 7.1 (1980): 23–37; "The Meaning of the Chronogenealogies of Genesis 5 and 11," *Origins* 7.2 (1980): 53–70. Hasel's term seems to have been adopted only by those inclined to accept a prima facie chronological intent of the two genealogies. See, for example, Jonathan Sarfati, "Biblical Chronogenealogies," *TJ* 17.3 (2003): 14-18; Travis R. Freeman, "The Genesis 5 and 11 Fluidity Question," *TJ* 19.2 (2005): 83–90. Chronological data is occasionally found in other genealogical material (Ex 6:16, 18, 20; 1 Chron 2:21); the significance of these 'rarities' will be explored at a later point in this paper.

[2]Bishop Ussher famously did just that—with injudicious precision!—in the mid-seventeenth century. But it is a pity that his name alone is so often cited in this respect, with the implication that using the chronological details of Gen 5 and 11 to estimate time since creation is to follow in his steps. Ussher was just one of very many in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who used biblical chronology to estimate (Luther/Calvin, et al.) or calculate (Ussher/Lightfoot) the earth's age (Davis A. Young and Ralph F. Stearley, "The Age of the Earth Through the Seventeenth Century," *The Bible, Rocks, and Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 27–46). Estimates as to the age of the earth based upon biblical data are in no sense dependent upon Ussher's (or Lightfoot's) incautiously precise date of creation. A precise dating is not possible, even if one accepts the chronological intent of the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies and the integrity of the numerical data. Rounding off has certainly occurred: ages are given only in whole years, never in months (in contrast with, for example, David's reign of seven years and six months over Judah (2 Sam 5:5, cf. 1 Ki 2:11). Rounding may sometimes have occurred to the closest unit of 5 years, but it was certainly not uniformly the case (e.g. Seth died at age 912, Jared at 962, Methuselah at 969, Lamech at 777). Walter Makous, in his statistical analysis of the genealogical numbers, notes that while rounding contributes little to the error variance of the totals, "it does prevent one from reconciling all the data on biblical chronologies exactly" ("Biblical Longevities: Empirical Data or Fabricated Numbers?" *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 63.2 [2011]: 123). Attempts at finding mathematical patterns (such as a sexagesimal system) in the numbers have engaged the minds of some scholars (see, for example, R. K. Harrison, "From Adam to Noah: A Reconsideration of the Antediluvian Patriarchs'

many scholars, however, a number of factors combine to suggest caution in using the numerical data in these genealogies to build a chronology: the numbers evidence a degree of schematization; the lifespans seem mythical in their inordinate length; the genealogies belong to a period of primeval history; and, not least of all, the disharmony between the implied length of that era and the evidence of archaeological and secular historical records suggest that the genealogies are incomplete.

The assumption that there are gaps in the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies is now almost de rigueur in scholarly discussions on the subject. The demonstrable existence of gaps in a number of other biblical genealogies is deemed sufficient evidence that gaps are also possible in the Genesis genealogies; the evidence of long ages in the geologic and secular historical records mandates, for many, that gaps are a certainty. The fact that the genealogies contain a tight interweaving of numerical data that, prima facie, mitigates against the possibility of generational gaps is not allowed to disturb this received view. Nevertheless, a few voices have lodged protest against the too-easy disregard of the implications of the numerical data of Gen 5 and 11.

Hasel's is among the most significant of these voices. By carefully comparing the extant OT texts (the Masoretic, LXX, and Samaritan Pentateuch), Hasel has shown that the Samaritan text and particularly the LXX do indeed give evidence of purposeful systematization, but that the systematization in those texts stands in stark contrast to the *irregularity* of the Masoretic text.[3] His emphasis on the uniqueness of the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies, reflected in his term "chronogenealogy," has not always been given the weight it deserves.[4] In light of their uniqueness, it is methodologically

Ages," *JETS* 37.2 [1994]: 164–168; L. M. Abrami, "The Ages of the Personalities in Genesis," *JBQ* 39.4 [2011]. Others have found such attempts unconvincing (see the discussion in Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC 1 [Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1987], 133-134). See also the discussion in Hasel, who concludes that such endeavors do at least take the numbers seriously rather than simply dismiss them as meaningless ("Meaning of the Chronogenealogies," 65).

[3]Hasel, "Genesis 5 and 11," 28–33. "Irregularity," he states, "is the mark of the Hebrew version" (33). Even accepting Hasel's arguments on this point, and accepting also Makous' statistical analysis (see previous footnote), it is still possible to harbor a suspicion that the numbers in the Hebrew version are, in at least some cases, contrived, throwing doubt on the remainder. The figure of 777 years for Lamech's life seems hard to accept as authentic. But such an attitude is possible only if one believes that (1) the special numbers found throughout the Bible, numbers such as 7 and 40, have their genesis in human contrivance rather than in the purposes and providence of God; (2) God has nothing to do with numbers and pattern and their meaning; and (3) God does not providentially determine a person's lifespan. These and other aspects of schematization are treated in a forthcoming article by the present author.

[4]Ibid., 25; Hasel, "Meaning of the Chronogenealogies," 53, 59, 62. Hasel's emphasis on the uniqueness of the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies was an important contribution to the discussion. Here, I wish to build on that contribution by emphasizing again that uniqueness and by demonstrating that there are several other

unacceptable to suggest that these genealogies may well have gaps on the simple basis that some other biblical genealogies undeniably do. Hasel also argued on lexical grounds that the begetting in the chronogenealogies cannot refer to anything other than direct father–son relationships.[5]

Freeman's is another voice protesting the common scholarly dismissal of the chronological integrity of the genealogies. He has outlined the major arguments on both sides of the question.[6] His review leads to the observation that the 'gaps' theory has been countered from both a negative and a positive perspective. The first approach involves a point-by-point rebuttal of the major tenets upon which the 'gaps' theory is built;[7] the second insists upon the recognition that there are *genres* of genealogies, and that to extrapolate the principle of gaps from one genre (such as Matthew 1 or Ezra 7) to the quite different genre of Gen 5 and 11 is to commit a fundamental error.

Clearly, there has already been a good deal of scholarly endeavor that provides support for the 'no gaps' view. Yet much more can be said on this subject. There is in the Genesis material itself much positive evidence that argues for a chronological intention in the genealogies. Specifically, the biblical material suggests that (1) the uniquely overwhelming presence of the numbers in Gen 5 and 11 determines the special function of those genealogies; (2) the generations are contiguous; (3) the numbers *are intended* to be totaled; (4) the genealogies present an individual chronology for each generation, demonstrating an inherent chronological system in the genealogies; (5) the book of Genesis *begins* with a chronology that, furthermore, is described as a genealogy (Heb. *toledoth*), anticipating the pervasive chronological-genealogical emphasis throughout the entire book; (6) there exists a 'paragenealogy' that embraces the entire period from Adam to Joshua and which, consequently, suggests a unity of chronological intent in both genealogy and narrative; and (7) exegetical links further establish an intimate thematic and chronological unity between the genealogies and the ensuing narratives, such that to accept

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features of these two genealogies that serve to highlight their relevance to matters of biblical chronology.

[5]Note Hasel's study of the Hebrew verb *yalad* (to give birth/beget) in "Meaning of the Chronogenealogies," 67. It is used only in the causative Hiphil form in Gen 5 and 11. Hasel notes that in all other uses of the verb in this form in Genesis and elsewhere, it always refers to direct biological succession.

[6]Freeman, "A New Look at the Genesis 5 and 11 Fluidity Problem," *AUSS* 42.2 (2004): 259–286.

[7]These tenets are (1) the similarity and order of the names in Cain's genealogy (Gen 4) and the Gen 5 genealogy indicate a common source which underwent fluidity during transmission; (2) "the symmetrical ten-generation form of the text and the prominence of the seventh position indicate schematization"; (3) a no-gap reading of the text results in an unbelievable overlap of the patriarchs' lives; (4) the two genealogies present family lines, not immediate descendants; (5) "extrabiblical evidence demonstrates that humankind originated earlier than a no-gap reading of Gen 5 and 11 will allow" (ibid., 269–283).

the chronological integrity of one and not the other seems arbitrary and inconsistent. These additional evidences will here be explored.

The Importance of the Numerical Data in Genesis 5 and 11

In referring to the "secondary character" of any numbers that might be found in genealogical lists, Oswalt has a point.[8] One may cite 1 Chron 2:21, which notes that Hezron was sixty years old when he married the daughter of Machir. Whatever the purpose of this somewhat incidental comment, it is certainly secondary to the purpose of the genealogy as a whole.[9] But Oswalt surely errs in not emphasizing that, outside of Gen 5 and 11, chronological data in genealogies is extremely rare. The detailed and extensive genealogies of the first nine chapters of 1 Chronicles contain no chronological data except that of Hezron's age at marriage and items relating to the length of David's reign. Even the latter should not be included as exceptions since, in Oswalt's own schema, "numbers found in connection with royal annals or chronicles" constitute a separate class of chronological data.[10] In other words, the Davidic numbers in 1 Chronicles have been imported from an existing chronological system—the royal annals or chronicles; they are not a new item belonging intrinsically to the chronicler's genealogy (cf. 2 Sam 5:5). A further apparent exception is found in Exodus 6:16, 18, 20, where the lifespans of Levi, Kohath, and Amram are recorded. But, as will be shown below, there are reasons to view this pericope as belonging to a great, overarching chronological genealogy—a *paragenealogy*—that extends from Adam to Joshua and constitutes an extension of the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies.[11]

[8]J. N. Oswalt, "Chronology of the OT," *ISBE*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 1:674.

[9]Hezron's "sixty years" is completely disconnected from any other chronological data. Since, therefore, it cannot be part of a chronology, if it has any purpose at all that purpose must be sought in the thematic material of the narrative.

[10]Oswalt, 674. Oswalt distinguishes three classes of chronological material in the Scriptures: genealogies, royal annals or chronicles, and random chronological statements" such as those found in Gen 15:13 and 1 Kgs 6:1.

[11]The constraints of space do not allow a detailed elucidation of what I here term a "paragenealogy." I expand on this in considerable detail in a forthcoming article. In brief, the generations from Adam through Joshua, as recorded in both genealogy and narrative, share a common feature that is essentially unique to those generations. With the sole exception of Jehoiada—a distant, lonely, statistical outlier (2 Chron 24:15)—only in these generations does Scripture record age of death. In every case the individuals are centenarians. The detail is supplied for a representative from every recorded generation. For the most part, the age data is recorded for just one individual per generation (the few exceptions are explainable), thus tracing a single line in the fashion of a linear genealogy. This surprising selectivity is strikingly observed in the genealogy of Levi, recorded in Ex 6:14–25. Of the forty names found in that pericope, age at death is given for just three, these three being the only direct ancestors listed between Moses and Jacob. The line from Adam through Seth through Abraham

In respect to numerical content, the uniqueness of Gen 5 and 11 needs to be acknowledged. It makes no sense to speak in general terms of sporadic chronological data in the various biblical genealogies and then to take broad conclusions supposedly gleaned from these and apply them to the material of Gen 5 and 11. As far as chronological data in genealogies goes, for all intents and purposes Gen 5 and 11 is the example. It is a suis generis. The proper understanding of the purpose of the numerical data in these two chapters must therefore arise primarily from a consideration of the material in situ rather than from the imposition of principles gleaned from markedly dissimilar genealogies.

In the genealogies of Gen 5 and 11, then, the numerical data dominates. This is particularly the case in the first genealogy, that of Adam to Noah. How striking the contrast with what we find in 1 Chronicles: "Adam, Seth, Enosh, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared . . ." (1 Chron 1:1–2).[12] Admittedly, the Chronicles genealogy, as with most others, is not always that terse: "Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. Mizraim begot Ludim," etc. (vv. 10–11). The genealogies of Jesus demonstrate similar features. There is simple recitation of names: Jesus was "the son of Joseph, the son of Heli . . . the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God" (Lk 3:23, 38). Matthew's descending genealogy reverses the direction: "Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers" (Matt 1:2). But as with 1 Chronicles, there is room for detail when desired: "Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah" (vv. 5–6).

Most of the examples just cited are vertical (or linear) genealogies, usually listing just one name for each generation. Horizontal (or segmented/branching) genealogies list siblings. Often, horizontal and vertical forms are mixed: "Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The sons of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras" (1 Chron 1:3-5). The extra detail, observable in both types of

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through Jacob is continued through Jacob's son Levi. From Moses the 'torch' passes to Joshua. He is not a biological descendant of Moses, but he is his spiritual successor in the following generation (cf. Josh 14:7 and Ex 7:7) and, importantly, also of the godly line of Israel. With Joshua, the age data—and the paragenealogy—ends. The existence of such a paragenealogy bears witness to both a unity and a shared chronological integrity of the Genesis chronogenealogical and narrative material. That the paragenealogy should finish with Joshua may be explainable by typology. Joshua's lifework was to bring Israel into Canaan. In this (as his name suggests), he is a type of Christ, the Savior of His people and the One who will bring them into Paradise. Adam, the first whose age is recorded in Scripture, is the one who (unwittingly) led the human race out of Paradise. Typologically, God's purpose in establishing a godly line—a people who call on the name of the Lord (Gen 4:26)—reaches its resolution when His people are brought into the promised land.

[12]All biblical quotations are from *The Holy Bible: Revised Authorised Version* (London: Samuel Bagster, 1982).

genealogy, can be extensive: "Now these were the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel: Bela the son of Beor, and the name of his city was Dinhabah. And when Bela died, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his place. When Jobab died, Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his place" (1 Chron 1:43–45). In some cases, the non-genealogical details can be so extensive as to make the form of the genealogy all but unrecognizable, as with the first part of the "genealogy" of Esau (Gen 36:1–8).

What is striking about these extra details is that details of a chronological nature are almost entirely absent.[13] There is no concern to state how old an individual was at his marriage,[14] at the birth of a son, or at his death, nor how long he stayed in one place or another. What dominates in all these genealogies are names and places. In Gen 5 and 11 it is conspicuously not so. Numbers—*ages*—dominate: "Seth lived one hundred and five years, and begot Enosh. After he begot Enosh, Seth lived eight hundred and seven years, and begot sons and daughters. So all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died" (Gen 5:6–8). Two names; three numbers. Whatever one tries to make of these details—whether they are factually correct, whether there are gaps, whether the data is schematized—there is no escaping the dominating presence of the numbers.

When considering *other* genealogies, Oswalt's claim is almost self-evident: "the primary function of genealogy in the Near East has always been to establish a person's or family's identity. With regard to this purpose chronology has no importance." But the suggestion that such may be the case with the genealogies of Gen 5 and 11 would, in the light of the above observations, be theologically inadequate. Oswalt does *not* directly attempt to make that case; but it is unfortunate that he so soon after asserts that chronological references in genealogies "when they occur . . . are not totaled or otherwise used for establishing chronological relationships."[15] To what can he be referring apart from the patriarchal genealogies of Gen 5 and 11? Random chronological data appear here and there in genealogical (and non-genealogical) texts, but by their very nature of being random they do not exist in connection with other such data, much less in a list; there is therefore nothing to be totaled.[16] Among the genealogies, total-ability exists only in the

[13]With very rare exceptions; see n. 1, above.

[14]Hezron's age at his remarriage, is the sole exception (1 Chron 2:21; see n. 9, above).

[15]Oswalt, 674.

[16]"Random" chronological statements is Oswalt's term (see n. 10, above). It embraces every chronological statement that cannot be included in his other two categories, genealogy and royal annals. As examples, he cites Gen 15:13 and 1 Kgs 6:1. Hasel similarly categorizes these texts using exactly the same phrase ("Meaning of the Chronogenealogies," 54). But a chronological item such as the note that Naomi's family dwelt ten years in Moab (Ruth 1:4) differs fundamentally from these two examples in that it is not connected with any other chronological referent. For this

two chronogenealogies.[17] However secondary the chronological details may be in other genealogies, it does not appear to be the case with those of Gen 5 and 11.

If, then, the chronological details of the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies are not secondary, are they primary? In Scripture, genealogies functioned to indicate biological succession, title to land, eligibility for Levitical or Aaronic privileges, royal succession,[18] tribal/family membership, racial purity, and more.[19] Chronological concerns are plainly irrelevant to all of these; but did any of these functions pertain to the chronogenealogies? We can immediately eliminate three from the foregoing list: title to land, priestly privileges, and royal succession. The last two—tribal/family membership and racial purity—are likewise irrelevant to at least the first chronogenealogy. Harrison notes that the emphasis on families and tribes for genealogies was important for organizational purposes during the period of the wilderness wanderings;[20] that such arrangements were of no relevance to the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies does not need to be argued. Similarly, racial purity, for the Israelites, was a post-Abrahamic phenomenon. There is little biblical evidence of racial concepts prior to Abraham; indeed, just several generations before his, the world was one language and one speech (Gen 11:1, cf. 10:24f and 11:8f, 13–16). It is possible to argue that the genealogy of Gen 11 might have some connection with the Jewish interest in racial purity, because it traces the line back to Shem. But such an argument would founder on the fact that all of the non-Abrahamic Semites could do likewise.

The remaining function mentioned by Harrison is that of biological succession. But this function should not be regarded in the same light as the others in Harrison's list. It is a generic function. Every genealogy is based upon biological succession, as is clear from Harrison's opening definition of the term: a genealogy is "a record or catalog of an individual's descent from ancestors according to generations."[21] The various *special* functions that might

type of chronological data, I prefer the term "isolated," constituting a fourth category.

[17]In this paper, the term 'chronogenealogy' is used to distinguish the genealogies of Gen 5 and 11 from the several other genealogies that occur in the book of Genesis.

[18]In including royal succession in this list, Harrison seems to take a different path from Oswalt, who places royal annals in a category separate from genealogy (see n. 10, above). Royal annals do display genealogical elements, but the genealogical aspect is not intrinsic to these annals, since succession is not necessarily biological (as when a dynasty change occurs) nor is it necessarily unidirectional (e.g. 2 Kgs 23:31, 34; 24:17). In this sense, Oswalt's distinction is to be preferred and is, in fact, consistent with Harrison's own definition of a genealogy (see below, n. 21).

[19]R. K. Harrison, "Genealogy," *ISBE* 2:425. Harrison mentions additional functions that pertained to minor genealogical records: tracing cultural or technological events (the line of Cain; Gen 4:17–22) and contrasting the purity of one line with another (Seth, as against Cain; Gen 4:25ff).

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid., 424. Compare: "Genealogies are oral or written lists of *kinship*

be accorded a genealogy, such as the others in Harrison's list, arise from the purposeful application of that recorded succession to the requirements and circumstances of the time. Given the early period to which the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies apply, some might find merit in assigning to them no special function beyond this 'generic function' of biological succession.[22] But the overwhelming presence of the numerical data does not permit this. Is it really possible to perceive particular, categorized functions for so many of the other genealogies—some of which display scant overt clues as to their purpose—yet deny the same to two genealogies that evidence such a startling uniqueness and which seem almost overburdened by very particular extraneous details attached, as they are, to every generation?

The genealogies of Gen 5 and 11 are, then, unique, and their uniqueness is expressed in an overt concern with numbers.[23] Their *special function* is to be defined from that uniqueness. The point may be pressed. Other genealogies, as has been seen, often include extra details not of a strictly genealogical nature. These extra details are haphazard, various, and non-standardized. That may at times make it a little difficult to determine the precise purpose of the genealogy to which they are attached. But in the case of the chronogenealogies, the extraneous details are regular, uniform, and standardized. The repetitive, uniform, formulaic nature of this extra data powerfully focuses attention on its essential character: we are looking at ages and lifespans. More than that, it reinforces the message that the numerical data is meant to be noticed. It is significant, also, that almost no *other* extraneous details are recorded.[24] This

relationships between persons or groups" (J. W. Wright, "Genealogies," *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003], 346; emphasis mine).

[22]"The main object of the genealogies in Gn. 5 and 11 is apparently not so much to provide a full chronology as to supply a link from earliest man to the great crisis of the Flood and then from the Flood down through the line of Shem to Abraham, forefather of the Hebrew nation. The abbreviation of a genealogy by omission does not affect its value ideologically as a link." (K. A. Kitchen and T. C. Mitchell, "Chronology of the Old Testament," *NBD*, [Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1996] 187); "All he [the narrator of Genesis 11] was concerned about was tracing the line of election from Shem to Abram, pointing out that man continued to be fruitful and that his lifespan was somewhat curtailed, as 6:3 predicted" (Wenham, *Genesis* 1–15, 253).

[23]Richard M. Davidson likewise affirms these genealogies as unique, both when compared with other biblical genealogies and with non-biblical ANE genealogies ("Does Genesis really teach a recent, literal, seven-day Creation week and a global flood?" *Dialogue* 22.2–3 [2010]: 6). For comparison with the latter, Davidson (8 n. 6) refers the reader to Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 and their Alleged Babylonian Background," *AUSS* 16.2 (1978): 361–374.

[24]The exceptions are (1) Seth's being named by his father and being in the image of his father (Gen 5:2), (2) Enoch walking with God (Gen 5:24), and (3) the reason why Lamech named his son Noah (Gen 5:29). If this genealogy is taken to be chronological in its special function, all three extraneous details are closely related to this function. The first provides a double evidence that immediate parentage is in

paring of additional detail, with the exception of numerical data, allows the numerical data to take center stage.[25] It does not seem to be claiming too much to insist that the special purpose of the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies is somehow connected with the numbers. The evidence can admit no less.[26]

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view. (See main text, below, for further discussion on this point.) Enoch's walking with God seems to be connected with his being taken by God at an age hundreds of years younger than others in the genealogy. Lamech's naming of his son, and the comment on the meaning of the name, provide advance warning of the coming event that will interrupt the genealogy; furthermore, the fact that Noah was named by Lamech again functions as one of the several solid evidences that the generations in this genealogy are of immediate parentage. The extraneous details found in other genealogies are much more frequent and wide-ranging. They include places (Gen 4:16ff; 10:10–12; 25:16; 36:5, 20ff; 1 Chron 5:11), marriage (Gen 4:19; 1 Chron 1:32; 2:19, 21, 24, 26), occupations (Gen 4: 20–22; 1 Chron 2:55; 4:14, 23; 6:10), sins (Gen 4:23; 1 Chron 5:1, 25), abilities (Gen 10:8ff; 1 Chron 5:18), historical events (Gen 10:25; 1 Chron 4:21; 5:20–22, 25ff), possessions (Gen 36:7; 1 Chron 2:34), position/rank (Gen 36:15ff; 1 Chron 5:15), sisters (1 Chron 1:39; 2:16), childlessness/no sons (1 Chron 2:32, 34), fecundity (1 Chron 4:27); speeches (Gen 4:23ff; 1 Chron 4:9f), battles (1 Chron 4:41–43; 5:19ff), non-chronological numbers (1 Chron 4:27; 7:2, 4, 7, 9, 11), and tragedy (1 Chron 7:21–23). Many more examples could be added. In many of these groups of texts, the genealogy and narrative are so interwoven that the two genres become almost indistinguishable. Again, this is never the case in the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies; they are focused on names and ages.

[25]Wenham suggests that the "sparseness" of the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies invites comparison with the genealogies of Gen 25:12–18 and 36:1-8 [9–43], "other genealogies opening with 'This is the family history of' and characterized by telegraphic brevity of narrative" (*Genesis 1–15*, 248). In fact, the comparison yields contrast more than similarity. The genealogy of Ishmael (25:12-18) is certainly brief, comprising just two generations, Ishmael and his twelve sons. But it is hardly sparse in narrative comment: it provides details regarding the circumstances of Ishmael's birth, the number of Ishmael's children and the fact that they were princes, the relationship between their names and the names of their towns and settlements, the extent of their territory, and details of Ishmael's death. The genealogy of Esau (Gen 36:1–8) seems likewise burdened with detail when compared with the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies: we learn from where Esau took his wives, including their names and whose daughters they were; we read of Esau's possessions, where he had gained them, where he took them, and (in some detail) why; we are told where he subsequently dwelt and of his alternative name. All in just eight verses. Again, with the exception of Ishmael's age at death, chronological details are absent from these genealogies.

[26]It can, however, admit more. There is no reason why a genealogy may not have more than one special purpose. In the case of Gen 5 and 11, one purpose is apparently to trace the godly line (cf. Gen 4:26). That purpose is consistent with chronological concerns, as is obvious from the richness of the chronological data that accompanies the narratives that trace the godly line of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

The Purpose of the Numerical Data of Genesis 5 and 11: Chronology?

Nevertheless, there is a leap involved in claiming a chronology simply because of the presence of chronological details. Recall Hezron's marriage at age 60 (1 Chron 2:21): it is certainly a chronological detail, but it has no connection with any chronology. By itself, chronological detail does not a chronology make. Similarly, the three items of chronological detail in Exodus Six—the ages of Levi, Kohath, and Amram—do not establish a chronology, even if it is assumed that there are no missing generations from that line. This is because it is not stated how old these individuals were when they produced their sons. Chronology depends upon *connections*.

The genealogies of Gen 5 and 11 do, of course, contain such connections. By reporting the age of each father at the birth of his son, the computation of the passage of time from one generation to the next is not only possible but seems invited by the material.[27] Despite this, a significant number of scholars insist that, whatever the purpose of the chronological data in these two chapters, it is not intended that the ages of each generation be totaled. Scripture itself, it is claimed, does not total the ages.[28] It is claimed that there *must be* gaps between these generations,[29] although no one has yet suggested a plausible alternative reading of this material that can permit such gaps without doing violence to the tight interweaving of the numerical data.[30] To

[27]The 'invitational' aspect is a point that Hasel, too, has observed (see his "Meaning of the Chronogenealogies," 66).

[28]The *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (hereafter, *SDABC*) notes that "no total is given" in the two genealogies, which it takes as evidence that the list of individuals may not be complete (*SDABC*, ed. Francis D. Nichol, rev. ed. [Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1976], 1:186). See also Oswalt: "no use is made of references [i.e., the numerical data] when they occur. They are not totaled or otherwise used for establishing chronological relationships" (674). The "no total" argument put forward by *SDABC,* Oswalt, and others is not new; compare William Henry Green, "Primeval Chronology," *BSac* 47 (April, 1890): 296–297.

[29]This "must be" appears to arise not from exegetical or theological considerations, but from the pressure of external archaeological and historical evidence. One example must suffice: "A literal Western interpretation of the figures as they stand yields too low a date for events recorded, *e.g.* the Flood . . . Hence an attempted interpretation must be sought along other lines. . . . In the case of genealogies, this involves the possibility of abbreviation by omission of some names in a series" (Kitchen and Mitchell, 187). Whatever the strengths of the external archaeological and historical evidence—and the evidence is impressive and not to be summarily dismissed—my concern here is solely with the biblical data.

[30]Freeman, "A New Look at the Genesis 5 and 11 Fluidity Problem," *AUSS* 42.2: 282. See, however, n. 34, below. Freeman summarizes and evaluates some common arguments used to counter the "gaps" theory (esp. pp. 272-286). They will not be repeated here, since my purpose is to set forth evidence *for* the chronological intent of the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies rather than to present arguments *against* the contrary view. Nevertheless, it is difficult to resist commenting on the frequently aired argument that the extra Cainan placed between Arphaxad and Shelah in Luke's genealogy of Christ

suggest, for example, that Enoch was in fact Jared's grandson rather than his son is certainly permitted by the biblical usage of the word *son*. But it achieves nothing; the fact remains that Jared was 162 years old when Enoch—whoever he was—was born, and the passage of *time* from one individual to the next is unaffected.[31] That is why it is really pointless for commentators to speculate on supposed gaps in these particular genealogies. It is the *numbers*, not the names, that we have to deal with.[32] Theologians who maintain the conservative

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is evidence of gaps in the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies. Others have already noted, quite rightly, both that a huge number of gaps must be posited in order to bring the Gen 5 and 11 chronology (if such it is) into line with current archaeological and historical timelines, and that there is no precedent in Scripture for a genealogy that contains a larger number of gaps than names in the genealogy (as Gleason L. Archer, himself an advocate of the 'gaps' theory, admits; cited in Freeman, "A New Look," 263). After a brief consideration of the evidence, Hasel concludes, following Euringer (1909), that the words "of Cainan" were likely *later* added in the Luke manuscripts (Hasel, "Genesis 5 and 11," 32). But it may be noted, in addition, that the idea that this extra Cainan was to be found in sources available to Luke, who then chose to include the name in his genealogy, is problematic on logical grounds. Was there only *one* missing name from the Genesis genealogy? If the author (or editors) of Genesis knew of it, why didn't he include it? If there was *more* than one missing name, why was only one (of purportedly so many) preserved in the sources? Or if the sources had more than one extra name, why did Luke choose to include just this one? For Luke's genealogy of Christ, in contrast to that of Matthew, is completely unsystematized—a single, unbroken list of some 65 names; it cannot be claimed that he was trying to systematize that segment of the genealogy. If the author of Genesis—not to mention the compiler of 1 Chronicles—was not aware of the second Cainan, where did Luke find the name? Did he have access to ancient records that the writer of Genesis was unaware of? The LXX requisitions the numerical data from Salah (next in the genealogy) to be used with Cainan, evidence that the translators (or later editors) possessed only a name; how is it that in every other case names and numerical data were available but that in this one case, supposedly only the name survived?

[31]Furthermore, the word "son" is not actually used in the genealogies of Gen 5 and 11 except in the case of Noah, who is *named* by Lamech, suggesting that Lamech was his immediate biological ancestor. Lexically, one must reckon with the meaning of the Hebrew *yalad* in its Hiphil form, as argued by Hasel (see n. 5, above).

[32]This claim is contradicted by a more sophisticated version of the 'gaps' theory. This theory has it that the repeated formula "X lived Y years, and begot Z" really means "X lived Y years, and begot someone in the line of descent that led to Z." Hasel traces this view back to Kitchen (Hasel, "Meaning of the Chronogenealogies," 54). It represents an attempt to acknowledge the historicity of the individuals in the genealogies and the integrity of the individual numerical data while at the same time denying chronological value to that data. This and similar theories are summarized in Freeman, "A New Look," 281, 265–266; see also Hasel, "Meaning of the Chronogenealogies," 62–69. The 'dynasty' view, in effect, attempts to deflect the stubborn chronological insistence of the numbers by shifting attention to the names. It requires the understanding that each name means at one point an individual and at

chronological reading of these genealogies can claim some justification in insisting that the numerical data cannot be manipulated.

But is it possible to find additional *positive* evidence to support the contention that these genealogies are intended to provide a chronology? In particular, are there any textual or contextual clues that might suggest the numbers are *meant* to be totaled? Six such clues may be advanced: (1) The textual evidence supports the view that biological sons are described in each generation. (2) Precise and felicitous numerical clues linking the two genealogies are superfluous if the numbers are not to be totaled. (3) The principle of totaling is already built into the genealogies themselves. (4) The life of each individual in Gen 5 and 11 is presented as a chronology, meaning that chronology is an inherent feature of the genealogies. (5) The unity of the genealogies and subsequent narratives argues for consistency in interpretation, meaning that the clear father-son connections of the subsequent narratives imply the same in the genealogies. (6) If the period from Adam to Terah is *not* covered by chronology, it would be unique in the biblical record. These six considerations must now be explored.

Evidence for Direct Biological Succession

As noted in footnote 28, a more sophisticated variation on the 'gaps' theory has been proposed that appears to respect the integrity of the chronological

another point a whole dynasty. Thus, "Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years, and begot the line of Enoch. After he begot the line of Enoch, Jared lived eight hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. . . . Enoch [the individual, last in the dynastic line] lived sixty-five years, and begot the line of Methuselah." Surprisingly, perhaps, it works, provided one is able to live with the fact that such use of a name is, according to Freeman, unattested in any other biblical genealogy (Freeman, "A New Look," 286). It does not, however, work for Adam. "Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him the line of Seth." It is worse for Lamech. "Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and begot a son. And he called his name the line of Noah, saying, 'This one will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands." Here would be a most singular case of Scripture recording the fact that a major figure in the Bible is prophetically named by his father, yet his name is not known or not deemed important enough to record. And what, precisely, would be the relationship between Noah and the three sons that he begot; were they, too, distant descendants? Who, in that case, entered the ark? While with some awkwardness it may be possible to insist that there are gaps between *some* of the generations and not between others (Adam/Seth, Seth/Enosh, Lamech/Noah, Noah/Shem), few scholars are likely to append their name to the idea that the formula "X lived Y years, and begot someone in the line of descent that led to Z" applies only for some of the generations. In summary, the name-dynasty theory allows its proponent to achieve a greatly lengthened chronology while at the same time respecting the historical and numerical integrity of the data and, in addition, avoiding the problem of numerous and lengthy gaps. Despite this achievement, the theory fails on two grounds: (1) it is entirely lacking in biblical linguistic evidence, and (2) when applied consistently for every generation, it results in nonsense.

data. The point at issue is whether the relationship between successive individuals really is one of immediate biological parenthood. Narrative clues in strategic places indicate that the relationships at the beginning and end of both genealogies are certainly immediate. Before the commencement of the first chronogenealogy, a mini-genealogy with narrative comment is given. "And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son *and named him* Seth." (Gen 4:25. Expressions in the biblical text connoting time parameters are emphasied throughout this article.). Similarly, "And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; *and he named him* Enosh." (Gen 4:26). This cannot be talking about a distant descendant; both are clearly cases of a parent naming their child.[33] The final generations of the first genealogy are those of Noah and his three sons. That they truly were his sons is clear from the Flood narrative. "On the very same day Noah and Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark" (Gen 7:13; cf. 1 Pet 3:20, which affirms that just eight souls were saved in the ark).

In the case of the Gen 11 genealogy, the final generations are those of Terah and Abram. As in the first genealogy, the father, at a certain age, begets three sons. As in the first genealogy, so in the second: they are immediate biological sons. Again, this is made clear in the subsequent narrative, where it is stated that one of those three sons (Haran) "died before his father Terah" (Gen 11:28) and that, subsequently, Terah took his deceased son's child Lot, along with his own son Abram and moved from Ur to Haran (Gen 11:28, 31).

Finally, what of the first generations of the second genealogy—Shem and Arphaxad? Evidence that supports an immediate father-son relationship is found in the previous chapter. Genesis 10 gives "the genealogy of the sons of Noah" (Gen 10:1). The three sons were all childless—or, at the least, took no children with them—when they entered the ark. However, "sons were

[33]This is particularly so in the first case: Seth's name indicates that he was a replacement for the son that Eve lost. Eve would hardly have waited another hundred-odd years (cf. Gen 5:6, 9) until she had a grandson, only then expressing her joy that God had appointed her a replacement for Abel! The second case gains added weight from its connection with the first: "And as for Seth, to him *also* a son was born; and he named him Enosh" (Gen 4:26). There would be no justification in understanding the first case as immediate descent and the second as not. Additionally, as Eve named Seth and Seth named Enosh, so also Lamech named Noah (Gen 5:29). There, too, immediate parentage is confirmed. Wenham, after noting these same details bluntly remarks that "it therefore requires special pleading to postulate long gaps elsewhere in the genealogy" (*Genesis*, 133). Sarfati has also put forward these 'naming' events as indicative of immediate father-son relationships, and as evidence that, in these locations at least, gaps in the Gen 5 genealogy are impossible ("Biblical Chronogenealogies," 16-17). As supportive evidence he cites Jude 14, which gives Enoch as the "seventh from Adam." Freeman cites a number of other scholars who likewise employ Jude 14 as testimony in this way ("A New Look," 282). But this text is not decisive, since it can be argued that Jude is simply stating that *in the genealogy as given in Genesis*, Enoch is in that position. Jude's citation cannot be seen as solid evidence for immediate relationship and, arguably, should not be urged as such.

born to them *after the flood*" (Gen 10:1). In what appears to be a conscious reminiscence of that notation, the Gen 11 genealogy begins with noting that Shem begot Arphaxad "two years after the flood" (Gen 11:10). Since he had no children at the time of the flood, it is quite impossible that Arphaxad, born a mere two years later, could have been anything other than an immediate son.[34]

Thus, it can be shown with virtual certainty that the first and last generations of both genealogies are of immediate father-son relationships. This is a fair indication that the generations in between, in both genealogies, are to be accepted as immediate biological descent in each case. The regularity of the fixed numerical formulae for all the generations is inexplicable, even misleading, if we are to suppose that these two lists contain an unfathomable mixture of immediate biological descent and lengthy gaps. Short of providing parallel genealogies or narrative material that proved immediate descent for every generation, Scripture could not make its intention more clear. The evidence favors understanding the chronogenealogies as describing immediate biological descent, each occurring within a specified timeframe. If this is the case, they are chronologies.

[34]It is possible to counter this argument with an appeal to the more 'sophisticated' gaps theory noted above (see n. 32). Perhaps this 'son' born two years after the flood was "someone in the line of Arphaxad"? Again, however, there is no biblical precedent for so understanding personal names. In addition, the genealogy relates that "the sons of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram. The sons of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash. Arphaxad begot Salah, and Salah begot Eber. To Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg . . ." (Gen 10:22–25). The way in which this material is organized makes it virtually impossible to understand the five "sons of Shem" in v. 22 as anything other than brothers. Arphaxad, unexpectedly, is placed in the middle of the list of five "sons" of Shem, meaning that two names (Lud and Aram) are mentioned after him. This cannot be understood lineally, for when Arphaxad's descendants are listed (in v. 24), they are Salah and Eber, not Lud and Aram. The significant point is that Lud and Aram, along with Elam and Asshur, were his brothers. It is hard to believe that the Genesis author would have listed five *grandchildren* (or descendants) of Shem and omitted completely any reference to his children. Furthermore, if Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram were whole people groups several generations removed from Shem, one would wonder why there are only five. The progeny in the intervening generations would have resulted in many more people groups that could lay claim to Shem as their ancestor. A further, similar evidence of direct biological descent is to be found with Eber and his "two sons" (10:25). They are specifically said to be "brothers." The first was named Peleg, "for in his days the earth was divided." The other was Joktan, whose "sons" are then listed (vv. 26–29). As with the five sons of Shem, it is hardly likely that the author of Genesis would have provided such details for Eber's grandsons (or distant descendants) and completely omitted any reference to his own children.

Evidence That the Numbers Are Intended to Be Totaled

Any chronology depends upon connections, one piece of data connecting with another. This is exactly what is seen in Gen 5 and 11. In both genealogies, each individual item connects with the next, the crucial detail being the age of each individual at the birth of his son. Those connecting links are broken by the interruption of the Flood story; but, significantly, they are re-established in such a way that draws added attention to the chronological intention of these chapters.

The second genealogy begins in an unexpected manner: "Shem was one hundred years old, and begot Arphaxad two years after the flood" (Gen 11:10). Why here the chronological reference to the flood? The 'formula', established in the first genealogy and continued in the second, requires only the words, "Shem lived one hundred years and begot Arphaxad." It will be remembered that the first genealogy finished on a chronologically uncertain note: "And Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth" (Gen 5:32). Gen 10:21 implies that Japheth was the firstborn; if that is the case Noah's age when Shem was born is uncertain.[35] An otherwise unnecessary chronological detail in Gen 7 helps to provide certainty: "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life . . . the fountains of the great deep were broken up and the windows of heaven were opened" (Gen 7:11). This detail, when combined with Gen 11:10 shows that Shem was in fact born when Noah was 502 years old.

But these two details achieve something much more important than mere information as to ages: they allow a precise *chronological linking* of the two genealogies. One could therefore construct a single genealogy from Adam to Terah, rewriting the material for the two middle generations so that they conformed to the formula provided for the other generations, thus: "Noah lived five hundred and two years, and begot Shem," and "Shem lived one hundred years, and begot Arphaxad." Even Noah's age at death, missing from the genealogies, is provided in the post-Flood narrative material. Strikingly, the details are stated in a form never found elsewhere in the biblical narratives, yet one which is essentially identical to what is found in the preceding genealogy. In Noah's case, however, the year of the Flood substitutes for the year of his son's birth: "And Noah *lived after the flood* three hundred and fifty years. So all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died" (Gen 9:28–29). The use of the genealogical formula at this point demonstrates that the interruption of the flood narrative is not allowed to affect the integrity of the total chronological concern of the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies.[36] More

[35]Shem is apparently mentioned first because of his importance to the later chronology. The same pattern is seen with the final statement of the second genealogy: "Now Terah lived seventy years, and begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran" (Gen 11:26). A comparison with 11:32 and 12:1 suggests that Terah was, in fact, 130 years old when he begot Abraham.

[36]More than that, the use of the genealogical formula in the narrative is a clear indication of the essential unity of the chronogenealogies and the narratives that

than that, *the narrative gains an interest* in the genealogy by being included in the genealogical formula. With these purposeful, yet apparently incidental, additional details, the two genealogies form a seamless whole: they are, indeed, one.[37]

One must not be tempted to conclude that these connecting links simply demonstrate a continuity of names and lineage. That continuity is already apparent merely from the presence of Shem's name at the end of the first genealogy and its repetition at the beginning of the second; the numerical links are completely superfluous to that goal. Patrilineal continuity is evidently not the overriding purpose of these links. Unless one adopts the position that these vital connecting links are coincidental—pure happenstance—the implication is that an actual chronology is intended and that the numbers are essential to that chronology.

A second evidence that the numbers in Gen 5 and 11 are intended to be totaled is that the principle of totaling is already built into the genealogies themselves. In the first genealogy, the first two sets of numerical data for each individual are totaled, to provide ages at death. Strangely, in the second genealogy the first two sets are *not* totaled. Why? Is it believable that the writer of Genesis intended the reader to know the ages at death for the generations in the first genealogy but not for those in the second? On purely logical grounds, that idea seems highly improbable; it is completely excluded by the fact that the writer has provided for each individual from Shem to Nahor both sets of numerical data that are required to establish totals. Although the totals are not supplied in Gen 11, the *means* to do so are, and the *example* to do so is provided in Gen 5. The purposeful omission (for so it must be) of the totals in Gen 11 is inconsistent and odd, unless it be seen as an invitation to make totals where totals can be made.[38] The totaling in the first genealogy is the hermeneutical pattern, as the selected proofs for direct biological descent

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follow each (on which, more below). It should be carefully noted that the linking of the first and second genealogies is made by means of reference to the Flood: Noah lived 350 years "after the flood" and Shem begot Arphaxad two years "after the flood." Furthermore, while the Flood narrative interrupts the genealogy, making the numerical data incomplete for both Noah and Shem, the necessary data is recoverable through that same narrative. The integrity of the chronogenealogical line from Adam to Abram is therefore dependent upon chronological details found within the Flood narrative. As will be seen below, there is between *each* genealogy and the narrative material that follows an intimate connection.

[37]The theological stance of the interpreter will determine whether he or she considers the intentionality to be that of the human author of Genesis or that of the divine Author (or both).

[38]C. John Collins, though one who accepts that there are gaps in the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies, essentially admits the invitational aspect: "The life spans in Gen 11:10–26 (after the flood) are quite long, though trending downward (the narrator here leaves it to the reader to add up the numbers)" (*Did Adam and Eve Really Exist? Who They Were and Why You Should Care* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011], 151).

prior to each chronogenealogy (discussed above) are the hermeneutical pattern for all the generations.

The point needs to be pressed. Commentators have written much on the great ages and lifespans of the individuals of these genealogies. But it is just as important, if not more important, to enquire as to why the numbers have been written the way they are. If Scripture intended only for us to contemplate the ages of these individuals (for whatever reason), it would have been sufficient to simply state their ages (the third numerical item) in each case. Similarly, providing the age at birth for one son in each generation (the first numerical item) establishes a chronological intention, provided it is understood that immediate biological succession is understood for each generation. But the second numerical item—the remaining years of life after the birth of the mentioned son—is completely unnecessary to either end. Chronologically, it contributes nothing. Yet it is there. Furthermore, it is there, in the second genealogy, even when the meaningful third item is dropped! Again, only the first and third numerical items have any meaning in themselves. Why drop one of them and retain the only number that has *no* functional significance in itself? This second numerical item gains its meaning only in connection with the first *and exists for no other reason than to be added to that first item*. The inclusion of the second item and purposeful omission of the third is the strongest possible evidence that the reader is being invited to engage with the text and make the totals for him- or herself.

That totaling occurs (in the first genealogy) and that totaling by the reader is expected (in the second genealogy) are necessary conclusions from the data. Since it is clear that Scripture intended for the numerical data *within* each generation to be totaled, providing first the pattern then the invitation, it follows that the numerical data *from* each generation is also meant to be totaled. To insist that the one set of numbers is supposed to be totaled while the other is not, with no exegetical grounds for not doing so, is hermeneutically indefensible. The individual totals and the numerical connections are not devoid of purpose.[39]

[39]Freeman ("A New Look," 282, 285) has observed that the *first* numerical item is "superfluous and entirely without meaning" if a chronology is not intended. That would seem to be correct. However, it is possible, though admittedly counterintuitive, to argue that the age at which these individuals gave birth is of interest in itself. But there is virtually no evidence in Scripture that that is the ever case, except when the parents gave birth at exceptional ages. There are cases of exceptional age at begetting in the Gen 5 genealogy (Jared, 162; Lamech, 182; Noah, 500), but they don't explain why those for the other individuals are recorded. The difficulty increases with the second genealogy, where age at begetting is between twenty-nine and thirty-five, Shem and Terah being the only exceptions. Nevertheless, it is not entirely beyond the bounds of reason that this first numerical item is there simply for its own sake. Where my suggestion differs from that of Freeman and others is that it is the inherently meaningless second numerical item that is of such importance. *It* cannot be easily dismissed, since it only has meaning in connection with the first item and, furthermore, is rendered completely superfluous by the third. This second numerical item can only

Evidence that Chronology Is Inherent in the Genesis 5 and 11 Texts

A fourth evidence for chronology in the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies lies in the recognition that chronology applies to individuals as well as to groups or eras. Thus, a chronology exists for Abraham's life: he is 75 when he leaves Haran (Gen 12:4); he moves about Canaan for 10 years before going in to Hagar (16:3); he has Isaac at age 100 (21:5), loses his wife 37 years later (17:17; 23:1), and dies 38 years after that (25:7). A chronology also exists for Joshua's life: he is 40 when sent by Moses to spy out the land (Josh 14:7), 85 when the partially conquered land of Canaan is divided among the tribes (14:10), and 110 when he dies (24:29). The data is less for Joshua than for Abraham, chronicling but two life events (plus his death); but it is a chronology nonetheless and spans his entire life. For the individuals of Gen 5 and 11 just one life event (the birth of a son) is chronicled; but the mere fact that that event is chronicled and that, in each case, the entire life is spanned, means that it is chronology in each individual's case. This point, combined with the previous, points to the stark fact that *chronology is inherent and pervasive in the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies*.

The Intimate Relationship between the Genealogies and the Narratives

A fifth reason why chronological concerns appear to be central to the genealogies of Gen 5 and 11 may be seen in the close connections between the genealogies and the narratives. This connection is indicated by the use of the numerical formula (of the first genealogy) in the Flood narrative (Gen 9:28f); indeed, the formulaic record of Noah's death formally brings to a close both the Flood narrative and the Adamic genealogy. But several more connections exist.

At first glance, the parallel endings of the two chronogenealogies are at once arresting and puzzling. The obvious parallel lies in the three sons being born to the last individual for whom chronological data is given: Noah, at five hundred years of age, begets Shem, Ham, and Japheth; Terah, at seventy years of age, begets Abram, Nahor, and Haran (Gen 5:32; 11:26). In each case, only one chronological detail is given; both subsequent narratives reveal that that detail does not apply to the first son mentioned, since he is not the firstborn; in both cases, the subsequent narratives make known the applicable age data.[40] The pattern is, however, profoundly disturbed by the fact that Noah is the important figure in the first genealogy, while that honor in the second belongs to Abram. Yet the two occupy different positions in the genealogy, as the following diagram shows:

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be explained with reference to the principle of *totaling*.

[40]That is, that Noah is 502 at the birth of Shem, and Terah 130 at the birth of Abram.

(7th)		Enoch			Serug	
(8th)		Methuselah			Nahor	
(9th)		Lamech			Terah	
(10th)		**Noah**		**Abram**	Nahor	Haran
(11th)	Shem	Ham	Japheth		——	

Scholars generally ignore this obvious 'glitch' in the pattern and speak of the first genealogy as terminating with Noah (ten generations) and the second as terminating with Abram (also ten generations).[41] The bald fact that Noah and Abram are both tenth in the line is true; it is also true that the real point of interest following the second genealogy is with Abram, just as it is with Noah following the first. But Scripture initially, and most obviously, presents a parallel not between these two, but between Noah and Terah—the final fathers of their respective genealogies.[42] This receives confirmation in the fact

[41]So E. H. Merrill, "Chronology," *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, 118–119: "There are ten generations from Adam through Noah . . . and ten more from Shem through Abraham"; N. M. Sarna, "Genesis, Book of," *EncJud* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1972) 7:397: "The ten generations from Adam to Noah are paralleled by a like number separating Noah from Adam"; John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 35: "the genealogies between Adam and Noah, and Noah and Abraham, are each set up to contain ten members, with the last having three sons." Freeman, citing S. R. Külling, also notes that most scholars seem to have "overlooked" the fact that the genealogies are not really symmetrical ("A New Look," 273). Hasel had already pointed out that there was "no schematic ten-ten sequence" in his "Meaning of the Chronogenealogies," 60.

[42]The apparent ambiguity is recognized by Wenham: "Noah and Terah each stand at the beginning of a new age. But whereas Noah was the hero of the subsequent narrative, here it is Terah's son Abram that takes the limelight" (*Genesis*, 252). The key to understanding the obvious asymmetry of the terminal points of the two genealogies is to recognize that there is a *triple parallel*. On the one hand, Noah and Abram are parallels—both tenth in the line, and both the important figures. Secondly, Shem and Abram are parallels—both in the final generation of their respective lists, both one of three sons (and neither the firstborn), and both the ones who re-launch the tracing of the godly line following an interlude. Thirdly, as Wenham's comment suggests, Noah and Terah are parallels—both the final fathers of their respective lists, and, in addition, both the main subjects of the narrative interludes that immediately follow the two genealogies. Asymmetry also exists in the length and content of the interludes, necessarily so because of the asymmetry of the parallels. The first, much longer, interlude concerns Noah and his family; it is longer because Noah is the more important figure. The second interlude is shorter because Terah is the less important figure. The net effect of the asymmetry and of the complex of parallels is to highlight the interdependence of the genealogical and narrative material. This is so because the parallel between Noah and Abram draws attention to their importance in the narrative materials; the parallel between Shem and Abram relates especially to their function in picking up the threads of the interrupted genealogies; and the parallel between Noah

that the narrative interludes that interrupt both genealogies are concerned with these two individuals; both interludes provide the chronological data for their age at the birth of the first-mentioned sons; and both provide the fathers' age at death.[43]

If, then, Terah is parallel with Noah, with whom is Abram parallel? The answer can only be "Shem." Shem and Abram are the first-mentioned sons of the last fathers of the genealogies. Shem has a special function. He not only receives his first mention at the very end of the first genealogy, but he launches the continuation of the chronological material following the narrative concerning his father. Abram also receives his first mention at the very end of the second genealogy. He likewise launches the continuation of the chronological material following the narrative of his father:[44]

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and Terah draws attention to the link between each genealogy and the subsequent narrative interlude. The usual one-sided emphasis on the parallel between Noah and Abram (their being the tenth name in each list) seems often to be used to bolster the claim that the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies are schematized, the implication being that they contain gaps: "The grouping into two sets of ten (Gen 5 and 11) suggests a simplified genealogical chain for ease in memorizing, somewhat like the three groups of fourteen in the Matthew 1 genealogy of Christ. Thus we may postulate a span of at least five to eight thousand years between Adam and Abraham" (Gleason L. Archer, "The Chronology of the Old Testament," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979], 1:361). Recognition of a complex of parallels is not only demanded by the biblical material, but automatically excludes such claims as that exemplified by Archer. Each of the three parallels is seen rather to exist in a symbiotic, mutually dependent relationship with the other parallels, the combined purpose of which is actually to affirm the interplay of chronological/genealogical material in the genealogies and narratives.

[43]That the narrative following the first genealogy focuses on Noah is well known. Note the first words of the narrative that follows the second genealogy: "This is the genealogy of *Terah* . . ." (Gen 11:27). It is, however, a genealogy with more narrative material than pure genealogy, including details of family tragedies, places, wives, daughters, and movements. Similarly, in Gen 6, with the first mention of Noah, another brief 'genealogy' is introduced: "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. This is the genealogy of Noah . . ." (Gen 6:8-9). This brief genealogy is then followed by the first stage of God's plan in respect to having a godly nation on the earth: He purges that line through a flood, leaving a faithful remnant, Noah and his family. Similarly, following the brief genealogy of Terah, the second stage of God's plan for a godly nation is instituted: He purges Abram of his association with idolaters, this time not by removing them from him (as with Noah) but by removing him from them. These two methods illustrate God's dealings with the wicked and with his people at different times in salvation history. His plan for his people on earth is to call them out of Babylon (Rev 18:4, cf. 2 Cor 6:17); of this, Abram is the pattern. God's plan at the eschaton is to remove the wicked from his presence and from his people (Prov 25:4f); of this, Noah is the pattern (Matt 24:37–40, cf. Lk 17:36f).

[44]Notice the almost immediate chronological reference: "And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran" (Gen 12:4).

Noah **Shem** Interlude (*Noah*) Shem (Chronology/genealogy continues from Shem in *genealogy* form.)

Terah **Abram** Interlude (*Terah*) Abram (Chronology/genealogy continues from Abram in *narrative* form.)

In the case of Shem (and his descendants) the chronological material is encased in a formal genealogy; in the case of Abram (and his descendants) the chronological material is encased in a narrative. But the latter, in its richness of chronological material, is a narrative unlike any other. It is also a genealogy in essence, for its function is to trace the godly line generation by generation, albeit with greatly expanded narrative detail.[45]

The words immediately prior to the first chronogenealogy announce this function of tracing the godly line: "Then [after the birth of Enosh] men began to call on the name of the LORD" (Gen 4:26). The same expression is next used near the beginning of the Abraham story, where the patriarch is recorded as building an altar to the LORD in Canaan, east of Bethel; and there he "called on the name of the LORD" (Gen 12:8).[46] The generations

[45]J. W. Wright points out that "while biblical scholars usually consider only lists to be 'genealogies,' genealogies can take narrative form, and narrative-like expansions do appear within the biblical genealogies" ("Genealogies," in Alexander and Baker, 346). Kathleen M. O'Connor claims that the whole book of Genesis "is a kind of loose genealogy, because it establishes relationships of birth among all the family of Israel, between Israel and its neighboring people, and among all the peoples of the earth descended from the first couple in Eden" ("Genesis, Book of," *NIDB* [Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2007] 2:542). My suggestion that the Genesis narrative, beginning with Abraham, is a genealogy in essence likely takes both these suggestions further than the authors envisaged them (see n. 11, above). It is not just that genealogies can take narrative form, nor even that the whole book of Genesis is a kind of loose genealogy. Rather, it is that there is a specific genealogical thread that traces a single line—a godly line—through the generations. That line begins with one of Adam's three named sons, Seth, and continues through one of Noah's three named sons, Shem, then through one of Terah's three named sons, Abram. (I am indebted to Gordon Wenham [*Genesis*, 248] for the observation that Adam fathered three named sons.) The Gen 5 and 11 genealogies and the subsequent narratives are unified *thematically* by this idea of a godly line; they are unified *technically* by the details of age and chronology. That the book of Genesis may be seen to contain such a unifying thread is consistent with the unifying presence of the *toledoth* formulas. The function of these formulas as markers may not necessarily be the same in each case—Daniel C. Harlow assigns to some the function to preface "a new round of narratives (6:9; 11:27; 37:2 [to which I would add 2:4]) or else a genealogy (5:1; 10:1, 27; 25:12; 36:1, 9)" ("Creation According to Genesis: Literary Genre, Cultural Context, Theological Truth," *Christian Scholar's Review* [2008]: 169–170). Nevertheless, the structurally unifying effect of these ten toledoth formulas seems evident. See also n. 49, below, for a specific application of the unifying function of toledoth.

[46]Twice more Abraham is recorded as calling on the name of the Lord (Gen 13:4;

that follow Abraham, as with the generations following Enosh, constitute that godly line. The use of the same expression, first, in connection with the chronogenealogies, and second, in connection with the major narrative that follows, is additional evidence of the unity of the chronogenealogies and narratives. This unity must be recognized. It is a unity of thematic focus—tracing the godly line (the genealogical aspect)—and of chronological intent. To acknowledge the chronological integrity of the narrative that begins with Abraham, while denying chronological integrity to the preceding genealogies is to fail to recognize this unity.

The Evidence of Scripture's Pervasive Interest in Chronology

There is a further reason to accord true chronological value to the numerical material of Gen 5 and 11, and it is that no other broad period of biblical history is denied the witness of biblical chronology. Given this extensive chronological concern, can it be that Scripture has no interest in one period—that which predates the Israel story? On purely logical grounds, this may be judged unlikely. But several additional considerations add weight to that assessment. They can here be considered only briefly.

First, the Bible story begins not with Israel but with mankind. We must allow for at least the possibility that chronological interest begins at the same point.[47] Second, the Flood story, which is sandwiched between the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies, is rather precisely chronicled. Why? Is it really important to know how long the rains fell and how long the flooding lasted?[48] The chronicling of the Flood is simply witness to Scripture's consistent interest in chronology. Third, the numerical data of Gen 5 and 11, through careful wording and linking passages, is both capable of chronological application and is to all appearances chronological in intent. Finally, Creation itself is presented as a chronology.[49] Whether or not one accepts the factual veracity

21:33); Isaac does likewise (Gen 26:25).

[47]The first eleven chapters of Genesis cover what is sometimes referred to as "universal" history (see, for example, Sarna, 386; William D. Barrick, "A Historical Adam: Young-Earth Creation View," in *Four Views on The Historical Adam*, ed. M. Barrett and A. B. Caneday [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013], 204). That the biblical record shows any interest in this period at all, and that Scripture evidences an interest in the chronological details of individuals throughout the entire period, undermine any suggestion that no chronology may be expected in these early chapters.

[48]Knowing how long the flooding lasted is certainly not important to anybody's salvation. Yet, in God's wisdom, Scripture has recorded the detail. Any suggestion that the age of the earth cannot be a concern of Scripture, since it is not important to our salvation, is an invalid argument and quite irrelevant to the issue. It is not for us to decide upon what basis anything is or is not recorded in Scripture. What matters, rather, is what Scripture *does* tell us.

[49]There is an intriguing similarity between the constitution of the chronological data of Gen 1 and that of Gen 5. In Gen 1, there are two units of time, an evening and a morning, which are totaled to make one day. The pattern is repeated throughout

of the data of Gen 1, it seems clear that Scripture *presents* the Creation as happening over a defined period of time.[50]

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the chapter. In Gen 5, two items of time, an age at the birth of a child and a remaining time period, are totaled for one generation, and the pattern is repeated throughout the chapter. In neither Gen 1 nor Gen 5 are the individual totals added up to produce a grand total. In respect to the days of Creation, not until the twentieth chapter of Exodus is the obvious made plain: "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth" (Ex 20:11). That Scripture should at a later point confirm the intuitive understanding that the individual totals ("one day," "a second day," etc.) may be added up for a combined total for the whole period, establishes a precedent and a pattern to be followed. This chronological similarity between Gen 1 and the chronogenealogies receives remarkable confirmation in the use of the Hebrew *toledoth* to describe both God's creative work and man's pro-creative work. *Toledoth* occurs first in Gen 2:4; its next occurrence is in 5:1, introducing the genealogy. What is to be noted is, first, the close juxtaposition of these two uses of the word and, second, the fact that Gen 2:4 is "the only instance where this word is used of other than human relationships" (*SDABC* 1:221). In Gen 1, God generated in consecutive, contiguous days (however long one considers those days to be); and those days were chronicled. In Gen 5 and 11, human beings "made . . . in the likeness of God" (the reminder at the beginning of the first genealogy reinforces the connection with the Creation) likewise generated in consecutive, contiguous generations; and those generations were chronicled.

[50]David A. Sterchi, following Throntveit, Youngblood, and others, suggests that the days of Gen 1 need not be regarded as chronological; in Sterchi's view "the seven days are more like a numbered list" ("Does Genesis 1 Provide A Chronological Sequence?" *JETS* 39.4 [1996]: 536). One wonders: where does Day 7 fit in time and order, if it was not actually *last*? Did God rest before he finished his work? The text tells us *after* the sixth day that "the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them were finished" (Gen 2:1) and that God "ended his work" on the seventh day (2:2). Where would Sterchi place the sixth day, which reads like a summary of what has gone before (1:31)? The words "God saw *everything*" and "it was *very* good" would seem strangely out of place if Day 6 is to be reordered. What is puzzling is that Sterchi himself points out these features of Days 6 and 7. Yet it cannot be doubted what he means by his denial of the chronology. He cites Luke's account of the temptations of Christ, where Luke reverses the second and third temptations as given by Matthew. He also offers the illustration of a shopping list: the items on the original list are numbered, but the later recounting of the shopping experience *presents* the items in a different order—from least valuable to most valuable items, for example (534). His conclusion makes clear his intention: "The seven days are more like a numbered list. To claim that the text requires us to read it chronologically is to err by exceeding the meaning in the text" (536). It is not easy to know exactly how Sterchi envisages a rearrangement of the order, if indeed that is what he is suggesting. He acknowledges that the sixth and seventh days complete the creation; for those two days, in order to provide that emphasis, the Hebrew *yom* has the definite article, unlike for the first five days (533–534). Is he suggesting that only the first five days are dyschronological? What exactly is the relationship between the order in which God actually created and the order of days as presented in Gen 1? If a correspondence is there for the sixth and seventh

Summary and Conclusions

Prima facie, the genealogies of Gen 5 and 11 present an unbroken line of individuals from Adam to Abraham, with numerical data that allows the construction of an approximate chronology for that period. The resulting chronology, however, is greatly at odds with that which widely-accepted geological, archaeological, and non-biblical historical records affirm. The philosophical problem that this presents the biblical scholar who wishes to respect the truthfulness of Scripture is significant. A seeming majority of evangelical scholars has elected to reevaluate the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies in order to harmonize them with these other sources. Whether or not that is a legitimate enterprise, it must be demanded that the biblical material be given every opportunity to present its case. I have here sought to demonstrate that the endeavor to harmonize these genealogies with secular chronologies finds little, if any, support in the biblical text. However, my purpose in this paper has been less to find fault with such harmonizing efforts than to explore more fully evidence that the biblical material is indeed concerned with providing a chronology for the 'primeval' period. I here briefly summarize that evidence.

First, the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies are unique. The overwhelming presence of numerical data, presented in a consistent, generation by generation, formulaic manner, has no parallel in Scripture.

Second, while the generic purpose of these genealogies is (like all others) to trace biological succession, their *special function* is determined, to some considerable degree, by the numerical data contained in them.

Third, whenever it is possible to verify that two successive generations either do or do not involve immediate biological succession, the result is always for the affirmative. This is evidence that all the generations should be so understood.

Fourth, although the numerical data obviously relates to *age*, especially age at death, six lines of evidence support the conclusion that the data is intended as a chronology. In particular, exegetical clues within the genealogies make it virtually certain that the author of Genesis intended the individual figures to be totaled wherever possible, while chronology at the individual level is indicative of an intended chronology at the broader historical level.

Fifth, since the special function of the genealogies of Gen 5 and 11 is, in both cases, to present a chronology, Hasel's characterization of them as *chronogenealogies* is appropriate. Whether or not the resulting chronology is consistent with non-biblical chronologies, the character of the biblical material and the evident intent of the biblical author ought to be recognized.

days, why not for the first five? How can Day 6 be "climactic" (533) without implying temporal *order*? In order for his suggestion to have credibility, Sterchi would need to explicate in what ways the order of days (or divine events) as *presented* in Gen 1 might differ from the order in which God did actually create. Absent a credible alternative to the commonly accepted meaning of the numbered days in Gen 1, the account of creation as given in that chapter must be regarded as chronological, that is, occurring in the order as presented.

Sixth, there exists an intimate unity between the chronogenealogies and the narratives that follow each. This unity is *established* by verbal links and exegetical clues in the genealogies and narratives, while it is *evident* at the level both of thematic focus—tracing the godly line (the genealogical aspect)—and of chronological intent.

Seventh, the unity between the genealogies and the narratives finds further evidence in an apparent 'paragenealogy' that spans the period from Adam to Joshua. This unifying thread adds further weight to the foregoing conclusions regarding the chronological intent of the genealogies: the age at death recorded for each generation from Abraham to at least Joseph (the last patriarch in Genesis), in most cases along with age at begetting, is merely an extension of the thematic focus and chronological intent of the preceding genealogies.

Eighth, Scripture *begins* with chronology, with an ordered account of Creation that is presented in chronological fashion with features anticipating that of the genealogies. The link between Creation week and the chronogenealogies is reinforced by the use of the Hebrew term *toledoth*. This term is placed in summary position following the description of the Creation week and at the beginning of each chronogenealogy. As God's work of creation was chronicled, so too was man's work of procreation.

In conclusion, whatever philosophical and scientific difficulties may arise from understanding the Gen 5 and 11 genealogies as having a chronological intention, a mass of evidence points in just that direction. In seeking to understand the biblical story of creation vis-à-vis the findings of science and archaeology, it is not sufficient merely to suggest alternative readings of Gen 1 and 2. The chronogenealogies must be allowed to speak to the issue. They do so speak. And they will not go away.

Andrews University Seminary Studies, Vol. 53, No. 2, 279-320.

CREATION IN HEBREWS

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The Letter to the Hebrews is certainly an important voice in any discussion on the biblical view of Creation. It holds the second place among New Testament documents in references to Gen 1–2 and creation in general.[1] It probably contains, however, the most famous affirmation on the topic: "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible" (Heb 11:3, NRSV).

The purpose of this article is to study the language and the theology of creation in the Letter to the Hebrews. The paper is, then, both exegetical and theological in nature. I will approach this study with four questions in mind:

1. What does the Letter to the Hebrews say about the creation of our world?

2. What role does the creation of our world play in the broader argument of the Letter to the Hebrews?

3. How did Hebrews' views on creation relate to the debate on the origin of the world in antiquity (especially to Plato whose views held a prominent position in the intellectual landscape of the ancient Greco-Roman world)?

4. What are the implications of Hebrews' views on creation for the current debate between creationism and evolution?

Hebrews and Hellenistic Views on Creation

The study of the debate on the origin of the world among ancient Greek philosophers is especially important for the study of Hebrews. The Letter to the Hebrews is the most Hellenistic of New Testament documents. It seems

[1]With a total of 11 references. For a list of references in the New Testament to Gen 1–2 and creation in general, see Ekkhardt Mueller, "Creation in the New Testament," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Soceity* (hereafter *JATS*) 15, no. 1 (2004): 48. In this list, Hebrews is tied with Romans in the second place with 9 references each (Revelation is first with 14). This list does not include, however, Heb 2:10; 3:4.

I want to express my gratitude to the Faith and Science Council for the request to write this paper, the warm fellowship, and the stimulating dialogue of its meetings. The Seminar in Interpretation of Genesis 1–2 at Andrews University in the Spring of 2011 also provided a space for the discussion of an earlier draft of this paper. I owe a debt of gratitude to its instructor, John Reeve, and each member of the seminar for the insightful questions and comments and hospitality. Ekkehardt Mueller and Reimar Vetne went through the manuscript and provided valuable critique and suggestions, which contributed in no small degree to this paper. The shortcomings of the paper, however, are mine.

obvious that its author was well educated and enjoyed rhetorical training.[2] Both his arguments and style are sophisticated. Its Greek is excellent, "by far the best Koine to be found among New Testament writings."[3] It contains complex sentences of elevated style that were carefully edited to delight and exert varying rhetorical effects in the audience.[4] The Letter was, however, not only beautifully written, but also carefully argued. In fact, some have considered this book to be the beginning of Christian philosophy.[5] Thus, insight into the ancient debate on the origin of the cosmos among Greek philosophers together with a thorough knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures (no document of the NT quotes the OT as often as Hebrews does[6]) provides the reader with the tools to reconstruct as much as possible the appropriate chamber of resonance that will not distort its music or damp its singular tones.

The ancient debate on the origin of the cosmos was lively and the spectrum of positions wide. Anaxagoras, Empedocles, Socrates, Plato, and the Stoics, with differences and nuances, championed the argument from design and found compelling evidence for a creator. Aristotle embraced teleology—that is to say, that the world is and contains purposive structures—yet, he denied an active organizing intelligence (that is, no divine oversight, planning, or enforcement). The atomists, who were strict materialists, appealed to the explanatory power of infinity and accident and proposed the fundamental insight of natural selection.[7] I will not be able to explore this wider landscape

[2]Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, ed. Helmut Koester, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 5.

[3]Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary,* NTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 8.

[4]Attridge, 5. See also Michael R. Cosby, *The Rhetorical Composition and Function of Hebrews 11: In Light of Example Lists in Antiquity* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988); David A. deSilva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews,* SBLDS 152 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 30–33; Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary,* AB 36 (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 92–96.

[5]See James W. Thompson, *The Beginnings of Christian Philosophy: The Epistle to the Hebrews*, CBQMS 13 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1982).

[6]See George H. Guthrie, "Old Testament in Hebrews," *DLNT,* ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997) 841–2. George Guthrie, for example, counts 36 quotations and 37 allusions. Compare with Pamela Michelle Eisenbaum, *The Jewish Heroes of Christian History: Hebrews 11 in Literary Context*, SBLDS 156 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 90–91; S. Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Amsterdam: van Soest, 1961), 16.

The Book of Revelation, however, has more allusions to the Old Testament than Hebrews.

[7]David Sedley, *Creationism and Its Critics in Antiquity*, Sather Classical Lectures 66 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007). See also, Keith Augustus Burton,

but will focus on the most prominent and influential of ancient cosmologies, Plato's *Timaeus*.

The *Timaeus* proved "from the start the most influential of all Plato's works, and probably the most seminal philosophical or scientific text to emerge from the whole of antiquity."[8] It became the basic Platonic dialogue for Middle Platonism (ca. 80 B.C.–A.D. 250)[9] and the only Platonic dialogue in general circulation in the Western Middle Ages.[10]

Hebrews' scholars have long argued that Hebrews adopted a Platonic worldview similar to, or mediated through, that of Philo[11]—a Hellenistic Jewish philosopher who lived in Alexandria from ca. 20 B.C.–ca. A.D. 50.[12] Philo brought together in his writings Jewish tradition and Greek philosophy. He was especially influenced by what is known today as Middle Platonism, which is a blend of Platonist thought with Stoic and Pythagorean ideas.[13] Gerhard May, in his study on the origin of the doctrine of creation out of nothing in early Christianity, argues that it was not until the second part of the second century that Christianity began to respond to the challenges of philosophical theology and Platonizing Gnosticism by developing a clear doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*.[14] Hebrews was written in the previous century but the forces and tendencies that would shape the later debate were already

"The Faith Factor: New Testament Cosmology in Its Historical Context," *JATS* 15, no. 1 (2004): 34–46; Arnold Ehrhardt, *The Beginning: A Study in the Greek Philosophical Approach to the Concept of Creation from Anaximander to St John* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1968).

[8]Sedley, 96.

[9]Gerhard May, *Creatio ex nihilo: The Doctrine of 'Creation out of Nothing' in Early Christian Thought*, trans. A. S. Worrall (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 3–4.

[10]See Jaroslav Pelikan, *What Has Athens to Do with Jerusalem?: Timaeus and Genesis in Counterpoint*, 21 (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 111–32. Platonism, as a system of philosophy, is "perhaps the greatest philosophical edifice ever erected in the Western intellectual tradition" and helped shape Christian theology in its first centuries of existence, J. M. Dillon, "Plato, Platonism," *DNTB,* ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000) 804–805. For a study of the influence of Plato's *Timaeus* on Christian theology, see Pelikan.

[11]See, for example, Thompson; Johnson, 17–21.

[12]In *Leg. Gaj.* 1, 182 Philo describes himself among the "aged" and "gray-headed." It could be inferred from this that he was between sixty and seventy years old in AD 40. See, Ronald Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World: Philo,* Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish and Christian World 200 BC to AD 200 1 part 2, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1.

[13]Ellen Birnbaum, "Philo of Alexandria," *NIDB,* ed. Katherine Doob Sakenfeld (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006–2009) 4:512–3.

[14]May, xiv. He rejects the common notion that the concept of *creatio ex nihilo* had emerged in pre-Christian Hellenistic Judaism (e.g., 2 Macc 7:28–29) and was simply presupposed and absorbed by Early Christians. He suggests that with Irenaeus this doctrine takes a settled form and the debate reaches a specific conclusion.

taking place. By the time Hebrews was written, Plato's worldview had great influence in the thinking of Hellenistic Judaism and was beginning to have influence in early Christian sectors as well.[15] Thus, the question arises with force, what position did the Letter to the Hebrews favor in what would be the later debate? Did Hebrews reinterpret the Genesis account from a Platonic/Philonic point of view and, if so, in what ways and to what extent?

This paper has three main sections. The first section introduces the debate in modern scholarship regarding Plato's/Philo's influence on Hebrews. This includes a summary of Plato's views on the origin of the cosmos. The second section analyzes the references to the creation of the world and what role they play in the argument of their immediate contexts. Finally, in the third section, I will draw some of the implications of this study in terms of the theology of creation in Hebrews.

Did the Author of Hebrews have a Platonic/Philonic Worldview?

The view that the author of Hebrews was influenced by the Alexandrian Jewish Philosopher Philo and the existential dualism of Plato has a long history. Philo was contemporary to Herod the Great, Hillel, Shammai, Gamaliel, Paul, and Jesus. He was as well a prime example of an Hellenization process that occurred especially among Diaspora Jews. His entire work is a gigantic attempt "to show that the Jewish people did not need to be ashamed of their cultural and religious heritage"[16] and endeavors to explain the OT and Judaism in terms of Greek philosophy—especially from the Platonic strand.[17] Philo influenced Christian thinkers such as Clement and Origen, and his philosophical/allegorical exegesis was continued by the Alexandrian Christian church.[18]

[15]John Turner, "Plato, Platonism," *NIDB* 4:546–7.

[16]David T. Runia, *Exegesis and Philosophy: Studies on Philo of Alexandria,* Collected Studies 332 (Hampshire: Variorum, 1990), 5.

[17]It could be said that the Hellenistic literature, from the Septuagint to Philo and Josephus had a "double purpose: to defend the Jews and Judaism from the attacks of pagans and to prove the superiority of the Jews and Judaism over other nations and their religions," Robert H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times: With an Introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York: Harper, 1949), 197. Philo evidences a broad and penetrating knowledge of Greek culture in his writings. He quotes "some fifty-four classical authors directly and accurately, Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 15. See also Peder Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria: An Exegete for His Time*, NovTSup 86 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 3.

[18]J. M. Knight, "Alexandria, Alexandrian Christianity," *DLNT* 36–37. Indeed, we owe the survival of Philo's works to the Christian church. Of the more than seventy treatises he wrote—see Gregory E. Sterling, "Philo," *DNTB* 790—the fifty that survived are essentially those in Eusebius' catalogue of Philo's work (*Hist. eccl.* 2.18.1–7). In fact, we could say to some extent that Philo was adopted by the Christian church, David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey,* vol. 3 of *Jewish Traditions in Early Christian Literature*, ed. Y. Aschkenasy et al., CRINT (Minneapolis,

In the early fourth century, Eusebius of Caesarea referred to Plato's *Republic* while commenting on Heb 8:5 (*Praep. Evang.* XII). Hugo Grotius in 1646 suggested, probably for the first time, Philonic influence on Hebrews.[19] In 1894, Eugene Ménégoz was the first to produce a thoroughgoing presentation on Philo's influence on Hebrews. He concluded that "[l'auteur de l'épître] est un philonien converti au christianisme."[20] This view dominated the first part of the twentieth century and reached its climax in Ceslas Spicq's massive commentary in 1952. Spicq evaluated vocabulary, hermeneutic techniques, psychology, and parallels with Hebrews 11 and concluded by quoting approvingly Ménégoz' view and even suggested that the author of Hebrews knew Philo personally.[21] He did not describe Hebrews' author as a thoroughgoing Philonist, however, he recognized that there is a "resolute repudiation" of Philo's allegorical method in the Epistle. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the publication of an article by Barrett in 1956—which stressed that Hebrews' perspective is eschatological and not existential-dualistic—dealt major blows to the ideas championed by Spicq. In 1970, Ronald Williamson wrote the most comprehensive, point-by-point critique of Spicq's case. He concluded that Spicq's case was groundless.[22]

The case for Platonic/Philonic influence continues, however, to exert influence in the interpretation of Hebrews to the present.[23] In 1982, James W. Thompson asserted that Spicq succeeded in demonstrating that Hebrews uses "the vocabulary of educated Hellenistic Jews."[24] In his opinion, the problem

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MN: Fortress, 1993), 3-7, 31-33.

[19]For other suggestions of Philonic influence before the 20th century, see James H. Burtness, "Plato, Philo and Hebrews," *LQ* 10 (1958): 54–55.

[20]Eugène Ménégoz, *La théologie de L'Epitre aux Hébreux* (Paris: Fischbacher, 1894), 198.

[21]Ceslas Spicq, *L'épître aux Hébreux,* EBib (Paris: Gabalda, 1952), 1:91. Also, Lincoln D. Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought,* SNTSMS 65 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 7 n. 5.

[22]"But it is in the realm of ideas, of the thoughts which words and O.T. texts were used to express and support, that the most significant differences between Philo and the Writer of Hebrews emerge. On such fundamental subjects as time, history, eschatology, the nature of the physical world, etc., the thoughts of Philo and the Writer of Hebrews are poles apart." Ronald Williamson, *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews,* ALGHJ 4 (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 576–577.

[23]Luke Timothy Johnson argues that Hebrews shares the worldview of Plato (Johnson, 17–21). Kenneth L. Schenck, though rejecting that Hebrews adopts a Platonic/Philonic worldview, speculates that salvation in Hebrews is salvation from the created realm in part on the basis of Heb 9:26, that declares that atonement was needed from the beginning of creation, Kenneth L. Schenck, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Hebrews: The Settings of the Sacrifice,* SNTSMS 143 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 113–81.

[24]Thompson, 8.

was that Spicq had claimed too much.[25] Thompson argued that Williamson's critique had not been able to refute the idea that Philo and the author of Hebrews belonged to a common conceptual background[26] and quite correctly identified the crux of the debate: "The *eschatology of the Epistle* to the Hebrews has been a central issue for debate in discussion of the intellectual world of the author. This debate appears to result from the fact that Hebrews contains both passages which assume the spatial dualism of Plato (i.e., 8:5) and statements which assume the apocalyptic, temporal dualism of the two ages [linear apocalyptic] (i.e., 1:2; 6:4)," (emphasis mine).[27] The question, then, continues to be debated. Was the author of Hebrews influenced by Philo's and Plato's views and, if so, to what extent did their views shape Hebrews' views on the creation of the world? It is important that we evaluate the evidence.

Origin of the Universe according to Plato

Plato conceives the earth as approximately spherical and located, motionless, at the center of a greater sphere, which is heaven. The surface rises in different degrees so that some sectors lie under water, others in the air, and others rise to the upper atmosphere known as aether. Below the surface there are underground rivers.[28] Souls are assigned to an appropriate region according to the level of their purification. The range goes from punishment at Tartarus to living in beauty and purity in the upper atmosphere near total discarnate state. How did this earth come to exist?

This is described in the *Timaeus*. The discourse on cosmology is in fact just a fragment of the *Timaeus-Critias*, which is a truncated series of monologues that include the Atlantis story told by Critias, the relation of the origin of

[25]No amount of verbal parallelism can demonstrate that the author of Hebrews is a "philonien converti au christianisme," ibid. "The relationship between Philo and Hebrews is probably too complex to be reduced to a matter of literary dependence," ibid., 11.

[26]Thompson, 10. He has softened his position, though: "The major debate in scholarship on Hebrews has been the determination of the author's intellectual worldview. We need not choose one over the other, as if the Jewish and Greek worlds existed in isolation form each other. The author lives between the world of scripture and that of Greek philosophy. He is one among many early Jewish and Christian writers who struggled to describe their faith in the language of philosophy. . . . Like Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and other early Christian writers, he affirmed Christian convictions that could not be reconciled with Platonism while employing Platonic categories to interpret Christian existence," John W. Thompson, *Hebrews,* Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 24–25.

[27]Ibid., 41.

[28]This is described in the *Phaedo*'s closing myth, *Phaed.* 107c1–115a8. I will follow in this work the description of Plato's cosmology by Sedley. For further study, see Ehrhardt, 87–106; Thomas Kjeller Johansen, *Plato's Natural Philosophy: A Study of the Timaeus-Critias* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

the world by Timaeus, and a second disposition by Critias, but the document breaks off and we do not get to hear what a third speaker (Hermocrates) was going to say.[29] David Sedley summarizes the main highlights of Timaeus' discourse on cosmology in the following way:

> *First principles*. After an opening prayer, Timaeus invokes a strong version of the Platonic "two world" metaphysics, which separates a realm of intelligible being from one of perceptible becoming.
>
> *World design*. The product of an intrinsically good "maker" or "Demiurge," our world is modelled [sic] on an eternal Form, and is itself a single, spherical, intelligent entity, consisting of the four familiar stuffs, earth, water, air, and fire, plus a soul.
>
> *Materials*. The Demiurge designed the microscopic structure of the four elementary stuffs imposing beauty and functionality on a substrate called the "receptacle" whose motions had prior to his intervention been more or less chaotic. . . .
>
> *The world soul* was composed by the Demiurge out of a complex mixture of sameness, difference, and being, arranged in two strips—the circle of the Same and the circle of the Different—and divided into harmonic intervals. This is the structure that underlies the orderly motions of the heavenly bodies.
>
> *The human rational soul*. The human rational soul, also constructed by the Demiurge, was modelled [sic] by him on the world soul, and was later housed in our approximately spherical heads in imitation of the way the world soul occupies, and rotates through, the spherical heaven. Its incarnation has disrupted its naturally circular motions, but by imitating the world soul it can aspire eventually to restore them.
>
> *The human body*. Anything the Demiurge makes, including our rational souls, is thereby immortal. To avoid making human beings themselves immortal, the detailed design and construction of the human body, including the mortal soul-parts, had to be delegated to the lesser, created gods. They designed and built the human body as a suitable housing for the rational soul.
>
> *Other animals*. These were created as deliberately engineered degenerations from the human archetype, designed to imprison ex-human souls for a period of punishment and redemption.[30]

The interpreters of the *Timaeus* have long debated whether Plato considered that there was really a divine craftsman who, in a specific date in the past, had built the world out of chaotic matter or this image was only employed to describe the causal role of intelligence in a world that has existed

[29]For a study of the internal logic of the different sections of the *Timaeus-Critias*, see Johansen, 7–23. The *Timaeus* is presented as a continuation of the *Republic*. Johansen argues that "the *Timaeus-Critias* can be seen as an extension of the concern in the *Gorgias* and the *Republic* with refuting the view that nature supports vice and undermines virtue" (22).

[30]Sedley, 97–98.

essentially unchanged from past eternity?[31] David Sedley concludes that Plato believed in an act of creation in time and that Aristotle, the Epicurians, the Stoics, and Galen all favored a literal reading of the *Timaeus*.[32] Plato's Demiurge is a craftsman. He is not the omnipotent God of the Bible. He models the world on an eternal Form and uses pre-existing matter that existed in a state of chaos. He is limited to some extent, however, by the matter he uses to create so that the world he creates is less than perfect. He structures the world in order "to provide souls, through a system of punishments and rewards, with the possibility of self-purification, divinization, and eternal discarnate bliss."[33] The world is made with the soul in mind. All the animal kingdom was modeled on one Form. The superior species are those that resemble more closely the Form—these are the immortal fiery animals (the star gods) created by the Demiurge. The lower ones are the mortal species associated with air, earth, and water and were created by the immortal fiery animals.[34]

Does the Letter to the Hebrews Contain Platonic Ideas?

Some consider that Hebrews' use of the terms ὑπόδειγμα and σκία, ἀντίτυπος, εἰκων and πρᾶγμα, and ἀληθινός is an evidence of the presence of Platonic ideas in the Letter to the Hebrews. A closer analysis, however, shows that this not the case.

"Ὑποδειγμα has perhaps played more of a role in the 'Platonizing' of Hebrews than any other factor."[35] This word appears in Heb 8:5 and has been translated as "copy" (e.g. RSV) conveying the sense that the earthly sanctuary was a "copy" of the heavenly one. Plato believed that the earthly world (perceived by the senses) is a 'copy' (μίμημα or εἰκών) of eternal ideas (*Tim.* 48e–49a). Philo shared this view. According to him God created the earthly world as a beautiful copy (μίμημα καλὸν) of a beautiful pattern (καλοῦ παραδείγματος; for example, *Creation* 16).[36] The comparison between the earthly and the heavenly world and between shadow and reality in Heb 8:5 and 9:23 made unavoidable for some the conclusion that the author of

[31]For references to studies on this debate, see ibid., 98 n. 9.

[32]The *Timaeus* has the outward form of a creation myth but its contents switch repeatedly between myth, fable, prayer, and scientific analysis. See ibid., 97, 107.

[33]Ibid., 125–6.

[34]See ibid., 127–32.

[35]Hurst, 14.

[36]"For God, being God, assumed that a beautiful copy [μίμημα] would never be produced apart from a beautiful pattern, and that no object of perception would be faultless which was not made in the likeness of an original discerned only by the intellect" (Philo, *Creation* 16 [Colson, LCL 226, 14–15]) See also, Peder Borgen, Kåre Sigvald Fuglseth, and Roald Skarsten, "μίμημα" *The Philo Index: A Complete Greek Word Index to the Writings of Philo of Alexandria* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 226.

Hebrews was influenced by the classical dualism of Plato via Philo.[37] There are, however, several problems with this view. First, "ὑπόδειγμα is *not* a word characteristic of Philo."[38] He and Plato preferred παραδειγμα (e.g. *Creation* 16). Second, ὑπόδειγμα does not mean "copy" but the opposite: "something *to be* copied," an "example."[39] A better translation in the context of Heb 8:5 and 9:23 would be "sketch" or "prototype." Third, παραδειγμα in Plato and Philo denotes the world of ideas, while in Hebrews ὑπόδειγμα denotes the earthly tabernacle. Hebrews' use of ὑπόδειγμα, then, does not actually support the idea that Hebrews has a platonic worldview.

Hebrews' use of the term ἀντίτυπος has also been understood in platonic terms,[40] especially where the earthly tabernacle is contrasted with the heavenly one in 9:24. Ἀντίτυπος could mean "copy" as well as "original" and in classical Greek "occasionally means 'echo,' 'corresponding,' 'opposite,' 'reproduction' . . ."[41] The immediate context of this verse, however, suggests a prefiguration relationship (type-antitype) rather than a metaphysical one (original-copy; see also discussion above on ὑπόδειγμα). First Peter 3:21—the only other occurrence of the term in the NT[42]—uses ἀντίτυπος in a type-antitype relationship as well. This same relationship seems to fit better the context of Hebrews. In this sense, Moses' tabernacle is a prefiguration of something that comes later; thus, ἀντίτυπος does not carry a Platonic sense in Heb 9:24.

The phrase "εἰκόνα τῶν πραγμάτων" (lit. image of the things) in Heb 10:1 has been forwarded as another example of Platonic and Philonic influence on Hebrews.[43] Plato (*Crat.* 306e) and Philo (for example, *Alleg. Interp.* 3.96, *Abraham* 3f.) used εἰκών (image) to refer to the earthly (perceived)

[37]William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8,* WBC 47a (Dallas, TX: Word, 1991), 207.

[38]Hurst, 13. Ὑπόδειγμα is used only four times by Philo. See, "μίμημα," *Philo Index*, 226. In fact, "Kenneth Schenck points out that the term 'is *never* used by *any* ancient author, let alone Philo or Plato, in reference to a Platonic copy,'" *A Brief Guide to Philo* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 84; quoted in Edward Adams, "The Cosmology of Hebrews," in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 133.

[39]Hurst, 14. In the Septuagint and in Philo is used mostly in the sense of moral example.

[40]For example, in Neo-Platonism by Plotinus, *Enn.* 2.9,6 where ἀντίτυπος is contrasted with αὐθεντικόν, Hurst, 18. The term ἀντίτυπος, however, was rarely used in Judaism.

[41]Hurst, 17–18. Philo uses it only three times (*Planting.* 133, *Confusion.* 102, *Heir* 181) in the sense of "resistant" or "inimical."

[42]It should be noted that the order is reversed in 1 Peter. The baptism, which is the antitype, is the fulfillment while in Hebrews the antitype is what prefigures the fulfillment. This should not have much importance since it is the type-antitype relationship in the context of the history of salvation which is important for understanding Hebrews' use of the term, ibid., 18.

[43]See ibid., 19.

world. For Philo, "image" (εἰκών) and "shadow" (σκία) are synonymous[44] and both refer to the earthly world of perception. For Hebrews, however, "image" (εἰκών) belongs to the heavenly world and is opposed to "shadow" (σκία).[45] In conclusion, the terms are the same but used differently, evidencing a different conceptual background.

Finally, as Lincoln D. Hurst explains, "it has been assumed by many that ἀληθινός, used by *Auctor* [of Hebrews] in 8:2 and 9:24, relates specially to Plato's *Rep.* VI.499c, and means the 'real' world of the eternal archetypes as opposed to the 'unreal' world of earthly copies."[46] Hebrews' comparison in those verses, however, is not between the phenomenal sanctuary (earthly) and the ideal (heavenly); but between the symbol (Mosaic Tabernacle) and the reality (Heavenly Tabernacle). The Greek term ἀληθινός (true) refers in this case to "the reality to which the symbol points,"[47] namely, the heavenly sanctuary. Further examples in the New Testament of this typological argument may be found in John 6:32, Rom 2:28, and Phil 3:3. Again, Hebrews' use of ἀληθινός (true) does not evidence that it shares a Platonic/Philonic worldview.

Should We Understand the Heaven-Earth Vertical Duality in Hebrews from a Platonic Point of View?

The presence of "vertical" patterns in Hebrews (for example, a heaven-earth duality) does not necessarily imply a Platonic or Philonic mode of thinking. The idea that Greek thought deals with space (a "vertical" cosmological framework) while Jews think in terms of time (a "horizontal" temporal framework) has been overstated.[48] Christianity, in fact, merges both frameworks. Christianity's worldview included the idea of the present and coming ages (horizontal temporal framework), which overlapped with heavenly and earthly domains (vertical cosmological framework). Colossians 3:1–4 is a good example of this phenomenon:

> So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is

[44] *Alleg. Iterp.* 3.96 reads: "Bezaleel means, then, 'in the shadow of God'; but God's shadow is his Word, which he made use of like an instrument, and so made the world. But this shadow, and what we may describe as the representation, is the archetype for further creations. For just as God is the Pattern [παραδειγμα] of the Image [εἰκών], to which the title of Shadow [σκία] has just been given, even so the Image becomes the pattern of other beings, as the prophet made clear at the very outset of the Law-giving by saying, 'And God made the man after the image of God" (trans. Colson, LCL 226, 364–367).

[45] Hurst, 19–20.

[46] Ibid., 20.

[47] Ibid., 20, 21.

[48] Hurst, 21.

> hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

In this text, the apostle merges vertical and horizontal frameworks. He invites his readers to look for the things above (vertical framework) so that they might be revealed in the future (horizontal framework) with Jesus in glory.

In the same way, Hebrews' view of reality includes the overlap of vertical and horizontal dimensions. According to Heb 8:5, the earthly tabernacle built by Moses was a ὑποδεῖγμα (pattern) and σκιά (shadow) of the heavenly sanctuary. Yes, there is here a vertical dimension that involves heaven and earth, but there is also a horizontal dimension in time. Moses' tabernacle was a prototype of an eschatological reality to be fulfilled by Christ when he offered himself as sacrifice and ascended to heaven to minister in our behalf.[49] Thus, in the argument of Hebrews the earthly tabernacle is not simply a shadow but a foreshadow of the heavenly one. According to Heb 10:1, the ritual of Moses' tabernacle pointed toward the future: "Since the law has only a shadow [σκιά] of the *good things to come* and not the true form of these realities . . ." (NRSV, emphasis mine; see also 9:11–14). The contrast between the heavenly and the earthly sanctuary is, then, temporal ("then-now," horizontal) and spatial ("above-below," vertical).[50]

The overlap of vertical and horizontal dimensions in Hebrews is, however, a little more complex. The ritual of the earthly sanctuary pointed toward the new reality achieved by Christ in heaven now but that believers will only enjoy in the future (e.g., Heb 11). Thus, the author of Hebrews sees the future as already happening in heaven. This is frequent in other biblical writers. For example, the future inheritance of Christians is seen as already present in heaven:

[49]Hurst, 16.

[50]An apparent contradiction results, however, from this horizontal (temporal) contrast between both sanctuaries. How do we understand that the earthly sanctuary is the "prefiguration" of the heavenly one (the "good things to come," 10:1) if the heavenly sanctuary was already present in Moses' time and seems to be the basis on which the earthly one was designed (Heb 8:5)? Does not Ex 25:40 imply that the heavenly comes first and the earthly later?

There were four views in Judaism as to when the Heavenly Sanctuary was built: (1) before creation, (2) at creation, (3) when the earthly sanctuary was built, and (4) at the end of the age. Hurst argues that Hebrews should be included in the fourth view and gives several arguments (ibid., 38-41): (1) Heb 8:2 says that the heavenly tabernacle was actually pitched by the Lord; therefore, it is not archetypically eternal in the Platonic sense; (2) Heb 9:8 clearly implies that the heavenly sanctuary is the "second" and the earthly is the "first;" (3) Heb 9:23 says that the sanctuary was "purified" by Jesus' blood which must refer to the Inauguration of the Sanctuary and not to the Day of the atonement (Heb 9:15–22); and (4) finally, Heb 13:14 talks about the future manifestation on earth of this heavenly temple (implied in the "heavenly city"). Hurst offers 1 Enoch 90:28–29 as an example of the view that God would build a Sanctuary at the end of the age.

> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, *kept in heaven for you* (1 Pet 1:3–4, NRSV, emphasis mine).

Likewise, what is present in God's mind is considered as having already happened or even as being eternal and this is the essence of the Jewish thought of predestination. For example, Rev 13:8 asserts: "All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world" (cf. Eph 1:4–5).

Therefore, the heavenly sanctuary may be eternal in the sense that it was in the mind of God since the beginning; that is, it was predestined by God and prefigured in the earthly tabernacle. In summary, Hebrews' understanding of the Heavenly Sanctuary is eschatological but existed already in God's mind from the beginning of time when he conceived the plan of redemption.

There are other evidences that Hebrews does not share a Platonic view of the universe. Hebrews does not exhibit the slightest trace of discomfort with the idea that God created the physical universe (Heb 2:10; 3:4; 4:3–4; 11:3) and does not accord the Son, who collaborated in Creation, a Demiurgical role (1:2–3, 10–12).[51] The heaven-earth duality in Hebrews hardly agrees with Plato's distinction between the physical world and the realm of ideas. The author describes Heaven as a city populated with angels, and God and Jesus at the center. Heaven and earth do not form in Hebrews an antithetical dualism. They are not polarized.[52] Finally, Hebrews announces a future destruction of the world (12:25–27), but Plato (*Tim.* 32C, 33A) and Philo (*Eternity* 1–20) argue that the universe will last forever.

In summary, Hebrews uses "Platonic-sounding language" but this use does not suggest its author sees the universe in Platonic dualistic terms.[53] Furthermore, the author of Hebrews is at odds on the inherent worthiness of the physical world and the eternal destiny of the present world.

What Does the Author of Hebrews Say about the Creation of the World?

ἐπ᾽ ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων ἐλάλησεν ἡμῖν ἐν υἱῷ, ὃν ἔθηκεν κληρονόμον πάντων, δι᾽ οὗ καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας· (Heb 1:2)

> … in these last days he spoke to us in a son, whom he appointed heir of all [things], through whom also [he] made the universe.[54]

This is the first passage in Hebrews to refer to creation. It raises two questions in our mind: "what did God create?" and "how did he create it?" We are going to address them in that order.

[51]Adams, 130.

[52]Ibid., 134.

[53]Ibid., 138.

[54]Translations are mine, unless otherwise noted.

The passage affirms that God made the "*aionas*" through Jesus, which is the Greek term that I have translated here as "universe." The Greek term αἰών (aion) has a long history of evolution and therefore it is not strange that New Testament authors use it in different ways.[55] Αἰών may refer to prolonged time or eternity both for the future and the past—especially when used with a preposition (e.g., ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος; εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα).[56] It may refer as well to the time or duration of the world—for example, in the expression "the end of the age [συντέλεια αἰῶνός]" (e.g., Matt 13:39; cf. 28:20; 1 Cor 10:11). A third use of αἰών is to refer to the world itself and not to its time. In this sense the meaning is not temporal but local—making αἰών equivalent to κόσμος—and could be translated as world or universe (e.g., Mark 4:19; Matt 13:22; 1 Cor 1:20; 2:6–8 [cf. 3:19; 7:33]).[57] Finally, this term was also used to refer to the eschatological scheme of this age and the age to come, which is found in apocalyptic and rabbinic texts and in the NT.[58]

The term αἰών appears 15 times in Hebrews[59] and the author uses it in all the senses mentioned above.[60] The author of Hebrews is unique in the NT, however, both in the fact that here (1:2) and in 11:3 it refers to the object of the Son's creation activity with the term αἰών and that it uses it in the plural form.[61] This fact opens several possibilities regarding the meaning of

[55]See H. Sasse, "αἰών," *TDNT,* trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–1976) 1:197–208; J. Guhrt, "αἰών," *NIDNTT*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1975-1978) 3:826–33. In ancient Greece, αἰών denoted relative time—or time "allotted to a being" (Sasse, *TDNT* 1:197–8)—in contrast to χρόνος that denoted time itself. Thus, Homer uses αἰών as a parallel to Life (*Il.* 16, 453); Hesiod, to denote a life-span (frag. 161, 1); and Aeschylus to denote a generation (*Sept.* 742). Plato, however, used αἰών to refer to timeless, ideal eternity in contrast to χρόνος that is the time created with the world. Plutarch and the earlier stoics adopted Plato's views and from them the traditions of the mysteries of Αἰών and the speculations of the Gnostics. Finally, the idea of a personal Αἰών—or personified αἰῶνες—became important in Hellenistic syncretism.

[56]See L&N (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989) 93.615; Sasse, *TDNT* 1:198–202.

[57]The temporal element, though, is not completely lost but only recedes into the background.

[58]E.g., Matt 12:32; Mark 10:30; Luke 16:8; 20:34; Eph 1:21. See also Str.-B. (Munich, 1922-1961) 3.671–2; 4 Ezra 3.9; 8:41; Midr. Ps. 15[72b]; Sasse, *TDNT* 1:204–7.

[59]Heb 1:2, 8 (2x); 5:6; 6:5, 20; 7:17, 21, 24, 28; 9:26; 11:3; 13:8, 21 (2x).

[60]Prolonged time or eternity: 1:8; 5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21, 24, 28; 13:8, 21. The time or duration of the world: 9:26. This age and the age to come: 6:5 (cf. 2:5; 9:9–10). World or universe: 1:2; 11:3 (see discussion below).

[61]The plural of αἰών is common in prepositional phrases or as an attributive genitive to refer to prolonged time or eternity. In the LXX and the NT, it appears as the direct object of a verb only in Tob 13:18; Heb 1:2, and 11:3.

our passage. Does this passage refer to the creation of "ages"—that is, the present and coming age[62]—or the creation of "worlds"[63]?

What are these "worlds" that God created through the Son? Hebrews does not show any interest in a multiplicity of worlds as was later the case in rabbinical writings.[64] Ron A. Stewart has suggested that the author refers to the creation of the visible (or sense-perceptible) and invisible (intellectual) worlds that sum up the entire universe,[65] but as we will see, it is unlikely that the author is using Platonic categories here or elsewhere in the epistle. Others suggest that the author refers to the spheres that comprise the universe.[66]

The context suggests that the author has a spatial meaning in mind; in other words, that he is referring to the creation of "worlds." In the immediate context, the affirmation that God created τοὺς αἰῶνας through the Son is parallel to the affirmation that the Son inherited "all things" (1:2; τὰ πάντα) and that he (the Son) sustains "all things" (τὰ πάντα) by his powerful word (1:3). The expression τὰ πάντα is commonly used in the NT to express the idea that all creation is God's work and, therefore, there is no power independent of him in the universe.[67] Thus, probably the best translation for the expression τοὺς αἰῶνας is "universe."[68] In this sense, Heb 1:2 affirms that the Son inherits what he helped create in the first place, that is, "all things." We should understand that "all things" involves the earthly as well as the heavenly world, or "coming world," which the Son also inherits according to Heb 2:5 and 8:1–2.[69] It could not be differently since it is the Son who created the angels who inhabit heaven (Heb 1:7).

How did God create the universe? He created it *through* (διά) the Son.[70] This idea is also attested in other NT writings (e.g., John 1:3, 10; 1 Cor 8:6; cf.

[62]David A. deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle "to the Hebrews"* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 87.

[63]See Attridge; Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993); Spicq.

[64]Ellingworth, 96. Rabbinic writings refer to the creation of עוֹלָמִים—a word usually translated in the LXX with the plural of αἰών—referring to the creation of other worlds (see Str.-B. 3.671–2).

[65]Ron A. Stewart, "Creation and Matter in the Epistle of the Hebrews," *NTS* 12, (1966): 288. See also Ellingworth, 96.

[66]Attridge, 41. Note that Gen 1 refers among other things to the creation of the "vault" (רָקִיעַ) referring to the heavens.

[67]B. Reicke, "πᾶς," *TDNT* 5:893–6.

[68]Lane, 5. See BDF (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961) §§ 4(2), 141(1). See also analysis of the expression "at the end of the ages" (ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων) in Heb 9:26.

[69]This is further supported by the quotation of LXX Ps 102:26–28 in the very next section (see below), which refers to the creation of the earth (γή) and the heavens (οὐρανοί).

[70]Kenneth Schenck has recently argued that the Son's relationship to creation is

Col 1:16). The author's affirmation that God created the universe "through" Jesus does not mean that Jesus is inferior to the Father as a hammer or a saw is inferior to the builder or as the servant is inferior to the master. The context emphasizes the identification and close relationship between the Son and God (Heb 1:3–4). Jesus is the one who enacts the purposes of the Father. Thus, without contradicting himself, the author may refer to the Son in Heb. 1:10 as the "Lord" who created "the earth and the heavens." The same cannot be affirmed of a tool that is manipulated or a servant who only follows the commands of another. The creation of the universe through Jesus speaks of the "perfect accord of will and activity between Father and Son."[71]

The passage has an underlying logic that is worth noting. Before affirming the role of the Son in the creation of the universe, the author had argued that the Son functioned as God's word: "God, having spoken long ago in many parts and in many ways to the fathers by the prophets, in these last days spoke to us in a Son . . . " (Heb 1:1–2).[72] Thus, the passage affirms that Jesus is both the word of God in "these last days" and the means through which God created the universe at the beginning of time. (There is, then, a consistency in the way God acted at the beginning of time and now at the end of time.) This implicitly agrees with the OT assertions that God created the universe through his word (Gen 1:3, 6; Ps 33:6). The next passage, Heb 1:3, strengthens these allusions by noting that the Son continues to sustain the universe "by his powerful word" (NRSV).

In summary, this passage does not only refer to the creation of the world but also to the creation of the universe, that is to say, of everything over which God has sovereignty. It also confirms the intimate connection between the Father and the Son in the work of creation and an implicit affirmation that God created through his "word" as affirmed in Genesis.

The second reference to creation is found in Hebrews 1:10–12, which quotes—with some modifications—LXX Psalm 101:26–28.

> σὺ κατ᾽ ἀρχάς, κύριε, τὴν γῆν ἐθεμελίωσας, καὶ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σού εἰσιν οἱ οὐρανοί· (Heb 1:10)
>
> You, in the beginning, Lord, founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.

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not as "creator" but as the goal of God's purposes, Schenck, chs. 5–6.

[71]John Webster, "One Who Is Son: Theological Reflections on the Exordium to the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology,* ed. Richard Bauckham et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 84.

[72]The expression ἐν υἱῷ ("in a Son") can be understood as the Son being the messenger (so NRSV) or as embodying the message (so NASB). The argument of Hebrews 2:6–10 implies that Jesus does not only carry a message for humanity but that he himself embodies that message. He is himself "divine speech," Koester, 185. See also Craig R. Koester, "Hebrews, Rhetoric, and the Future of Humanity," *CBQ* 64, (2002): 103–23.

Psalm 101 (LXX) is a petitionary hymn in which the distance between the Creator and the creature is emphasized.[73] The author quotes this Psalm to support his previous assertion that God created the universe "through the Son" (see above) and to emphasize the absolute superiority of the Son over the angels (1:5–14).[74] They are created and transient (1:7) while the Son is creator and remains forever (1:10–12). In fact, the author calls the Son straightforwardly "God" in Heb 1:8—by means of the quotation of LXX Ps 44:7–8—and attributes to him in Heb 1:10–12 what was said of God in LXX Ps 101:26. The author plainly attributes full divinity to the Son through these quotations.[75]

Four issues call our attention in this passage. What "beginning" is our author referring to? Does this verse contradict the idea of Genesis that God created the world with his word?

Let us begin with the first question: What beginning is our author referring to? The quotation of LXX Ps 101:26–28 in Heb 1:10–12 is divided in two unequal parts. The first has to do with the actions of the Son regarding the beginning of the world: in the beginning, he "founded" the earth and made the heavens (Heb 1:10). The second part has to do with what the Son will do at the end (vv. 11–12). The Son will "roll them up" and "change" them.[76] The expression κατ' ἀρχάς is a classic synonym for the expression ἐν ἀρχῃ, (in the beginning) used in the Old Greek translation of the Gen 1:1.[77] The juxtaposition of the beginning and the end in the same passage suggests that the author has in mind a merism.[78] Similarly, the reference to the earth and the heavens is a merism used to refer to the totality of the world. The author refers to "laying the foundation" of the earth (ἐθεμελίωσας) and building the heavens, which are the two farthest point of the totality of the cosmos.[79] Thus, this passage affirms both that Jesus has created the totality

[73]Johnson, 80.

[74]For the relationship between Heb 1:1–4 and the chain of quotations in Heb 1:5–14, see John P. Meier, "Structure and Theology in Heb 1,1–14," *Bib* 66, (1985): 168–89.

[75]See Richard Bauckham, "The Divinity of Jesus Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology,* ed. Richard Bauckham et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 24–26.

[76]This passage is the counterpart to the quotation of Hag 2:6 in Heb 12:26. They explain each other. Ellingworth, 126.

[77]Ibid., 127. See also G. Delling, "ἀρχή" *TDNT* 1:478–482; H. Bietenhard, "ἀρχή" *NIDNTT* 1:165–9.

[78]A merism is a figure of speech that lists two or more elements of a thing—usually its opposite extremes—to denote the totality of a thing; for example, the familiar English expression that someone "searched high and low" to mean that he searched "everywhere."

[79]There is no interest in this passage in stoic doctrines of the foundation of the earth before its actual creation.

of the world (universe) and has acted throughout the totality of time—of the world in this case.

The reference to "earth" and the "heavens" is an allusion to Gen 1:1, though in the opposite order. Hebrews changes the order of the elements with the purpose of emphasizing heaven,[80] which is the realm where angels live[81] and an important concept in Hebrews. The author will emphasize heaven again in Heb 12:26 when he refers to the final destruction of the world (12:26). Thus, the context suggests that the author has in mind the same beginning of Gen 1:1, the beginning of the world as a whole, which marks as well the beginning of time.

Does this verse contradict the assertion of Genesis that God created the world with his word?[82] Genesis 2:7 also affirms that "God formed man from the dust of the ground" (NRSV), which seems to imply the use of His hands. The expression "works of someone's hands," however, is an idiomatic expression that refers to the activity of a person, not to the manner in which a person does things.[83] The strength and energy of a person "are made effective through his hands" (see Heb 2:7 [variant reading]; 8:9; 10:31; 12:12);[84] thus, the hand of God is a symbol of his power (2 Chr 20:6) to create (Isa 48:13), protect (Ezra 7:6; Job 5:18; Ps 145:16; Isa 49:16), and destroy (Exod 7:4; 9:3; 1 Sam 7:13). In fact, the hands can stand for a person (Acts 17:25). Thus, the assertion "the heavens are the work of your [God's] hands" means simply that the heavens are the result of God's activity and power and does not imply a contradiction to the assertion that God created the world through his word.

> ἔπρεπεν γὰρ αὐτῷ, δι' ὃν τὰ πάντα καὶ δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα, πολλοὺς υἱοὺς εἰς δόξαν ἀγαγόντα τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῶν διὰ παθημάτων τελειῶσαι (Heb 3:4).
>
> For it was fitting for Him, for the sake of whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the champion of their salvation through sufferings.

The phrase "for the sake of whom are all things, and through whom are all things" is a circumlocution for God.[85] This form of reference to God is significant in two different ways. First, it reminds the readers that the same God who created them is the one who will make everything that is necessary so that they may fulfill the original plan for which they were created. That original plan was described in Ps 8 (which is quoted in Heb 2:5–9) but the author of Hebrews argues that it has been brought to fulfillment only in and

[80]Ellingworth, 127.

[81]Attridge, 60. Some consider that the plural refers to several heavens where different orders of angels lived, see Ellingworth, 126–7.

[82]See also Isa 66:2; Acts 7:50.

[83]Ellingworth, 127. See F. Laubach, "χείρ," *NIDNTT* 2:148–50; E. Lohse, "χείρ," *TDNT* 9:424–34.

[84]F. Laubach, "χείρ," *NIDNTT* 2:148–50.

[85]Lane, 55; Adams, 125. Similarly, μεγαλωσύνη ("Majesty") in 1:3 and 8:5.

through Jesus.[86] Second, this circumlocution for God shows that there is not the minimal reticence on the part of the author to identify God as the agent for the creation of the physical universe. In Plato's worldview, the supremely good god could have not created the universe; instead it was a minor god (a Demiurge), and a series of derivations, who created the physical universe.

> πλείονος γὰρ οὗτος δόξης παρὰ Μωϋσῆν ἠξίωται, καθ' ὅσον πλείονα τιμὴν ἔχει τοῦ οἴκου ὁ κατασκευάσας αὐτόν· πᾶς γὰρ οἶκος κατασκευάζεται ὑπό τινος, ὁ δὲ πάντα κατασκευάσας θεός (Heb 3:4).
>
> For Jesus is worthy of more glory than Moses, just as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.

This passage contains the simple assertion that God is the creator of all things. But this assertion is misleadingly simple.

In Heb 3:1–6, the author develops a comparison between Jesus and Moses. The argument is simple. Both were faithful to God (3:1–2); yet, Jesus has superior glory to Moses because he is a Son over the house of God while Moses is a servant in the house of God (Heb 3:5–6).[87] The central element in this comparison, the axis on which the comparison turns, is the simple assertions of verses 3–4.[88] Verse 3 says that Jesus has superior glory to Moses just like the builder of a house has more glory than the house he has built. The comparison of Jesus and Moses to the builder and a house is more than just a comparison. Just like the string of an instrument that is played may produce a number of overtones (higher frequencies) along with the fundamental tone (or frequency), this comparison produces a series of important "overtones." First, the comparison brings to mind that Jesus is the builder of the universe (Heb 1:3, 10–12) while Moses is a created being and, therefore, part of the house built (Heb 3:5–6). Second, the author's play with different uses of the word house (οἶκος) produces another overtone.[89] In verses 1–2, the word "house" denoted God's people, Israel;[90] but the truism

[86]See Koester, "Hebrews, Rhetoric, and the Future of Humanity," 103–23.

[87]Regarding the importance of glory or honor in the Greco-Roman culture of the first century A.D., see deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude*, 134–7.

[88]Lane, 77.

[89]See discussion in Ellingworth, 205–206.

[90]The reference to Jesus as faithful priest in verses 1–2 also brings to mind the prophecy of 1 Sam 2:35 where God promises that he is going to raise a "faithful priest" and he will build him a "sure [πιστός, faithful] house." In this case, "house" denotes a family lineage or dynasty of priests. Note that in Heb 10:19–23, the author refers to Jesus as a great priest over the house of God, implying that believers are a house of priests (see Heb 13:10–16). The importance of the sanctuary and the author's concern with the inauguration of the new covenant sanctuary in heaven (Heb 9:15–23) also suggest the possibility that the author is referring to the construction of a sanctuary.

in Heb 3:4 ("every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God"[91]) raises the stakes. House in this place denotes everything, the universe, and only God can be its builder. The affirmation that God is the builder of "all things" does not deny that Jesus is the builder of the universe (remember that in Heb 3:3 Jesus is clearly compared to a builder); instead, it brings to mind earlier references to the divinity of Jesus (1:2–4, 8–12), who participated with God (the Father) in the creation of the universe (Heb 1:2–3, 8–12).[92] It also brings to our mind sovereignty over the universe. Jesus is the Son who is "heir of all things." Thus, the next verses (5–6) describe Jesus as Son "over" the house of God.

In summary, this passage asserts simply that God is the creator of the universe but along with this assertion, it brings to mind that Jesus is co-creator with God, divine like him, and sovereign over the universe with the Father.

There are four references to creation in Heb 4. I will address those references in vv. 3–4 and 10 first.

> Εἰσερχόμεθα γὰρ εἰς [τὴν] κατάπαυσιν οἱ πιστεύσαντες, καθὼς εἴρηκεν· ὡς ὤμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου· εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου, καίτοι τῶν ἔργων ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου γενηθέντων. εἴρηκεν γάρ που περὶ τῆς ἑβδόμης οὕτως· καὶ κατέπαυσεν ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ (vv. 3–4).
>
> For we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, "As in my anger I swore, 'They shall not enter my rest,'" though his works were finished at the foundation of the world. For in one place it speaks about the seventh day as follows, "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works." (Heb 4:3–4, NRSV)
>
> ὁ γὰρ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς κατέπαυσεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ ὥσπερ ἀπὸ τῶν ἰδίων ὁ θεός (Heb 4:10).

[91]The expression ὁ κατασκευάσας—used to refer to God as the builder of "all things"—may mean to make ready for some purpose (make ready, prepare), to bring a structure into being (build, construct, erect, create), or to furnish/equip something, BDAG (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) 526–7. Hebrews uses the verb both to mean the construction of something (e.g., Noah's construction of the ark, 11:7) and to the act of furnishing something (e.g., the sanctuary for priestly service, 9:2, 6). Here, the previous assertions of Heb 1:3, 10–12 suggest that the author refers to the creation or construction of the universe more than of its furnishing. In fact, the LXX translates the participle בּוֹרֵא (creator), from the verb בָּרָא (to create), with the expression ὁ κατασκευάσας (the builder). The verb κατασκευάζω is also used for God's creational work in the LXX Isa 40:28; 43:7; 45:7, 9; Bar 3:39; Wis 9:2; 11:24; 13:4, Adams, 126. Craig R. Koester suggests that the author may have both meanings in mind in the sense that God both built the universe and furnished it so that there could be glory (2:10), rest (4:4, 10), and a city (11:16) for his people, Koester, *Hebrews*, 245.

[92]See Johnson, 109.

> For the one who has entered into his rest he also has rested from his labors just as God did from His.

These references to creation appear in the second exhortatory section of Hebrews that is found in chapters 3 and 4.[93] In this section, the author uses the language and events of Ps 95 and Num 14 to call the attention of the readers to the danger of disregarding the word of God.[94] The author describes the readers as in the same situation that the wilderness generation of Num 14 was: the moment of the fulfillment of the promise or, in other words, the moment to enter "the rest."[95] According to the argument of Hebrews, the repetition of the promise by David in Ps 95 (LXX 94) shows that the promise had not been fulfilled in the time of Joshua (Heb 4:8). The Psalm's exhortation "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts" (LXX 94:7–8, quoted in Heb 3:7–8; cf. 3:15; 4:7) implies that the reason for the failure of the wilderness generation was disobedience (ἀπείθεια) resulting from lack of faith (ἀπιστία, Heb 3:18–19).[96] The author, then, exhorts the readers to obey the voice of God by entering "the rest."[97] In Heb 4:3–10, the

[93]See discussion in Felix H. Cortez, ""The Anchor of the Soul that Enters within the Veil': The Ascension of the Son in the Letter to the Hebrews" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 2008), 284–9.

[94]The author introduces this section with the warning: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts" (3:7–8). This is a warning he repeats two other times in the section (cf. 3:15; 4:7).

[95]See John Dunnill, *Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews,* SNTSMS 75 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 141–3.

Psalm 95 refers to Meribah and Masah (Exod 17:7; Num 20:13). Hebrews reads Ps 95 in relation to Num 14 (Heb 3:17), where the "rest" implied is the land of Canaan (Deut 3:20; 12:9, 10; 25:19; Josh 1:13, 15; 21:44; 22:4). Rabbi Aqiba made also the same connection (b. San. 110b; t. San. 13:10 j. San 9.29c). See Otfried Hofius, *Katapausis: Die Vorstellung vom endzeitlichen Ruheort im Hebräerbrief*, WUNT 11 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1970), 41–47; Attridge, 125 n. 33.

[96]The Psalmist's exhortation refers to God's incrimination in Num 14:22 "[They] have tested me these ten times and have not obeyed my voice."

[97]Scholars continue to debate the meaning of "rest" in Heb 3–4. The debated issues include whether rest is a place or a state, a present reality or a promise about the future, the heavenly temple or a Christian Sabbath. For an evaluation of the several views, see Jon Laansma, *"I Will Give You Rest": The Rest Motif in the New Testament with Special Reference to Mt 11 and Heb3–4,* WUNT 98 (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1997), 276–332; Erhard Gallos, "Σαββατισμος in Hebrews 4" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 2011), 112, n. 2. (Gallos understands *sabbatismos* in Heb 4 as a call to literal Sabbath-keeping now, giving the faithful believer a weekly spiritual rest in this world.) In addition, different views regarding the religio-historical origin of the concept of "rest" have produced different solutions, for example: entry into the gnostic pleroma, liberation from foreign oppression (George Wesley Buchanan, *To the Hebrews: Translation, Comment and Conclusions,* AB 36 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972), 9, 63–65, 71), entry into the eschatological temple (Hofius, 53–54), or entry into the

author, however, makes an important redefinition of the concept of "rest" to which believers should "make every effort to enter" (v. 11). The author basically argues—though in a complex fashion—that the rest to which the desert generation was not able to enter—and to which believers are exhorted to enter—is the rest God enjoyed on the seventh day at the completion of the creation week.[98] Thus, the author refers to this type of rest as a σαββατισμός converting Sabbath observance into a symbol of salvation—a return to Eden.

The use of the Sabbath of the creation week as a symbol of salvation raises some questions about the author's understanding of the nature of the creation week. Did the author of Hebrews understand the creation week as a historical event consisting in a period of time equivalent to the week we experience today?

The argument of Heb 4 implies that God's rest on the seventh day of the creation was the prototypical rest into which he always desired his people to enter. The author calls this rest a σαββατισμός. This term derives from the verb σαββατίζειν which means "to keep the Sabbath"—just like βαπτισμός (baptism) derives from βαπτίζειν (to baptize)—and refers to the Jewish and the early Christian practice of keeping the seventh day of the week as a day of rest for religious purposes.[99] Erhard Gallos, after analyzing all the references to this term that occur both in Christian and non-Christian literature,[100] concludes that "we can say that σαββατισμός is used always literally, although sometimes pejoratively, with the exception of Origen who uses the term twice figuratively as a time period in the scheme of ages and as a cessation from sin."[101]

Is σαββατισμός—and by extension the creation week—understood in Hebrews as a historical or as a mythical event? This passage does not provide a categorical answer. There are some indications, however, that suggest that the author considered the creation week a historical event.

According to the argument of Heb 4, God's σαββατισμός at the end of the creation week was a prototype of what God wanted his people to enjoy as a result of their faith in Him. Thus, the relationship of God's σαββατισμός to life in the land of Canaan for Israel's desert generation is similar to the relationship between a type and an antitype only that in a more complex fashion. Israel's rest in the land of Canaan is a type of the salvation God wants to provide believers, which is at the same time described as entering the rest that God enjoyed on the Sabbath of the creation week. Thus, rest in the land of Canaan is a type that points at the same time to the future (to

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heavenly spiritual world (Thompson, 99).

[98]Harold W. Attridge, "'Let Us Strive to Enter That Rest': The Logic of Heb 4:1–11," *HTR* 73 (1980): 284.

[99]See discussion in Gallos, 202–9.

[100]Plutarch, *Superst.* 2 (166); Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 23.3; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 30.2.2; *Martyrium Petri et Pauli* 1; *Ap. Const.* 2.36.2; Origen, *Cels.* 5.59; *Comm. Jo.* 2.27; *Or.* 27.16; *Sel. Exod.* 12.289.7; *Exc. Ps.* 17.144.31.

[101]Gallos, 208.

the salvation of God's people) and to the past (to God's rest on the Sabbath of Creation). The important thing is that the relationship between rest in the land of Canaan and God's σαββατισμός is equivalent to other type-antitype relationships in the book of Hebrews. In the other type-antitype relationships in the book of Hebrews the former or earlier element on which the type-antitype relationship is anchored is always a historical event. Melchizedek's priesthood—a type for Jesus' priesthood (Heb 7), the Mosaic sanctuary—type of the heavenly sanctuary (8:5), the sacrifice for the inauguration of the old covenant—type of Jesus' sacrifice that inaugurates the new covenant (9:15–23), and the animal sacrifices of the old covenant—type of Jesus' sacrifice for the cleansing of sin (10:1–18)—are all historical events. This privileges the idea that the author considered God's rest at the Sabbath of creation a historical event as well.

The description of God's rest at creation as a σαββατισμός happening at the foundation of the world (ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου) is significant in this respect. The term καταβολή, as an extension of its original meaning of laying a foundation, is used to refer to a historical starting point.[102] The expression ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου ("from the foundation of the world") marks the starting point of the history of our world (Matt 13:35; 25:34; Luke 11:50; Heb 4:3; 9:26; Rev 13:8; 17:8). When biblical authors wanted to refer to events before the beginning of the history of the world, they used the expression πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου ("before the foundation of the world"; John 17:24; Eph 1:4; 1 Pet 1:20). This means that God rested at the beginning of the earth's history and, therefore, his rest on the seventh day of the creation week was the first σαββατισμός (Sabbath observance) in a succession of σαββατισμοί (Sabbath observances) throughout history. Thus, God's Sabbath rest at creation is the historical anchor that makes possible the description of salvation of believers as an eschatological σαββατισμός.

> Ζῶν γὰρ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐνεργὴς καὶ τομώτερος ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν μάχαιραν δίστομον καὶ διϊκνούμενος ἄχρι μερισμοῦ ψυχῆς καὶ πνεύματος, ἁρμῶν τε καὶ μυελῶν, καὶ κριτικὸς ἐνθυμήσεων καὶ ἐννοιῶν καρδίας· καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν κτίσις ἀφανὴς ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, πάντα δὲ γυμνὰ καὶ τετραχηλισμένα τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτοῦ, πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος (Heb 4:12–13).
>
> Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account (Heb 4:12–13, NRSV).

This passage is the culmination of the exhortation to believers to enter into the rest of God.[103] In fact, it should be considered a warning to those

[102]For example, Josephus uses it to refer to the date of the beginning of the rebellion (*J.W.* 2.260), H-H Esser, "καταβολή," *NIDNTT* 1:377.

[103]Note that the passage is introduced with the coordinating conjunction γάρ (Heb 4:12) that effectively connects 4:12–13 with the preceding argument.

who decide to ignore God's word. The passage was written with the intention to produce fear in the readers by emphasizing the power of the Word of God to judge and punish human behavior and intentions. This, of course, made the exhortation to pay attention to God's Word all the more compelling.[104] What gives force to the warning are two things: first, the double meaning of the expression "word of God," and the description of the readers as "creatures."

There is probably a transition in this passage from the message to the person who has given that message. Hebrews 4:12 focuses on God's message or speech. This message is specifically God's invitation to us in Psalms 95:7b–11 to enter into His rest. If we reject this invitation we will incur the judgment of God. In Hebrews 4:13, however, there is probably a transition from the message to the person of God. The NRSV suggests this transition by translating "And before *him* no creature is hidden" (emphasis mine) instead of "before it"[105] This transition is important because it brings into close relationship God and His word. God both created the world (Gen 1:3; Ps 33:6, 9) and acts in history through his "word" (the prophetic word, 1 Sam 15:24; Isa 1:10; Jer 1:4; Amos 5:1; Mic 1:1; etc.).[106] To this word, the author of Hebrews attributes the divine trait of "living,"[107] which is a favorite description of God Himself in Hebrews (3:12; 9:14; 10:31; 12:22).[108]

The subjects to God's word of judgment are described as "creatures." This description is important because it provides the rationale for their subjection to judgment: "creatures" are subject to the judgment of their creators (see Heb 1:10–12). In this case, the argument implies that creatures are subject to the Word of God, because He created them.

> γῆ γὰρ ἡ πιοῦσα τὸν ἐπ' αὐτῆς ἐρχόμενον πολλάκις ὑετὸν καὶ τίκτουσα βοτάνην εὔθετον ἐκείνοις δι' οὓς καὶ γεωργεῖται, μεταλαμβάνει εὐλογίας ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ· ἐκφέρουσα δὲ ἀκάνθας καὶ τριβόλους, ἀδόκιμος καὶ κατάρας ἐγγύς, ἧς τὸ τέλος εἰς καῦσιν. (Heb 6:7–8).
>
> Ground that drinks up the rain falling on it repeatedly, and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and on the verge of being cursed; its end is to be burned over (Heb. 6:7–8, NRSV).

The language of "thorns and thistles" (ἀκάνθας καὶ τριβόλους) is a possible allusion to Gen 3:12–18 where God curses the earth because of

[104]deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude*, 170–71.

[105]This would mean that God is the antecedent of αὐτοῦ twice ("before *him*" and "in *his* sight") as well as of the relative pronoun ὅν (whom). O'Brien, 177, n. 139.

[106]Johnson, 132.

[107]See Deut 4:33 (LXX); Ps 83:3 (LXX); Isa 37:4, 17(LXX).

[108]Active (ἐνεργής) suggests strength and effectiveness. In the NT, the cognates ἐνέργεια (Eph 1:19; 3:7; Phil 3:21; Col 2:12) and ἐνεργέω (1 Cor 12:6, 11; Gal 2:8; 3:5; Eph 1:11, 20; 3:2; Phil 2:13; Col 1:29) often refer to the work of God in the community. See Johnson, 133.

human sin.[109] The cursing of the land in Gen 3:18 is put as an example regarding the harsh consequences of disobedience. The language of the passage is also reminiscent of the covenantal language of Deuteronomy 30 and the song of the vineyard in Isa 50:1–10.

> ἐπεὶ ἔδει αὐτὸν πολλάκις παθεῖν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου· νυνὶ δὲ ἅπαξ ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων εἰς ἀθέτησιν [τῆς] ἁμαρτίας διὰ τῆς θυσίας αὐτοῦ πεφανέρωται. (Heb 9:26)
>
> for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself. (Heb 9:26, NRSV)

We have already studied the phrase "foundation of the world" (ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου) in Heb 4:3, which refers to the historical beginning of the world; that is, creation. Here, the reference to the foundation of the world contrasts the reference to the "end of the age"[110] and together span the whole story of the universe. There is no merism intended, however.

The passage contains a double comparison. The first comparison is between the multiple offering of the high priests every Day of Atonement and the singular offering of Christ. The second is between the priest's offering "blood that is not his own" and Jesus' "sacrifice of himself." The author stresses that Jesus' sacrifice is of such efficacy that by a single sacrifice it has removed sin. He concludes that if this was not the case, Jesus would have had to die "again and again" since the foundation of the world. The argument is a *reductio ad absurdum*:[111] no human dies "again and again" and therefore it is absurd that Jesus had to die again and again. This argument contains as well a veiled reference to the story of the fall in Gen 3.[112] If Jesus' sacrifice had been only as effective as animal sacrifices were, Jesus would have had to die at the "foundation of the world" because that was the time when sin entered the world, making sacrifices necessary (see Rom 5:12).[113] This was

[109]Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 173; Johnson, 164; Koester, *Hebrews*, 316; Lane, 143. Others emphasize the role of Isa 5:1–5 in the interpretation of this passage, deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude*, 229; George H. Guthrie, "Hebrews," *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 963.

[110]For the importance of the contrast, see Ellingworth, 484. The expression "ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων" is an allusion to Dan 9:26–27; 11:35; 12:13 (Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 264; Ellingworth, 484; Johnson, 244).

[111]See Koester, *Hebrews*, 428.

[112]Kenneth Schenck has argued recently on the basis of this passage that the author does not refer to the entrance of sin into the world but to the fact that creation itself, though not fallen, is itself a hindrance to the attainment of glory, Schenck, chs. 5–6. It is not clear, however, why an un-fallen creation would need a sacrifice of purification or atonement (9:15–28).

[113]Koester, *Hebrews*, 422.

not necessary, though, because Jesus' single sacrifice is enough to provide cleansing for human sin.

> Πίστει νοοῦμεν κατηρτίσθαι τοὺς αἰῶνας ῥήματι θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐκ φαινομένων τὸ βλεπόμενον γεγονέναι. (Heb 11:3)
>
> By faith we understand that the universe was fashioned by the word of God, so that from what is not visible became what is visible.

This is the most important passage on creation in the epistle to the Hebrews and probably the most famous biblical text on the topic in the whole New Testament. It contains an allusion to Gen 1 where Scripture describes how God created the world through his word. It also plays on the concepts of "faith" and "sight," which firmly connects the assertion of the author about creation to the larger argument on faith in the immediate context. According to Heb 11:1, faith has to do with things that we do not see but we hope for. The author affirms that the believer can grasp them through faith.[114] Then, the author provides in the rest of Heb 11 a list of heroes of faith that exemplify this fact. By faith, they "saw and greeted" the promises from a distance (11:13). By faith, they looked "ahead to the reward" (v. 26), to a heavenly country and a heavenly city (v. 16).

The first example, however, in the list of notables in Hebrews 11, is not a hero from the past, but the believer in the present. Furthermore, what he does not see but believes is not something in the future, but an event in the past. Faith in this verse does not provide certainty about the "things hoped for" but about the origin of all things. According to the author, believers understand by faith the creation of the universe. They were not able to see it because they were not there at creation but they understand it by faith. The allusion in this passage to Gen 1 implies that the believers' understanding is anchored in Scripture.

The idea that believers should understand *by faith* the creation of the world was as unpopular in the world of the New Testament as it is today in scientific circles. J. W. Thompson has noted that "a catalogue of heroes of πίστις, introduced as patterns of imitation, is unthinkable in any Greek tradition."[115] Lane explains that "to the formally educated person, πίστις, 'faith,' was regarded as a state of mind characteristic of the uneducated, who believe something on hearsay without being able to give precise reasons for their belief. The willingness of Jews and Christians to suffer for the undemonstrable astonished pagan observers."[116] This passage, then, challenged the original readers to "disregard the shame" and cling to faith in an age of reason.

[114]Paul makes a similar assertion in 2 Cor 4:18: "because we look not at what can be seen [τὰ βλεπόμενα] but at what cannot be seen [τὰ μὴ βλεπόμενα]; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal."

[115]Thompson, *Beginnings*, 53.

[116]William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13,* WBC 47b (Dallas: Word, 1991), 316. See also E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 120–22.

The specific meaning of this passage regarding the creation of world, however, is much debated. I am going to explore the meaning of this passage with two questions in mind: The first question is, what did God create? This question is closely related to whether we should read this verse from a platonic worldview or not. The second question is, how did God create? Or, is there an assertion of creation *ex nihilo* here?

The Greek term I translated "universe" is τοὺς αἰῶνας. It literally means "the ages" but could also have a spatial meaning thus referring to "the worlds" (see above the analysis of Heb 1:2). It has been argued that the plural "worlds" refer to the archetypal (noumenal) and phenomenal worlds of Plato's worldview. According to this view, the Platonic model of the cosmos—that distinguishes between the archetypal world perceived by the mind and a phenomenal world perceived by the senses—lies behind the formulation of this verse.[117]

This reading seems to be strengthened by the affirmation in the second half of the verse that "from what is not visible [the archetypal world?] became what is visible [the phenomenal world?]."[118] Another observation seems to further strengthen the case of a Platonic reading. According to Plato, the Demiurge fashioned the world from a preexisting mass that existed in chaotic disorder (*Tim.* 52D2–53B5).[119] The author of Hebrews uses the Greek term κατηρτίσθαι to describe the work of creation by the word of God. This term literally means "to put in order" or "restore."[120] Thus, it is concluded that this verse does not argue that God created the universe out of nothing, but that he used pre-existing matter in chaos to "fashion"—or "put in order"—the universe we are now able to see. In summary, Heb 11:3 may be read from a Platonic perspective in this way:

> Πίστει νοοῦμεν κατηρτίσθαι τοὺς αἰῶνας ῥήματι θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐκ φαινομένων τὸ βλεπόμενον γεγονέναι.
>
> By faith we understand that the worlds [the archetypal and the phenomenal worlds] were put in order by the word of God, so that from what is not visible [archetypal world] became what is visible [phenomenal world].

This reading would probably not seem strange in antiquity. It is often affirmed that "contemporary Platonism helped to shape Christian theology in the first centuries A.D."[121] Jewish Hellenistic figures—like Philo—and later

[117]Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 316; Stewart, 284–293; Thompson, 75.

[118]For example, Philo refers to the invisible sources of the created universe in *Creation* 16; *Confusion* 172; *Spec. Laws* 2.225; 4.187; *Alleg. Interp.* 2.2. See also Erich Gräßer, *Der Glaube im Hebräerbrief,* Marburger Theologische Studien 2 (Marburg: Elwert, 1965), 53–54.

[119]See also Williamson, 377–81; Adams.

[120]BDAG 526; *LSJ* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996) 910.

[121]J. M. Dillon, "Plato," *DNB* 805.

ancient Christian theologians—Justin, Tatian, Clement, and Origen—were clearly influenced by Platonism in varying degrees.[122]

A Platonic worldview, however, does not fit the text. Hebrews 11:3 would argue from this point of view that God created both the archetypal and the phenomenal worlds. According to Plato, however, the Demiurge did not create the archetypal world of ideas. This world is eternal (*Tim.* 29A). Second, and more importantly, Heb 11:3 affirms that God created the world "out of" (ἐκ) "what is not visible." Plato says, however, that the Demiurge created the world out of preexistent, visible matter. Preexisting matter is visible though in a state of chaos. Plato states: "the god took over all that was visible . . . and brought it from disorder into order" (*Tim.* 30A).[123] Though the archetypes may be visible only to the mind, the phenomenal world is not built "out of" (ἐκ) them but "according" to them (*Tim.* 28C5–29B1).[124]

Furthermore, the verse may not refer to the use of preexistent matter. The term κατηρτίσθαι does not mean only "to put in order," "restore," etc. It is also used to refer to the act of "creating," "making," "preparing," or "furnishing" something.[125] The verb denotes the action of ordering, restoring, making, or creating something, in the sense of making suitable or apt for use.[126] For example, this verb is used in LXX Ezra to denote the building of the wall and the temple (Ezra 4:12, 13, 16; 5:3, 9, 11; 6:14) but in Ps 73:16 (LXX) and 88:38 (LXX) for the creation of the sun and the moon. In Heb 11:3, κατηρτίσθαι is equivalent to γεγονέναι, which means "has become" or "was made." In Heb 10:5, καταρτίζω is used to refer to the action of God "preparing" a body for Jesus for him to come into the world and offer himself as a sacrifice. Thus, the verb does not necessarily imply the use of preexistent matter by the creator. It does emphasize that what he created was suitable or apt for use.

Finally, this passage may not refer to the creation of "worlds." The second half of the verse helps us understand that the meaning of the expression τοὺς αἰῶνας ("worlds") in the first half is equivalent to what is denoted by the singular τὸ βλεπόμενον ("what is visible") in the second half. This agrees with the fact that the expression τοὺς αἰῶνας may just mean "universe" as it does in Heb 1:2 (see my discussion there).[127] Furthermore, the author's allusion in this passage to Gen 1[128] helps us understand its meaning. What God created

[122]Ibid., *DNB* 807.

[123]See Adams, 128; Lane, *Hebrews 9-13,* 332; Sedley, 116–8.

[124]Adams, 128

[125]BDAG, 526; LSJ, 910. It is used in the LXX to translate nine different Hebrew verbs, including those meaning "to make," "to establish," "to found," R. Schippers, "καταρτίζω," *NIDNTT* 3:350.

[126]The verb καταρτίζω is a derivative of the term ἄρτιος that means "suitable, appropriate, useful, apt"; see Schippers, *NIDNTT* 3:349; Ellingworth, 570.

[127]See also Lane, 5. See BDF §§ 4(2), 141(1).

[128]Johnson, 280; Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, "The Doctrine of Creation in Hebrews 11:3," *BTB* 2, no. 1 (1972): 64. Also, Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 331.

is what is visible from the point of view of Gen 1—"the heavens and the earth" or the universe.[129]

In summary, a Platonic worldview does not fit the assertion of the passage. This passage is not talking about the creation of Plato's noumenal and phenomenal worlds but of the universe as conceived in Gen 1. As Edward Adams concludes, "the author's wording seems to exclude any positive influence from Platonic cosmogony; indeed, it may well be a polemic against it."[130]

Hebrews 11:3 simply affirms that what we see (the universe) came from or by[131] "what we do not see,"[132] but this can be understood in more than one way.

Some see in the expression "so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible" an affirmation that God created the universe out of nothing, a creation *ex nihilo*.[133] These interpreters equate "what is not visible" with "nothingness."[134] Thus, they would understand the passage in the following way:

> Πίστει νοοῦμεν κατηρτίσθαι τοὺς αἰῶνας ῥήματι θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐκ φαινομένων τὸ βλεπόμενον γεγονέναι.
>
> By faith we understand that the universe was fashioned by the word of God, so that from what is not visible [nothingness] became what is visible [universe].

The Old Greek translation of Gen 1:2 describes the earth before God's creation activity as ἀόρατος ("invisible") and ἀκατασκεύαστος ("not built/prepared"). Jacques Doukhan has recently made a case that Gen 1:2 refers to

[129]Koester, *Hebrews*, 473. See also analysis of Heb 1:2–3 above. The variation between the plural and the singular is only stylistic, Ellingworth, 569.

[130]Adams, 128. William Lane suggests that the author's aim was to correct a tendency in Hellenistic Judaism to read Gen 1 in the light of Plato's views, *Hebrews 9–13,* 332.

[131]The preposition ἐκ can denote among other things origin, derivation or cause; thus, the passage can be translated either "what is seen was made *from* things that are not visible" (origin) or "*by* things that are not visible" (cause, emphasis mine). See BDAG 297.

[132]Since the negative (μή) precedes the preposition, it is possible to read it with the verb (γεγονέναι) In this case the verse would affirm that what is visible did not become from what is visible. That is to say, the verse would deny a visible source for the universe. The order μὴ ἐκ φαινομένων, however, is normal in classical Greek and occasional in the NT (BDF §433) and has the purpose of emphasizing the negation. Thus, the verse should probably be read as an affirmation of an invisible source for the universe (see e.g., Ellingworth, 569; Hughes, 65.).

[133]E.g., Chrysostom, *NPNF*[1] 14.465; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 281.

[134]Hughes, 67.

a creation out of nothing.[135] In this sense, what is "invisible" (ἀόρατος, Gen 1:2) or "not visible" (μὴ φαινομένων, Heb 11:3), would be equivalent to "nothingness." In a similar fashion, *2 Enoch* 25:2 equates the invisible with the non-existent: "Before anything existed at all, from the very beginning, whatever is, I created from non-being into being, and from the invisible things into the visible" (*OTP* 1:143). Romans 4:17 and some non-canonical works (2 Macc 7:28; 2 *Bar.* 21:4; 48:8; 2 *En.* 24:2) also refer to this idea of a creation out of non-existence (non-being). It is commonly understood that these assertions of creation out of "non-existence" should be understood as affirming a creation out of nothing, *ex nihilo*. We cannot be entirely sure of this, however. The expression "non-being" did not necessarily mean "nothingness" to the ancient mind. For example, Xenofon asserts that "parents bring forth their children out of non being" (*Memorabilia* II.2.3).[136] It is clear, that parents bring forth their children out of non-being but not out of nothing.

A second view is that the expression "what is not visible" refers to the earth in an unformed state prior the creation week.[137] The Old Greek translation of Gen 1:2 refers to the earth as being "invisible" (ἀόρατος) and "formless" (ἀκατασκεύαστος) prior or at the beginning of the creation week. This would mean that there was a gap between the time God created the universe, including this earth in a raw state, and the beginning of the creation week. In this sense, "what is not visible" refers not to "nothingness" but to invisible and unformed matter. The passage would be translated in this way,

> Πίστει νοοῦμεν κατηρτίσθαι τοὺς αἰῶνας ῥήματι θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐκ φαινομένων τὸ βλεπόμενον γεγονέναι.
>
> By faith we understand that the universe was fashioned by the word of God, so that from what is not visible [raw, unformed earth, (LXX Gen 1:2)] became what is visible [earth after creation].

The problem with this view is that an allusion to the LXX translation of Gen 1:2 is not strong. The LXX uses the word ἀόρατος (invisible) but Hebrews uses μὴ φαινομένων (not appearing).

A third view is that the expression "what we do not see" refers to the "word of God." It is argued that this passage might contain an inverted parallelism or chiasm[138]:

[135]Jacques Doukhan, "The Genesis Creation Story: Text, Issues, and Truth," *Origins* 55 (2004), 12–33.

[136]See other examples and discussion in May, 6–21.

[137]See Adams, 128–9.

[138]E.g., Koester, *Hebrews*, 474.

Πίστει νοοῦμεν
A κατηρτίσθαι
B τοὺς αἰῶνας
C ῥήματι θεοῦ,
C′ εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐκ φαινομένων
B′ τὸ βλεπόμενον
A′ γεγονέναι.

By faith we understand
A was fashioned
B the universe
C by the word of God
C′ so that from what is not visible
B′ what is visible
A′ became

There are important similarities between the elements of this parallelism. Both A and A′ are verbs in infinitive that function as the main verbs of their respective clauses. The elements B and B′ are both accusative directly related to the infinitive verbs. This suggest that C and C′ are parallel as well.

The structure suggests, then, that "what is not visible" refers not to "nothingness" but to the "word of God" because it places them as parallel elements.[139] In this sense, "what is not visible"/"the word of God" is not the material out of which the universe was created but the effective cause. If this is the case, the second part of Heb 11:3 does not offer new information to the reader about how God created the world but explains in different words the same thing said in the first part of the passage that God created the world through his word.

Scripture often associates God with invisibility (e.g., Col 1:15; 1 Tim 1:17). Hebrews 11:27 says that Moses "endured as seeing Him [God] who is invisible" (NKJV). Romans 1:20, a similar passage to Heb 11:3, affirms that the "eternal power and divine nature" of God are invisible (ἀόρατα) but may be understood (νοούμενα) from what he has created. This suggests, in agreement with the structure of the passage, that "what is not visible" in Heb 11:3 is the "word of God," which is another way to refer to God himself and his power and divinity which are invisible according to Heb 11:27 and Rom 1:20 (see also comment on Heb 4:12–13 above). This view suggests that the preposition ἐκ in Heb 11:3 does not refer to the material "out of which" the universe ("what is visible") came to be, but to the agent through which creation occurred.[140] This would agree with the fact that the author refers elsewhere to the word of God in connection to the creation of the world (Heb 1:2; 4:12, 13). In summary, Heb 11:3 may also be read in the following way:

[139]See Koester, *Hebrews,* 474.

[140]See note 131.

> Πίστει νοοῦμεν κατηρτίσθαι τοὺς αἰῶνας ῥήματι θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐκ φαινομένων τὸ βλεπόμενον γεγονέναι.
>
> By faith we understand that the universe [heaven and earth] was made by the word of God, so that through what is not visible [word of God/God] became what is visible [the universe].

This view faces the problem that in the Greek text, "word of God" is singular but "what is not visible" is plural. Furthermore, "word of God" is dative and clearly instrumental, but the expression "what is not visible" is governed by ἐκ plus genitive, which normally identifies source not an instrument. These two elements are, then, not clear-cut parallels.[141] These are not insurmountable objections, however. The expression "what is not visible" in the original language is plural but conveys a single idea and therefore can be parallel to word of God. Also, as mentioned above, ἐκ plus genitive can be translated "by" in the sense of an effective cause.[142] Finally, inverted parallelisms or chiasms are not uncommon in Hebrews.[143] One example is found in the immediate context. Hebrew 11:1 says:

Ἔστιν δὲ πίστις
A ἐλπιζομένων
B ὑπόστασις,
B′ πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος
A′ οὐ βλεπομένων.

Now faith is
A of things hoped for
B the **assurance**,
B′ the **conviction** of things
A′ not seen.

Note the similarities. Both A and A′ are genitive plural participles whose function is to describe the elements in B and B′. Both B and B′ are nouns in nominative singular. It is probable, then, that Hebrews 11:3 is also an inverted parallelism. If this is the case, what the author of Hebrews intends in this passage is to drive home the idea that God created the world through his word and repeats the idea twice. The important thing for him is that we understand it by faith.

In summary, though it is not entirely clear in which of the three ways mentioned above the author meant his assertions in Heb 11:3, it is clear that the author is not indebted to platonic ideas in his understanding of creation.

[141]The author may well be, after all, making a distinction between the "word of God" as the instrument of creation and "what is not visible as its source," Adams, 128.

[142]See BDAG 297, Ellingworth, 569; Koester, *Hebrews,* 474; O'Brien, 402. See also, note 132.

[143]E.g., Heb 1:5; 12:6; 13:2, 14.

Hebrews 11:3 also makes clear that Genesis 1 is very important for him and that he understands it to be the basis of faith and understanding on issues of creation. I further suggest, that the probable presence of the inverted parallelisms in Heb 11:3 and 11:1 gives an advantage to the view that this passage speaks only about creation through the word of God according to Genesis 1. Whether this creation was *ex nihilo*, the epistle does not say.

> τὸ δὲ ἔτι ἅπαξ δηλοῖ [τὴν] τῶν σαλευομένων μετάθεσιν ὡς πεποιημένων, ἵνα μείνῃ τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα. (Heb 12:27)
>
> This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of what is shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain. (NRSV)

The question that comes to our mind is, does this passage imply that there are eternal entities (i.e., not created) that will survive God's shaking of earth and heaven?

Some commentators consider that this passage shows how the Platonic worldview has been incorporated into and adapted to the argument of the author of Hebrews.[144] James W. Thompson, for example, argues that this passage contrasts the sense-perceptible world (the material world) from the intelligible world (the non-material world).[145] The first world is transitory and the author of Hebrews also refers to it as "what is seen" (11:3), what can "be touched" (12:18), what is "made with hands" (9:11, 24), what is "of this creation" (9:11). This realm is transitory and corrupt. It is not permanent. The intelligible world, on the other hand, is the world where the "true tabernacle" is (8:2; 9:24). It is the heavenly world where Jesus has been exalted (1:3; 4:14; 7:26; 8:1; 9:24) and where we have access through faith in Jesus (4:14–16; 10:19–25). This realm is "true," perfect, steady, and eternal. Thompson concludes, then, that the author of Hebrews conceives a dual universe:

> [H]e knows two worlds already possessing full reality, one of which is material, and therefore, shakable; the other is not material, and is unshakable. When the material world disappears, only the world that is presently unseen (11:1) and untouchable (12:18), remains.[146]

From this point of view, the term πεποιημένων ("created things") stands in apposition to τῶν σαλευομένων ("what is shaken") and has the function of explaining what is going to be "removed." In this sense, creation will be removed because it is transient, imperfect, and corrupt. In summary, those who read Heb 12:27 from a Platonic perspective understand it in the following way.

[144]Johnson, 335. Similarly, Erich Gräßer argues that the author of Hebrews distinguishes a lower transient heaven and earth (Heb 1:10–12) from the eternal heavens where God and Christ abide, Erich Gräßer, *An die Hebräer,* EKKNT 17 (Zurich: Benziger Neukirchener, 1990–1997).

[145]James W. Thompson, "'That which cannot be shaken': Some Metaphysical Assumptions in Heb 12:27," *JBL* 94 (1975): 580–87.

[146]Ibid., 586.

> τὸ δὲ ἔτι ἅπαξ δηλοῖ [τὴν] τῶν σαλευομένων μετάθεσιν ὡς πεποιημένων, ἵνα μείνῃ τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα.
>
> This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of what is shaken [the sense-perceptible world]—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken [the intelligible world / the heavenly world] may remain. (NRSV)

Does the author of Hebrews hold this negative view of creation? Craig R. Koester correctly notes that in the preceding verse (12:26), the author of Hebrews explains that God is going to "shake" both earth *and* heaven. In fact, the author places a clear emphasis on the fact that God is going to "shake" heaven.[147] Thompson responds to this objection that the author of Hebrews distinguishes between the created heavens (cosmological heaven), which belong to the lower, transient realm (Heb 1:10–12), and the heaven where Jesus entered and where God resides and the true tabernacle is located (axiological heaven). This "upper" realm (axiological heaven) is eternal and uncreated.[148] He argues that it is the lower (cosmological) heaven that is "shaken" and removed according to Heb 12:26.[149] But this distinction is not clear in Hebrews, much less in the immediate context.[150] In fact, the closest reference to heaven is found in the immediately preceding verse (12:25) and refers to God warning believers "from heaven." This heaven would clearly be the "upper" (axiological) heaven. The author makes no difference with the heaven to be "shaken" in v. 26.[151] It seems clear, then, that the "shaking" includes the heavenly realm.

Furthermore, the author does not have a negative view of creation. He does make a distinction between "this creation" and the heavenly realm in 9:11–14, but the distinction is qualitative not antithetical.[152] Note that the Son is highly involved in the act of creation, but there is not a hint of discomfort for this fact. The author does not accord the Son a demiurgical role while emphasizing God's transcendence and distance from the act of creation. In fact, the author positively affirms God's creatorhood as well (2:10; 3:4; 4:3–4, 10).[153] Similarly, a negative view of creation and matter does not fit with the reference to Jesus' resurrection in 13:20. Furthermore, the author does not

[147]Koester, *Hebrews*, 547.

[148]Thompson, "'That which cannot be shaken'," 586. Similarly, Gräßer, *An die Hebräer*.

[149]If the author refers here to a lower, transient heaven, his emphasis on the shaking of this heaven over the shaking of earth does not make sense.

[150]Koester, *Hebrews*, 547.

[151]The difference in number (οὐρανῶν [12:25]/οὐρανόν [12:26]) is not significant. The author alternates between the singular and the plural for no apparent reason than stylistic variation. For example, he may use the plural to refer both to the created heavens (1:10) and to the realm where God lives (12:25). Conversely, he may use the singular as well to denote the place where God lives (9:24).

[152]Adams, 129.

[153]Ibid., 130.

have a Platonic view of the heavenly realm where God and the true sanctuary are. He states clearly that the "heavenly things"—the heavenly sanctuary where Jesus entered to appear in the presence of God—stand in need of cleansing needing "better sacrifices" (9:23–24). A Platonic cosmology does not fit the wider argument of Hebrews.

If we want to understand the logic of this passage, we need to understand the meaning of the quotation of Haggai 2:6–7, 21–22.

In the previous passage, verses 18–24, the author had compared believers with the desert generation who heard God speak at (and shake) Mount Sinai and concluded that the believers, who had experienced a greater revelation and benefits than the desert generation (2:1–4), were liable to a greater judgment. He concludes that if the desert generation did not escape judgment, how much less will believers escape the same?

In verses 25–27, the author of Hebrews quotes Hag 2:6–7, 21–22 to make the point that God has announced a judgment.

> For thus says the LORD of hosts: Once again, in a little while, *I will shake the heavens and the earth* and the sea and the dry land; and I will shake all the nations, so that the treasure of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with splendor, says the LORD of hosts. . . . Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, *I am about to shake the heavens and the earth*, *and to overthrow the throne of kingdoms; I am about to destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations, and overthrow the chariots and their riders; and the horses and their riders shall fall, every one by the sword of a comrade.* (Hag 2:6–7, 21–22, emphasis mine).

Hebrews' quotation of this passage is very significant. The author makes some changes in his quotations to emphasize the points he wants to make.

First, Hebrews focuses on the shaking of heaven. He does this with three changes to the text of Haggai 2:6 (compare verse 21). He deletes any reference to the sea and the dry land. The only important thing for him is earth and heaven. He also changes the order of the words to put heaven at the end and then adds "not only . . . but" to place a strong emphasis on "heaven." The author wants us to know that God is going to shake the "earth and the heaven" but especially and most importantly "heaven."[154]

Second, he emphasizes the finality of this event. This is an eschatological event that describes the end of heaven and earth as we know them. The author argues that the expression "once more" (ἔτι ἅπαξ, v. 27) indicates or makes clear the removal of things that are shaken. The author had argued throughout the letter that Christ had died "once" (ἅπαξ) to refer to the finality of his sacrifice (9:7, 26, 27, 28; 10:2). Here, the expression carries the sense of a "once for all" (cf. ἐφάπαξ) removal of "what can be shaken" as in 7:27, 9:12 and 10:10. In other words, we could translate this expression as "yet once more and forever." This means that there will be an event of final consequences in the "earthly" but especially in the "heavenly" realm that is described as a shaking.

[154]Compare Matt 24:29; Mark 13:25; Luke 21:26.

In the Old Testament, the shaking of the earth is a common figure for the presence of God who shows up to deliver his people.[155] Thus, shaking became a signal of God's judgment over the oppressors.[156] The LXX uses the verb σαλεύω ("to shake") regarding those who experience God's judgment.[157] In the prophets, the shaking happens in the context of the Day of the Lord.[158] On the other hand, what is not "shaken" is not a Platonic transcendental realm but the righteous who trusts in the Lord.[159]

Haggai 2 was uttered about seven weeks after Haggai had given the leaders and the people the message that it was necessary for them to begin the rebuilding of the temple and four weeks after they had actually begun doing it. The message was delivered during the Feast of Tabernacles.[160] This feast remembered God's care for Israel through the desert, but also the dedication of Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 8:2). This remembrance, however, made the people think that the temple they were building was not worth the effort because it would not even be nearly as glorious as Solomon's temple had been (Hag 2:3). But Haggai promised that God would "shake the heavens and the earth . . . and all the nations" and fill this temple with glory by bringing their treasures to the temple they were building. He explains this in a following oracle pronounced two months later on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month (Hag 2:21–23) on the occasion that the foundation of the temple was laid (Hag 2:18). The oracle explains that the Lord will overthrow the kingdoms and their armies and then he will establish his own king in Jerusalem, from the line of David (represented by Zerubbabel), and will give him total authority—like that represented by a signet ring (v. 23). He will be the plenipotentiary of the Lord.[161] According to Haggai, then, the "shaking of heaven and earth" (2:6) meant the destruction of kingdoms and thrones (2:22).

What is shaken in Hebrews? What is judged? The point is that the author of Hebrews emphasizes the shaking of heaven.[162] This refers to a judgment that includes the heavenly realm (12:26) or "heavenly things" (9:23). The

[155]Ps 68:7–8; 9:27; 46:6; 60:2; 77:17–18; 97:4; 107:27; Mic 1:4; Nahum 1:5; Hab 3:6; Matt 24:29; Mark 13:25; Luke 21:26; Acts 16:26.

[156]For example, Ps 99:1 (LXX 98:1); 96:10 (LXX 95:10).

[157]2 Kgs 17:20; Ps 9:27 (MT 10:6); 45:7 (MT 46:6); 47:6 (MT 48:6); 108:10 (MT 109:10). See Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 481.

[158]Pieter A. Verhoef, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi,* NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 103. For example, Isa 13:1–22; 24:18; 34:1–17; Ezek 7:1–27; 30:1–9; 38:20; Joel 2:1–11; Hab 3:6.

[159]Ps 14:5, 8 (MT 15:5); 15:8 (MT 16:8); 20:8 (MT 21:7); 61:3 (MT 62:2); Ps 111:6 (MT 112:6).

[160]The precise date was the twenty-first of the seventh month (Hag 2:1), which would be the seventh day of the feast of tabernacles.

[161]Verhoef, 148.

[162]Craig R. Koester suggests that the shaking of heaven in 12:26 is related to the cleansing of heaven in 9:23. Koester, *Hebrews*, 547.

"heavenly things" that are judged (i.e., "cleansed" or "shaken") should include the heavenly powers (angels) and believers who were just described as being with God in the heavenly Jerusalem (12:22–24).[163] Verse 27 explains that they have one thing in common: they are created beings[164] and, therefore, subject to the judgment and scrutiny of God (Heb 4:13).[165] They can be removed because they are created but the text does not say that they are removed on the basis that they are created. Verse 25 had explained that they are removed because they "turn away from the one who warns them from heaven."

This agrees with the author's emphasis throughout the exhortatory sections that believers will face a judgment,[166] that "the Day"—probably the Day of Christ" (Phil 1:10)—is approaching (Heb 10:25). Thus, he announces that the enemies of the Son—who has been installed as king and plenipotentiary of the Lord (1:5–14)[167]—will be submitted. They will be made a footstool for Jesus' feet (Heb 1:13–14; 10:11–14). These enemies include those who once received the knowledge of truth but now "willfully persist in sin" (10:26–27; cf. 6:4–8). The result of this judgment is the final removal of what can be shaken. Enemies will be destroyed forever. This same word (metathesis) is used for the removal of the levitical priesthood (7:12) and Enoch from the earth (11:5), which is not temporary. In Hebrews, what remains, that cannot be shaken, is Jesus himself (1:11; cf. 13:8), his priesthood (7:3, 24), and the inheritance of the new covenant (10:34). These three things are the ones that God has invited us not to refuse. If we refuse them, we will be shaken or removed, that is, treated as the enemies of Jesus (10:27).

The next verse, Heb 12:28, explains that as a result of this "shaking," believers "are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken." This is probably an allusion to Dan 7:14, 18 where the saints receive a kingdom that cannot be

[163]Similarly, Revelation constantly describes believers as standing in heaven before the throne and Paul also describes believers as being seated already with Christ (Eph 2:5–6).

[164]Heb 1:7 refers to angels as part of God's creation.

[165]See Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 482.

[166]Heb 2:1–4; 4:12–3; 6:4–8; 10:26–31; 12:25–29.

[167]The prophecy of Haggai is given in the context of the inauguration of the building of the sanctuary and in conjunction with the promise of a Davidic king who will be God's plenipotentiary. In Hebrews, both issues are important. The book begins with the assertion that Jesus is enthroned forever at God's right hand. Jesus is identified as the person in whom the Davidic promises of a son who would sit on the throne forever are fulfilled. He has power over the angels of God. He has become, in fact, God's plenipotentiary. On the other hand, the inauguration of Jesus' rule in heaven coincides as well with three other events, the inauguration of Jesus' high priestly ministry (Heb 5:1–10), the inauguration of the heavenly sanctuary (9:15–23; cf. 8:5–6), and the inauguration of the new covenant. Thus, just like in Haggai, the promise of a future shaking is given in the context of the inauguration of the rule of a Davidic king and the inauguration of a sanctuary.

destroyed.[168] The interesting thing is that, according to Dan 7, the saints are given a kingdom as a result of a judgment in heaven. We have here an allusion to a pre-advent judgment that results in the believers receiving the kingdom.

In summary, once we have understood the meaning of the quotation of Hag 2:6 in Heb 12:27, we are able to read the passage in the following way:

> τὸ δὲ ἔτι ἅπαξ δηλοῖ [τὴν] τῶν σαλευομένων μετάθεσιν ὡς πεποιημένων, ἵνα μείνῃ τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα.
>
> This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of what is shaken [enemies who reject God both in heaven and earth]—as created things [as subject to God's judgment]—so that what cannot be shaken [the believer who trusts God] may remain.

This passage is, then, parallel to Heb 4:12–13 where the author warns the readers that the word of God will judge them, the readers need to pay attention (Heb 3:7). Here, the author warns the readers that they need to pay attention to Him who warns from heaven, otherwise, they will face the judgment, or shaking, of God.

Now, I would like to make some brief comments regarding what I understand are some of the implications of this study in terms of the theology of creation in Hebrews.

The Interchangeability of Roles between the Father and the Son

The analysis of Hebrews' assertions regarding creation shows that the roles of God the Father and the Son regarding creation are interchangeable. Unwittingly or not, the author assigns them the same roles.

First, the Father and the Son are creators. Several passages clearly identify God the Father as the creator of the universe;[169] Heb 1:10, however, clearly ascribes to the Son the creation of the universe. In this passage, the Father says to the Son: "In the beginning, Lord, *you* founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands" (emphasis mine).

Second, the Father and the Son are both the agents and the beneficiaries of creation. We often note the affirmation in Heb 1:2 that God created the universe "through" (δία followed by genitive) the Son and that the Son will inherit "all things" (τὰ παντα). We often forget, however, that Heb 2:10 affirms the opposite.[170] There, the author says that everything exists "through" (δία followed by genitive) God, the Father, and that "all things" (τὰ παντα) are "for" (δι' ὃν) Him.

Finally, the Father and the Son are both sovereign over creation and judge it. Hebrews 12:26–27 affirms about God:

[168]Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 382; Otto Michel, *Der Brief and die Hebräer*, KEK 13 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), 475–6; Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays* (London: McMillan, 1892; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), 442.

[169]God as creator: 1:2; 3:4; 4:3–4; 11:3.

[170]Koester, *Hebrews*, 227.

> At that time his voice shook the earth; but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven." This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of what is shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

Thus, God's sovereignty and power over creation are evident in the fact that God will "shake" in the future "heaven and earth." Hebrews 1:10 affirm the same about the Son but in different words:

> And, "In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like clothing; like a cloak you will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end."

According to this passage, the Son has the power of "rolling" the heavens and the earth "like a cloak" so that they will perish. Thus, just as God can "shake" the universe, the Son can "roll them up." In both cases the result is their total destruction. The Son, then, has the same sovereignty over creation that the Father has.

This interchangeability of roles should not come as surprise to the reader of Hebrews.[171] The author of this letter had already affirmed at the very beginning of his work the intimate relationship between the Father and the Son, not only in terms of their work for the salvation of believers but in terms as well of the homogeneity of their essence or being (Heb 1:1–4). Thus, the Son is called straightforwardly God (Heb 1:8) and attributed the characteristics that only God possesses (Heb 7:3; 13:8).[172]

Creation and Sovereignty

Creation in Hebrews has to do with God's sovereignty. The implicit logic of Hebrews is that God judges what he first created and then sustained. Both Christians and Jews shared this notion. According to them, two characteristics of YHWH, the God of Israel, identified him as unique or different to all other reality.[173] YHWH was the sole creator of all things[174] and the sole ruler of all things.[175] There is a small but important difference between these two

[171]The same phenomenon occurs in Paul. The doxology found in Rom 11:36 affirms that "all things" are "through" God (δία followed by genitive), but 1 Cor 8:6 affirms that "all things" are "through" Jesus (δία followed by genitive). Similarly, Rom 11:36 and 1 Cor 8:6 affirm that "all things" are "for" God (εἰς followed by accusative), but Col 1:16 affirms that "all things" are "for" the Son (εἰς followed by accusative).

[172]See Jerome H. Neyrey, "Without Beginning of Days or End of Life (Hebrews 7:3): Topos for a True Deity," *CBQ* 53 (1991), 439–55.

[173]Richard Bauckham, *God of Israel*, 9.

[174]E.g., Isa 40:26, 28; 42:5; 44:24; 45:12, 18; 48:13; 51:16; Neh 9:6; Hosea 13:4 (LXX); 2 Macc 1:24; Sir. 43:33; Bel 5; Jub. 12.3–5; Sib. Or. 3:20–35; 8:375–6; 2 En .47:3–4; 66:4; Apoc. Ab. 7:10; Jos. Asen. 12:1–2; T. Job 2:4.

[175]Dan 4:34–35; Bel 5; Add Esth 13:9–11; 16:18, 21; 3 Macc 2:2–3; 6:2; Wis 12:3; Sir. 18:1–3; Sib. Or. 3:10, 19; 1 En. 9:5; 84:3; 2 En. 33:7; 2 Bar. 54:13; Josephus *A.J.* 1.155–6.

conceptions. Jewish theology asserted that God had no helper, assistant, or servant in his work of creation. Simply, no one else had any part in it.[176] Jews believed, however, that God employs servants as part of his rule over the universe, in fact, myriads of them. Thus, God is portrayed seated on a very high throne while the angels stand before him, in the position of servants, in lower heavens, awaiting his command.[177] Non-canonical Early Jewish writings refer to several exalted figures—principal angels and exalted patriarchs—that played an important role in God's rule of the universe. There is, however, a conscious clear difference between them and God, however exalted they may be: when the human seer mistakes the glorious angel for God and begins to worship him, this figure forbids it and directs the human to worship God only.[178] Accordingly, these exalted figures never sit in God's throne but stand before him ready to serve. God alone rules. This defines who God is and cannot be delegated to a creature.[179] In view of all this, YHWH alone can and must be worshiped. This explains why "Judaism was unique among the religions of the Roman world in demanding the *exclusive* worship of its God."[180]

The author of Hebrews unabashedly refers to God's sovereignty over the universe. He introduces the letter by affirming that God created and sustains "all things" (τὰ πάντα) through his Son and that he has given "all things" (τὰ πάντα) as inheritance to the Son. This is why he sits in the throne over the universe and the Son sits at his "right hand." This affirmation of God's sovereignty at the beginning of the letter is essential for the argument of Hebrews and repeated throughout the letter (Heb 1:13–14; 2:5, 8; 8:1–2; 10:12–13; 12:1–2). In fact, the author will explain that this is the main argument of his work (8:1–2). It is essential because it is the rationale for God's and the Son's superiority over the angels or spirits. Right after affirming the role of the Son as creator, sustainer, and co-ruler of the universe in Heb 1:1–4, the author devotes the next section to affirming the Son's superiority over the angels (1:5–14). They are created (1:7) and, therefore, the angels

[176]Isa 44:24; 2 En. 33:4; 4 Ezra 33:4; Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.192. For example, in explaining Gen. 1:26, Philo argued that the creation of humanity was the sole exception (*Creation* 72–75; *Confusion* 179).

[177]Dan 7:10; Tob 12:15; 4Q530 2.18; *1 En* 14:22; 39:12; 40:1; 47:3; 60:2; 2 En. 21:1; 2 Bar. 21:6; 48:10; *4* Ezra 8:21; T. Ab. A7:11; 8:1–4; 9:7–8; T. Adam 2:9. See also, Bauckham, *God of Israel*, 10.

[178]Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 46–47. Some of the examples he gives are Tob 12:16–22; Apoc. Zeph. 6:11–15; Jos. Asen. 15:11–12; 3 En. 16:1–5. The same case is found in Rev. 19:10; 22:8–9.

[179]Richard Bauckham, "The Divinity of Jesus Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 17. I will follow his analysis here.

[180]Richard Bauckham, "Jesus, Worship of" *ABD* (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 3:816; N. T. Wright, *People of God*, 248–59; Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 29–53.

worship the Son (1:6) and serve him as ministers in favor of believers (1:7, 14). Since the Son is sovereign he can both deliver and judge. This is why the readers are exhorted to "hold fast" to their confession of Jesus (3:1; 4:14–16; 10:19–25), even in the face of persecution and suffering (10:32–39; 12:1–4).

It is important to note that references to creation in Hebrews are part of an affirmation of majesty/dominion (1:1–4; 1:10–12; 3:4), judgment (1:10–12; 4:3, 4, 10, 12–13; 12:27) or salvation (2:10; 9:26).[181] The author of Hebrews is not interested in the event of creation per se. He does not try to prove that God created the world or describe how he created it. He just assumes that God did. What is important for the author of Hebrews is that God can rule the universe, judge the wicked, and save the believers because He is sovereign and this sovereignty has an indispensable foundation in the fact that He created "all things" (τὰ πάντα).

Gerhard May has argued that this notion became central in Christianity's later argument that God created out of nothing. According to him, the doctrine of creation out of nothing was not clearly articulated in Hellenistic Judaism before Christianity.[182] It was not until the second century A.D. in the face of the Gnostic challenge that Christian thinkers felt obligated to articulate in clear terms that the all powerful God that is above all was the one who created the world out of nothing and not the ignorant Gnostic creator who originated in the fall of a higher heavenly being.[183] It became very clear to them that what God did not create was finally not under its power. Thus, in their view, a creation ex nihilo was an essential element of God's sovereignty.

Vocabulary and Presuppositions

It is important to note that the vocabulary referring to God's act of creation in Hebrews is diverse. He uses the verbs ποιέω (to do, make), θεμελιόω (to found, establish), κατασκευάζω (to prepare, build, furnish), and καταρτίζω (to put in order, restore); the nouns καταβολη (beginning), ἔργον (work), κτίσις (creature, creation); and the participle πεποιημένων (what is made). Many of these terms were used by Greek philosophers in their discussion about the origin of the cosmos with very different presuppositions. As I have shown, however, the fact that Hebrews uses some of the vocabulary philosophers used does not mean that he shared their worldviews.

Another difficulty we encounter as we study Hebrews in the context of a debate about the origins of the world is the fact that its author had very different concerns from the ones we have. As I mentioned above, the author of Hebrews is not concerned with either proving that God created the world or explaining how he did it. He assumed that God did and used this assumption as an important theological foundation for the argument of his this work.

[181]Hebrews 11:3 is the exception. In this case, the author refers to the relationship between creation and faith.

[182] May, 1–38.

[183] Ibid., 177.

This fact helps us understand a second phenomenon. Some of the passages relating to creation in Hebrews provide room for a limited amount of different views on creation. One example is Hebrews 11:3, which can be read in at least three different ways. While it is true that in my view the context privileges one reading above the others, the fact is that the text is less conclusive than we would like it to be. This happens, again, because the author was not concerned with the questions we are concerned with today. Otherwise, he would have made sure that his views were communicated clearly in his work.

All of this, however, does not make Hebrews irrelevant to the biblical debate on origins. Hebrews provides a worldview—and in some cases more than this—that should inform our conversation. Every theory or conviction presupposes and has an effect on the way we understand who God is and what His function is. For the author of Hebrews, the conviction that God created everything was foundational for his argument that He rules and judges everything.

Faith and Creation

Hebrews argued that faith was the basis for understanding the origins of the world (11:3). This affirmation invited derision in the ancient world. From the point of view of classical Greek philosophy, faith was the lowest level of cognition. "It was the state of mind of the uneducated."[184] Galen, who was relatively sympathetic to Christianity, said that Christians possessed three of the four cardinal virtues. They had courage, self-control, and justice; but they lacked *phronesis* (intellectual insight), which was, in his opinion, the rational basis for the other three.[185] Others were less favorable. Celsus accused them of being enemies of science. In his opinion, Christians were frauds who deceived people by saying that knowledge is bad for the health of the soul.[186] Porphyry repeated Celsus' accusation protesting "an irrational and unexamined *pistis* [faith]"[187] and Julian blurted out, "there is nothing in your philosophy beyond the one word 'Believe!'"[188]

Hebrews, however, commends faith and devotes a chapter to praise heroes of the past because of their faith. It is significant that in the list of heroes of Heb 11, the author referred to the believer, who accepted the assertion of Scripture that God created the world by His word, as the first examplar of faith. In his view, this conviction based on faith would gain him approval (Heb 11:2) just as Noah's building of the ark before rain existed (11:7), Abraham's leaving his inheritance for a land he did not know (11:8), Abraham's offering of Isaac believing God would resurrect him (when that had never happened; 11:17–19), and Moses' refusal to be called "son of

[184]Dodds, 121.

[185]Walzer, *Galen*, 15; quoted in Dodds, 121.

[186]*Cels.* 3.75; quoted in Dodds, 121.

[187]Porphyry, *Christ.* 1.17; quoted in Dodds, 121.

[188]Julian *apud* Greg. Naz., *Orat.* 4.102 (PG 35, p. 637); quoted in Dodds, 121.

Pharaoh's daughter" choosing instead "ill-treatment with the people of God" (11:23–26), gained them approval.

For the author of Hebrews the path of faith required "being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction" (10:33); but he also argued that those who took this path followed the steps of Jesus, who "endured the cross" and despised its "shame" (12:2).

Andrews University Seminary Studies, Vol. 53, No. 2, 321-335.

PAUL'S OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES AS A MARKER OF CONTINUITY BETWEEN JUDAISM AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

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The author of the book Acts of the Apostles[1] makes six direct references to Paul and his colleagues visiting a synagogue or a place of prayer on the Sabbath during their missionary journeys (Antioch of Pisidia: Acts 13:14, 42, 44; Philippi: 16:13; Thessalonica: 17:2; Corinth: 18:4). Traditionally these references have been interpreted primarily as a mission strategy used by Paul to win converts from the local Jewish communities. Paul went to synagogues on Sabbath as a matter of expediency. The fact that Paul himself may be observing the Sabbath, as his Jewish faith requires, is minimized if not avoided. Recent New Testament scholarship, however, has attempted to underline and rediscover Paul's Jewish heritage and tends to highlight some continuity between first-century Judaism and early Christianity. To what extent can these references to Paul's visits to synagogues on Sabbath affirm continuity between Judaism and early Christianity? Are these references indicative of Luke's intention to describe Paul's personal observance of the Sabbath?

This paper will review how these references to Sabbath are interpreted in recent commentaries (published in the last fifteen years or so) to see how commentators acknowledge this aspect of Paul's Jewish heritage. Attention will also be given to the reference to a gathering on the evening of the first day of the week in Acts 20:7. Through the years, commentators have approached this aspect of Luke's narrative in various ways and no attempt has been made to survey how they have interpreted these references to Sabbath. It is my conclusion that in recent years more commentators, but not many, are willing to acknowledge Paul's Jewish heritage and that he himself worshiped in synagogues on Sabbath. There is a developing trend in recent commentaries

[1]This paper will not address issues of authorship and dating of the book of Acts. I am aware of objections to the traditional opinion that Luke, a disciple and colleague of Paul, wrote this book in the first century. Luke's picture of Paul has enough divergence from the Paul of the Pauline epistles that scholarly opinion varies greatly about the reliability of the narrative in the book of Acts. Be that as it may, in this paper, I will take Luke's narrative for what it says, that he had a personal knowledge of Paul's activities, and I will attempt to synthesize current scholarly opinion about references to Paul's visits to synagogues on Sabbath. The author's intended audience is also a matter of discussion, although in more recent times, scholarly opinion leans toward the likelihood that Luke may have had a Jewish audience in mind. I concur with this tendency.

I'm grateful to my graduate assistant, Timothy Arena, for his help and expertise in finding many of the sources and references I've used in the preparation of this paper.

on the book of Acts that embraces these references to Sabbath as a genuine indication of continuity between Judaism and early Christianity, that Luke depicts Paul both as the apostle to the Gentiles and a practicing and faithful Jew, albeit one who claimed to belong to a new sect within Judaism and who maintained that Gentiles did not need to conform to all aspects of Jewish religious practices in order to be accepted by the God of Israel.

Markers of Continuity with Judaism in the Book of Acts

Few commentators acknowledge that Luke's references to Sabbath are part of a wider context in Acts that should be considered more carefully. Whether intentionally or not, Luke gives his readers numerous markers of continuity with Judaism. While many see evidence of markers of a new Christian identity in the New Testament, particularly when it comes to Pauline studies, our cultural and religious distance from first-century Judaism and early Christianity prevents us at times from seeing markers in other parts of the New Testament. Many people have often assumed that on the evening of the Resurrection, and thereafter, Jesus' followers began to keep Sunday as a day of rest, abolished or rejected observance of the Sabbath and other Jewish holy days, and ate freely of unclean and defiled foods. A more careful contextual and cultural reading of Acts gives a different picture of early Christianity in continuity with first-century Judaism and provides a better context to understand these references to Sabbath. To set the context for Luke's references to visits to synagogues on Sabbath, and how commentators have interpreted them, I'll start with a brief survey of some of these markers of continuity with Judaism.

The narrative begins with the ascension of Jesus. In a passing comment, the author indicates that the ascension occured on the Mount of Olives, "a Sabbath day's journey" from Jerusalem (1:12).[2] The two most recent commentaries have briefly addressed this reference to Sabbath. Craig Keener assumes a positive answer to his question, "Should we infer from Luke's mention of the Sabbath day's journey that his ideal audience continued to keep the Sabbath?"[3] On the other hand, Eckhard Schnabel does not think so: "This passage does not allow any inferences concerning the views of the early church regarding Sabbath observance."[4] I think Keener's question aims in the right direction and this reference cannot be dismissed as insignificant. How could this reference be understood by someone who was not a Jew or at least somehow acquainted with Judaism? And why refer to this distance from

[2]All references are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*.

[3]Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 1:737.

[4]Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 82. He finds support for his opinion in Max M. B. Turner, "The Sabbath, Sunday, and the Law in Luke/Acts," ed. D. A Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982), 124.

a Jewish perspective? Could it be that not only is the intended reader familiar with the distance referred to but may be aware of the restriction as well? This I believe begins to set the context for the author's many other references to Jewish religious practices.

Luke tells us that the early followers of Jesus were in Jerusalem at the time of the Pentecost experience and used the Temple precincts as their gathering place. It is likely that Pentecost and Peter's sermon happened in the Temple or near it, in a place large enough for hundreds of people to listen to him. Following this first explosive surge of new believers, we are told that these believers along with the apostles met regularly in the Temple (2:46). References to the Temple continue to be made with the healing of the lame man as Peter and John enter the Temple area through the gate Beautiful (3:2) which leads Peter to preach a second sermon near the portico of Solomon (3:11).

Conflicts with religious leaders in Jerusalem appear regularly. Luke describes two incidents in which all the apostles are jailed for their teaching about Jesus. The first arrest and imprisonment is interrupted by an angel who delivers them during the night and tells them to "go, stand and speak to the people in the Temple," which they do immediately (5:17–21). The second arrest, it appears, comes a few days later. This time the apostles are jailed, flogged, and finally released only to find them again in the Temple where they keep "right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ" (5:40–42). With the Temple being so obviously at the heart of the early Christians' faith and religious devotion, it is hard to imagine them not being faithful Jews, at least it appears that Luke has no intention to give a different impression.

Then Luke relates the putative conversion of Paul on the road to Damascus. Obviously, Luke's narrative gives no indication of Paul converting from one world religion to another. Paul had received permission from leaders in Jerusalem to go to Damascus to arrest any believers in Jesus who might be members of local synagogues (9:2). Those believers in Jesus are Jews. Even the disciple Ananias, who is asked in a vision to find Paul and instruct him in his new mission, is described as a devout Jew—"a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, and well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there" (22:12; cf. 9:13, 14). Soon after this, Paul is said to be preaching about Jesus in the synagogues of Damascus (9:20–22). It appears that Luke is not intending to give any evidence of a break between first-century Judaism and early Christianity, at least not at this point in his narrative. The early Christianity espoused by Ananias and the other believers in Jesus in Damascus appears to still be agreeable with their local Jewish practices.

The story of Peter's strange vision in preparation for his visit to the Roman centurion Cornelius in Caesarea Maritima is also a marker of continuity between Judaism and early Christianity. As Luke tells it, Peter had never eaten any unclean or defiled food up to then. In this regard, Peter had been a faithful Jew and says so in his reply to the voice in the vision, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anthing unholy and unclean" (10:14). James Dunn comments, "Here Luke portrays Peter as the model of the

devout Jew, loyal to the traditions that made his Judaism so distinctive—in this case, the laws of clean and unclean, which marked out the separation of Israel from the other peoples (Lev 20:22–26)."[5] Further details in the narrative tell us that Peter's interpretation of this dream is to consider all men, including Gentiles, as deserving of the blessing of the gospel of salvation in Jesus and inclusion in the blessings of the covenant with Israel (10:28, 34, 35). This is something he is reprimanded for when he returns to Jerusalem and meets with other believers in Jesus who cannot understand why Peter would defile himself by eating with Gentiles, and in the home of a Roman military leader at that (11:2, 3).

One further marker of continuity is given in passing before the narrative of Paul's three missionary journeys. Luke tells of another arrest of Peter, this time during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, again an incidental marker of Jewish holy time that both narrator and reader appear to be familiar with. Many other such time markers are given in the narrative of Paul's three missionary journeys. As Keener comments, "Certainly, Luke can refer to common Jewish festivals such as the Sabbath (twenty-seven times [including the Gospel]), Passover (Acts 12:4; Luke 2:41; 22:1, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15), Pentecost (Acts 2:1; 20:16), and the Day of Atonement (27:9) without explanation, and sometimes he sounds as if Paul observed such festivals with other believers (cf. 20:6; perhaps 20:16), a not implausible scenario historically (cf. 1 Cor 16:8)."[6] In spite of being branded as someone who neglects Jewish laws, Paul appears to be eager to celebrate Pentecost in Jerusalem at the end of the third missionary journey (Acts 20:16). And what can we say of James' request of Paul to offer sacrifices of purification at the Temple, since he was defiled by having been in regular contact with Gentiles, and Paul readily acquiescing to this request (21:17–26)? Even toward the end of his narrative, Luke does not distance Paul from a faithful observation of the Law. Luke's Paul remains a faithful and observant Jew throughout the narrative of his activities.

In Acts 15 Luke relates the events at the council at Jerusalem. While we too quickly assume the discussion centers around the inclusion of Gentile converts into the Christian church, it is obvious that for James and the elders, the question is about how to include them within the covenant people of God. In the end, some guidance in principle is provided by the Prophets (Amos 9:11, 12) and the Torah (Leviticus 17, 18).[7] Gentiles do not need to become Jews by being circumcised, but they need to respect some specific principles of purity and morality as given in Leviticus. James, as a matter of fact, even implies that these principles should not raise any major objections since they are well-known even to Gentiles because the Law of Moses "is read in the

[5]James D. G. Dunn, *New Testament Theology: An Introduction* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2009), 112.

[6]Keener, 1:737.

[7]These stipulations for Gentile Christians resemble the regulations required of aliens within the community of Israel in Leviticus 17–18, a kind of application of Noahic stipulations as well (Genesis 9:1–7). See Parsons, 215; Schnabel, 641-646.

synagogues every Sabbath" (15:21). Although what James is saying about the reading of the Law in the synagogues on Sabbath is not entirely clear, and commentators vary greatly in their opinions, David Peterson comments that "James implies that there are observant Jews everywhere and that Gentile Christians will know why the requirements of v. 20 are being suggested. . . . It also seems that James expected synagogue worship to go on in every city and that the issue of obedience to the law would not quickly be resolved for Jewish Christians."[8] "The long-standing and widespread practice of reading the law and teaching about the law in every synagogue of the Jewish Diaspora should have alerted Gentile Christians to the concerns of faithful Jews."[9] Again, the continuity with Judaism is obvious in this discussion and in the conclusion the council arrives at.

In the various trials and conversations that Luke recounts after Paul's arrest in the Temple, Paul does not distance himself from his Jewish heritage, to the contrary he affirms and claims it. In the Temple, the day he is arrested and saved from the lynching mob he states, "I am a Jew from Tarsus" (21:39; 22:3). Before the Sanhedrin, he claims to be "a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees" (23:6). To governor Felix Luke states that Paul presents himself as a Jew of the sect of the Way who nonetheless believes "everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets" (24:14). And to king Agrippa also Paul describes himself as a Jew in conflict with Jewish leaders, something that Agrippa seems to personally know about (26:3). In the end, Luke tells his readers that for the commander of the Roman garrison in Jerusalem, Claudius Lysias, governors Felix and Festus, and king Agrippa, the conflict between Paul and religious leaders in Jerusalem that opened the way for Paul to go to Rome is about differences of interpretations of Jewish laws and customs (23:26–30; 24:27; 25:14–21; 26:30–32). Clearly, and intentionally, Luke portrays Paul as a Jew, faithful to his faith and heritage.[10]

If we are to take Luke's comments about Paul's faithfulness to his Jewish faith for what they say, that Paul believes and observes "everything that is in

[8]David Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 436. Also arriving at a similar conclusion are: John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, v. 26 (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1992), 332; Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 507; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Anchor Bible, v. 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 558; Paul W. Walaskay, *Acts*, Westminster Bible Companion (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 147; Bruce Milne, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Focus on the Bible Commentary Series (Fearn, Ross-shire, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2010), 319.

[9]Peterson, 435. Of course, that would be assuming that the Gentiles were previously Jewish proselytes or God-fearers or had previously attended synagogue with their Jewish Christian friends. See also Schnabel, 646.

[10]Commenting on Paul's Nazirite vow and shaving his head in Acts 18:18, Keener observes, "Certainly Luke emphasizes Paul's personal law-keeping practice more than Paul does in his letters." Keener, 3:2783. Bock, however, plays down the importance of this vow as a personal "private vow." Bock, 586.

accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets" (24:14), then it becomes more likely that for Luke Paul's observance of the Sabbath was genuine, authentic, and not a subterfuge to *convert* Jews to Christianity. For Luke, Paul was a Jew and intended to remain one, albeit as a member of a new sect. Mark Nanos provides a summary of this evidence in the book of Acts and its implication: "Acts emphasizes that Paul remained a Pharisee and practiced Torah and temple sacrifices (cf. Acts 21:23–26), and that Paul advocated observance of appropriate Jewish ritual behavior for non-Jews joining his communities in agreement with the views of the other apostles (i.e., the Apostolic Decree of Acts 15–16), because, notably, his subgroups were part of the larger Jewish communities into which these non-Jews were being included."[11]

So given this contextual setting to Paul's missionary journeys, how have recent commentators interpreted Luke's references to Paul's visits to synagogues on Sabbath? Is there a movement toward a greater acknowledgment of Paul's Jewish heritage? My survey of many recent Bible commentaries on the book of Acts as well as a few recent works on the theology of the New Testament reveals that not many commentators acknowledge Paul's Jewish heritage or refer to it in their interpretation when it comes to these references to Sabbath. Still, by far, the majority of commentaries continue to interpret these references only as a mission strategy, "to the Jew first" (Romans 1:16).[12]

Paul's First Missionary Journey (13:4–14:28)

There are three direct references to Paul's visits to synagogues on Sabbath during the first missionary journey, all three in the context of Paul's visit at Pisidian Antioch.

> But going on from Perga, they arrived at Pisidian Antioch, and on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down (Acts 13:14).
>
> As Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people kept begging that these things might be spoken to them the next Sabbath (Acts 13:42).
>
> The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord (Acts 13:44).

Since these three references to Paul and his colleagues visiting the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch on Sabbath are the first ones we encounter in the book of Acts, commentators tend to spend more space on these references than on the later ones. By the time we get to the references in 17:2

[11]Mark D. Nanos, "A Jewish View," in *Four Views on the Apostle Paul*, ed. Michael F. Bird (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 174–175; see also 175–177.

[12]One example of this approach: "Contacts with the synagogue . . . were important in Paul's missionary activity *only* as opportunities to initiate the proclamation of the gospel" (emphasis mine). Arthur G. Patzia, *The Emergence of the Church: Context, Growth, Leadership and Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 187. To be fair, however, Patzia also readily acknowledges the Jewishness and Sabbath observance of early Christianity. Patzia, 41, 187, 212.

and 18:4, most commentators simply omit any comment about Sabbath or visits to the synagogues in these cities.

In his description of Paul's activities in the first two missionary journeys, Luke consistently reports that Paul's custom is to visit the local synagogue when he arrives in a new place.[13] While only four of these visits are said to be on Sabbath,[14] we can assume at least some of the other ones may have been on Sabbath as well, although the Diaspora synagogue was more than a place of worship and served also as a social gathering place or a school for the Jewish community on other days of the week. However, on other days, it is less likely that proselytes or God-fearing Greeks may have attended these events.[15]

This discussion then must involve how Luke portrays Paul's relationship to the synagogue. As John Polhill comments, "If one wished to make contact with the Jewish community in a town, the synagogue was the natural place to begin. It was also the natural place to begin if one wished to share the Christian message. Jesus was the expected Jewish Messiah, and it was natural to share him with 'the Jews first.'"[16] Actually, Paul's usual approach to begin his outreach to people attending the synagogue speaks in favor of his Jewishness, a fact that is recognized by some commentators. Schnabel briefly notes, "the missionaries go to the synagogue . . . the first Sabbath after their arrival in Antioch in order to worship."[17] Paul Walaskay points out also, "As was the custom for Paul and Barnabas, they went to the synagogue on the sabbath day. . . . Certainly these men were competent to comment on the scripture reading: Paul was a respected Pharisaic teacher educated in biblical interpretation in Jerusalem, and Barnabas was a Levite qualified to perform priestly duties in Jerusalem. They would be highly honored guests of the synagogue and the congregation would eagerly wish to hear from them."[18] And Keener concludes that, "any Jewish proclaimers starting in a given community would have begun with the synagogue anyway" and "no place in the Diaspora was better suited for religious discussion with gathered Jews than the synagogues."[19]

Some commentators remark on the similarities between Luke's descriptions of Jesus' first public address in Nazareth (Luke 4:16–30) and

[13]Salamis in Cyprus (13:5), Pisidian Antioch (13:14, 43), Iconium (14:1), Thessalonica (17:1), Berea (17:10), Athens (17:17), Corinth (18:4), Ephesus (18:19; 19:8).

[14] In Pisidian Antioch (13:14, 43), Philippi (16:13); Thessalonica (17:1, 2); Corinth (18:4).

[15]Polhill, 297; Keener, 2:2002.

[16]Polhill, 297.

[17]Schnabel, 573.

[18]Walaskay, 128–129.

[19]Keener, 2:2002.

Paul's in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:14–43).[20] Is it only an anecdotal fact that both happened on a Sabbath? For most commentators it appears to be so. But in both accounts Luke reveals a familiarity with the order of worship in a synagogue service on the Sabbath: people listening to the reading of the Law and Prophets, followed by an exhortation given by a distinguished guest.[21] This familiarity seems to be an indication that Luke and early Christians are more than just acquainted with Jewish customs; these customs are their customs as well. While Luke states that Jesus' attending a synagogue on the Sabbath is according to "his custom" (Luke 4:16), this reference is omitted from the Pisidian Antioch account; but Luke gives it later in reference to Paul's visit to the synagogue in Thessalonica (Acts 17:2).

What is noticeable also in this account is the reaction of Jews and God-fearing proselytes after the service (13:42–44). What at first appears to be overwhelming support and acceptance turns into jealousy and persecution on the part of some Jews. The proselyte Greeks, however, continue to rejoice in the message Paul and Barnabas have shared with them. This pattern of visiting the local synagogue, sharing the good news about the Messiah, and arousing joy in the hearts of some Jews and proselyte Greeks and rejection and jealousy in some other Jews, repeats itself over and over in Luke's account of Paul's activities (cf. Acts 14:1–7, 19; 17:5; 18:12). A number of commentators have carefully analyzed this jealousy and its implications for Paul's mission.[22]

The positive reception Paul receives from some Jews and proselyte Gentiles causes some of the Jewish leaders to be jealous and oppose him. A power struggle ensues. Some are jealous that he is drawing to his message Gentiles who are then offered entrance into the covenant people of Israel without having to undergo circumcision. The nature of this conflict is the process of admission of Gentiles into God's people. "It is one thing to proclaim the coming of the Messiah to the Jews. It was quite another to maintain that in the Messiah God accepted the Gentiles on an equal basis."[23] As Bradley Chance explains, Luke understands that the salvation of the

[20]J. Bradley Chance, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary, v. 23 (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2007), 214, 228; Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts*, Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 191; M. Dennis Hamm, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The New Collegeville Bible Commentary, New Testament, v. 5 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2005), 63; James Montgomery Boice, *Acts: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1997), 236; Fitzmyer, 509; Schnabel, 573.

[21]First-century sources provide some details about synagogue services; see Polhill, 297–298; Chance, 214; Keener, 2:2044–2050.

[22]James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity, 1996), 182–184; Chance, 222-224; William J. Larkin, Jr., *Acts*, IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 205; Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 97; Keener, 2:2093–2096.

[23]Polhill, 307. See also, Larkin, 204–205; and Bock, 462, 463.

Gentiles has been part of God's plan from the beginning. Preaching the gospel to the Gentiles is not "the mechanical result of Jewish rejection in Antioch, as though God offers the Gentiles the gospel only because the Jews of Antioch rejected it. [...] God does not turn to Gentiles because Jews reject the gospel; Jewish rejection is the secondary cause for the gospel's movement toward the Gentiles."[24]

James Dunn also explains that Paul is in some sense threatening Jewish identity and hard-won concessions as a recognized religion in the Roman Empire. The Jewish community in Pisidian Antioch appears to be substantial in number and influential in local politics. The same is evident in other cities. In Luke's narrative, "it was not so much Paul's message which caused the offence to the bulk of Antioch's Jews as its surprising appeal to Antioch's wider citizenry. The fear would be of an untried and untested new sect upsetting and undermining the good standing and good relations which the Jewish community had established for itself within the city."[25]

Thus, as some commentators explain, what Luke is describing is not Paul inviting Jews and Gentiles to form a new religion; rather, he is proclaiming the fulfillment of God's promise of a Messiah and this promise is for both Jews and Gentiles. Seen from this perspective, Paul's visits to synagogues on Sabbath are not merely a strategy to win converts. Paul can be seen as a faithful Jew and observing the Sabbath: at this point in early Christian history, Paul and his colleagues are Jewish believers in Jesus the Messiah and keep the Sabbath.[26]

Paul's Second Missionary Journey (15:36–18:22)

The other three references to the Sabbath occur in Paul's second missionary journey.

> And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled (Acts 16:13).

> Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And according

[24]Chance, 223.

[25]Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 183. Keener also comments, "When Gentiles whom the synagogue had not reached responded now to Paul's message (13:44), apparently because he demanded only faith in Israel's God without full conversion to Jewish culture and ethnicity (13:38–39), much of the synagogue responded with hostility (13:45). Paul then turned to the Gentiles (13:46–47), to the joy of the Gentiles (13:48) and the further annoyance of local Jewish people of influence (13:50)." Keener, 2:2093.

[26]This fact is readily recognized by some commentators: Georg Strecker, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. M. Eugene Boring (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 289; James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 237–239; Patzia, 212; and suggested by Keener, 1:737.

> to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scripture (Acts 17:1, 2).
>
> And he [Paul] was reasoning in the synagogue [at Corinth] every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks (Acts 18:4).

In Acts 16, Paul and his three colleagues reach the Roman city of Philippi and on the Sabbath seek a place of prayer outside the city walls, likely because there is no synagogue in that city. In contrast to all other references to Sabbath, this one is not directly linked to a synagogue, but simply to a place of prayer where the worship may be more informal.[27] The prominence of women in this narrative suggests that the lack of Jewish men in the city may have hampered the formation of a synagogue assembly.[28] Most commentators, however, comment briefly that Paul's usual strategy is to reach out to Jews first even if there is no synagogue.[29] Few commentators indicate that Paul and his companions are "true to their Jewish identity . . . and in keeping with their typical missionary pattern" in seeking the local worshiping community of Jews on the Sabbath.[30]

The last two references to visiting a synagogue on Sabbath are barely referred to by most commentators, even though both references suggest that Paul visited these synagogues on a weekly basis for a period of time—"for three Sabbaths" in Thessalonica (17:2) and "every Sabbath" in Corinth (18:4).[31] The reference to the synagogue in Thessalonica, however, includes Luke's added comment that Paul visited the synagogue "according to his custom"—an allusion to Jesus' identical custom in Luke 4:16. But for those

[27]The absence of a synagogue in the city may also be explained by the anti-Judaic sentiments held by people of Philippi (Acts 16:20, 21). See Keener, 3:2472–2477.

[28]See Bock, 533.

[29]Commentators who offer the strategy interpretation are Larkin, 235; Chance, 283; Keener, 3:2384, 2538–2539; Justo L. González, *Acts: The Gospel of the Spirit* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2001), 189; Bruce B. Barton et al., *Acts*, Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1999), 280.

[30]Parsons, 229; Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Reading the New Testament Series (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 149. Keener, however, points out "That Paul went to synagogues fits the pattern of his ministry in Acts (13:5, 14; 14:1; 17:10, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8), continuing that of Jesus (Luke 4:44)." Keener, 3:2538.

[31]Very few commentators say something in reference to the Sabbath in Acts 18:4, and for those who do it is the usual context of Paul's missionary strategy: Derek W. H. Thomas, *Acts*, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2011), 513-514; Parson, 251; Barton, 312; C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Shorter Commentary* (London: T & T Clark, 2002), 277. In a strange departure from his prior arguments in favor of Paul's Jewishness, Dunn makes this comment: "On the sabbath, however, he focused his energies on the synagogue. . . . Despite the tiredness which such physical labour must have caused (cf. I Cor. 4.11–12; II Cor. 11.27) he did not take the day off, but continued to use the synagogue as the obvious place and platform for his preaching of the word." Dunn, *Acts of the Apostles*, 242.

who comment on this phrase, the custom is a simple reference to Paul's missionary strategy.[32] A few commentators, however, indicate that this custom may refer to Paul's Jewish devotional habits. For Dennis Hamm, "When Luke notes that Paul joined the local synagogue community according to 'his usual custom,' he could be referring to Paul's usual missionary strategy. He could as well mean that Paul attended synagogue as his Jewish practice, much as Jesus attended the Nazareth synagogue 'according to his custom' (Luke 4:16)."[33]

Paul's Third Missionary Journey (18:23–21:16)

When it comes to Paul's third missionary journey, we find no direct reference to visits to synagogues on the Sabbath but we have two references to the synagogue in Ephesus that deserve some attention. In Acts 18:24–26, we are told that in Ephesus, Priscilla and Aquila, two of Paul's co-workers, met "a Jew named Apollos" who was well educated in the Scriptures and who spoke and taught about Jesus in the synagogue. What is interesting here is that this acquaintance happened in the Ephesus synagogue and in all likelihood on Sabbath. Luke, again in a matter-of-fact style, describes this meeting of Priscilla, Aquilla, and Apollos in the context of the synagogue: Paul's co-workers are also faithful Jews who observe the Sabbath. In fact, Luke describes Apollos as "teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus" without a prior knowledge of Paul and his mission. It seems obvious then that Apollos' purpose for being in the synagogue is not part of Paul's mission to the Jews first, then to the Gentiles if the Jews refuse his gospel. Apollos is a Jew and therefore he attends services in the synagogue.

A little later, Luke states that while in Ephesus Paul "entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and pursuading them about the kingdom of God" (19:8). Here also, it appears that this is the same pattern we find in prior references to Paul's visits to a synagogue on Sabbath. If that is the case, although there is no direct reference to a day of the week, these visits also must have happened on Sabbath and can be described as part of Paul's Jewish custom. In that context, other earlier references to visits to synagogues in the first two missionary journeys without a time reference (Acts 13:5; 14:1; 17:10, 17; 18:19) may also likely be happening on Sabbath. The connection between the synagogue and early Christians during Paul's three missionary journeys is indicative of continuity between first-century Judaism and early Christianity. Looking carefully at all this evidence can support the conclusion that for Luke Paul visited the local synagogue not only because he wished to share his faith in the Messiah with fellow Jews, but also because as a Jew he observed the Sabbath.

[32]See Boice, 286; González, 197; Peterson, 477.

[33]Hamm, 79. See also, Keener, 3:2538–2539. Dunn also concurs: "as with Jesus (Luke 4.16), it was his custom to attend the synagogue on the sabbath anyway, that is, as the appropriate place for a Jew to take part in communal devotions." Dunn, *Acts of the Apostles*, 226.

More intriguing and at the same time more conclusive is the reference to a gathering in Troas in the evening of the first day of the week:

> On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight (Acts 20:7).

Many commentators recognize that the timing of this event is difficult to establish with any degree of certainty. Either the event happened on a Saturday night after the Sabbath if Luke uses Jewish time reckoning, from sunset to sunset—the evening of the first day of the week is our Saturday night,[34] or, it happened on Sunday evening if Luke uses Roman time reckoning, from midnight to midnight.[35] But if the context I have described so far is any indication of Luke's pattern regarding time periods and seasons, his repeated use of Jewish time markers tells us this event likely happened on a Saturday night, after a day-long gathering on the Sabbath. A few commentators, note that traditional Sabbath activities in a Diaspora synagogue included day-long sessions during which people argued or reasoned various points of law or doctrines. This type of activity is seen in Luke's descriptions of Paul's visits to the synagogues in Thessalonica (Acts 17:2), Corinth (18:4) and Ephesus (19:8). Commenting on Acts 17:2, Malina states, "Such discussions could be day-long affairs that involved a vigorous, even heated exchange of opinions, here specifically about the significance of the resurrected Jesus of Nazareth and God's plan realized in him."[36] Schnabel also concurs that this type of day-long activity on Sabbath was a normal occurence and intimates that it is likely what happened when Jewish leaders from the Roman community visited Paul in house arrest in Rome (28:23).[37] It is possible, then, that this may be the pattern we see in Acts 20:7. Paul's desire to speak with the believers in Troas started earlier that Sabbath morning, and lasted well after sunset, into the night of the following day. Far from being a harbinger of a new Christian identity marker, this gathering is the evidence of continuity with Jewish identity. This view is also supported by Alistair Stewart in his study of early Christian leadership and celebration of the Eucharistic meal.[38]

However, the majority of recent commentators interpret this event as the decisive evidence that early Christians are now beginning to keep Sunday as the new day of worship in distinction from the Jewish Sabbath. Some commentators are effusive with their comments about this gathering. I have

[34]Among those who favor a Saturday night gathering: Kenneth O. Gangel, *Acts*, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1998), 340; Fitzmyer, 668–669; González, 234; Chance, 366; Walaskay, 186; and Barton, 342.

[35]Among those who favor a Sunday evening gathering: Larkin, 288; Dunn, *Acts of the Apostles*, 268; Boice, 340; Peterson, 557; Barrett, 306; Bock, 619; Thomas, 567–569; Gangel, 340; and Schnabel, 835.

[36]Malina, 123.

[37]Schnabel, 1070–1071.

[38]Alistair C. Stewart, *The Original Bishops: Office and Order in the First Christian Communities* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 252–253.

found that commentators who say little if anything about Paul's Jewish heritage when it comes to references to Sabbath observance and visits to synagogues are more likely to comment at length on the meaning of this Sunday event as a marker of a new Christian identity in distinction from Judaism.[39] In contrast, very few commentators ascribe little or no significance of this gathering.[40]

But if Luke's presentation of Paul's faithful observance of Jewish religious practices is to be taken at face value, it becomes hard to see this gathering as a marker of new identity. In the following decades, as Christians came to intentionally distance themselves more and more from Judaism, for various religious, social, and political reasons that are too many to discuss here,[41] Luke's reference to this gathering on the evening of the first day of the week came to be a marker of Christian identity in distinction from Judaism, but I doubt it was intended to be one in Luke's narrative.[42] Craig Keener concurs and provides a long analysis of the time and purpose for this event

[39]Among some of these commentators who *clearly* see this gathering as the herald of the new Lord's Day: Larkin, 288–290; Dunn, *Acts of the Apostles*, 368; Boice, 340–341; Hamm, 93; Thomas, 567–569. On the other hand, some commentators are less emphatic on the nature of this gathering but see some evidence of the new Christian day of worship or the institution of the Eucharist and the Lord's Supper. See Fitzmyer, 668–669; Chance, 366v367; Malina, 144. Justo González sees this event happening on Saturday night as a precursor of vigils second-century Christians would celebrate in honor of the resurrection of Christ. González, 234.

[40]For Peterson the meal shared at this gathering appears to be an ordinary meal during "a very unstructured and informal meeting." Peterson, 557. C. K. Barrett, for his part, comments, "There is nothing to suggest that this was anything other than a church fellowship meal, accompanied by religious discourse and conversation." Barrett, 306. Although Walter Schmithals sees hints of Sunday subsequently becoming the Lord's Day in Acts 20:7, he nonetheless concludes that "we cannot show—nor is it very likely—that this custom was first instituted by Paul himself." Christian Sunday celebrations originated first with gatherings in the marginal times of the day, before the beginning or after the end of the day on Sunday. Walter Schmithals, *The Theology of the First Christians*, trans. O. C. Dean, Jr. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 190-191.

[41]See, Samuele Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1977); D. A. Carson, ed., *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982); Kenneth A. Strand, ed., *The Sabbath in Scripture and History* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982); Sigve K. Tonstad, *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2009).

[42]As commentators downplay the references to the observance of the Sabbath as an identity marker of the early Christian community, and in continuity with its Jewish heritage, it is interesting to note also how they deduce from this gathering in Acts 20:7 principles or elements of Christian worship, overlooking that such elements can also

and believes the event may likely have happened on a Sunday evening.[43] Yet, in his opinion, Luke's narratives in the Gospel and Acts never challenge "the timing of the Sabbath but the restrictions against benevolent activitiy then."[44] Luke's many "references to the Sabbath . . . make clear that the traditional Sabbath day was not supplanted by a new day so designated; even if we were to argue from complete earliest Christian silence to support the latter, it would render the many explicit references to the former utterly confusing."[45] Thus, this event in Acts 20 is not a meeting in honor of the resurrection of Christ, "rather, it was just what Luke suggests: a meeting with Paul, who planned to leave the next morning. The text says nothing about Sunday worship (or the lack of it)."[46]

Conclusion

My survey of Luke's references to Paul's visits to synagogues on the Sabbath leads me to conclude that an analysis of what is happening in the book of Acts should acknowledge a genuine continuity between early Christianity and first-century Judaism. More recent commentators are willing to recognize the Jewish character and nature of early Christianity. Thus it is no longer strange to affirm that early Christian believers worshiped on the Sabbath, in the context of the Diaspora synagogue, and that this was according to their custom and reverence for the Law.[47] For James Dunn, "*It is almost impossible to overemphasize the fact that Christianity began within and as a part of Second Temple Judaism.* Jesus was a Jew. . . . The first Christians were all Jews, including Paul, the most controversial figure for non-Christian Jews."[48] Some New Testament scholars now recognize this fact, among them Walter Schmithals, Georg Strecker,[49] and Craig Keener (being the most explicit), but many more do not even mention or note it.

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be deduced from Jesus' worship in the synagogue in Nazareth and Paul's worship in Pisidian Antioch and other places in Acts. See Polhill, 418; Boice, 340-341; and Larkin, 289-290.

[43]Keener, 3:2967.

[44]Keener, 3:2965.

[45]Keener, 3:2966. Keener adds, "The idea that the Sabbath was changed to Sunday is not attested in our earliest sources (the NT documents), though it appears not long afterward and eventually became dominant in the churches of the empire and those they influenced." Keener, 3:2966.

[46]Keener, 3:2967–2968.

[47]See Patzia, 212.

[48]Dunn, *New Testament Theology*, 107.

[49]Walter Schmithals: "in principle Hellenistic Jewish Christians observed the sabbath, yet here it is only a question of the extent of sabbath holiness, not of matters of worship." Schmithals, 195. Georg Strecker, "the church presented itself as 'an eschatological sect within Judaism.' After the experiences of the epiphanies of the risen Jesus and the constituting of early Christian community life associated with these

This acknowledgement should consequently provide a better context for a continued study of Luke's description of the relationship between Jews and early Christians, the relationship of early Christians and the Diaspora synagogue, the context for Paul's witness to Jews, proselytes and Greeks, the conflicts that arose between Paul and some Jews, and the cultural barriers between Judaism and paganism in first-century Roman society. Luke's depictions of the conflicts Paul experienced should no longer be perceived as conflicts between Christianity and Judaism, but between two forms of Judaism—one of them allowing Gentile inclusion into the covenant without undergoing the rite of circumcision. All these insights bring out new possibilities in the study of early Christianity in the context of first-century Second Temple Judaism.

experiences, this cohesion with Judaism was maintained. Thus Christians continued to observe the Sabbath." Strecker, 289.

Andrews University Seminary Studies, Vol. 53, No. 2, 337-353.

HOW DID THE JEWISH SABBATH BECOME THE CHRISTIAN SUNDAY?: A REVIEW OF THE REVIEWS OF BACCHIOCCHI'S *FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY*

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The process whereby the Jewish Sabbath became the Christian Sunday in Western Christianity is well known and is not subject to much current scholarly disagreement. However, there continues to be a discussion about the process whereby the practice of Sunday worship appeared and was augmented by Sunday as a Sabbath rest in the early church. An examination of the reviews of Samuele Bacchocchi's book *From Sabbath to Sunday* reveals a significant shift in thinking on this issue. Partly in response to Bacchocchi's book, the defense of Sunday as a Sabbath based on apostolic authority seems to have faded and in its place has appeared an argument for Sunday as a day of worship based on the practice of the early church.

During the first three hundred years of the Common Era Christian *worship* did take place on Sunday, but there is no evidence that Sunday was seen as a Sabbath or a day of *rest*. As far as the process of officially transforming Sunday into a day of rest, the first evidence is found in Constantine's decree of 321. At virtually the same time, Eusebius of Caesarea provided the first extant theological foundation for a Sunday Sabbath.[1] However, observance of Sunday as both a day of worship and rest did not develop in the West until the early medieval period. In the East, the liturgy honored Sabbath as a day of rest in theory, and Sabbath rest was the practice in some locations, while

[1]The text of Constantine's Sunday Law of 321 A.D. is: "On the venerable day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country however persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits because it often happens that another day is not suitable for gain-sowing or vine planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost. (Given the 7th day of March, Crispus and Constantine being consuls each of them the second time.)" *Codex Justinianus,* lib. 3, tit. 12, 3 (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 8 vols. [New York: Scribner, 1910], 3:380.

Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* (PG 23 [Paris, 1857–1886] 1172): καὶ πάντα δὴ ὅσα ἄλλα ἐχρῆν ἐν σαββάτῳ τελεῖν, ταῦτα ἡμεῖς ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ μετατεθείκαμεν ('and so all the other things that one must observe on the Sabbath, these things we have transposed to the Lord's Day'). See the entire context and the extended discussion in Richard Bauckham, "Sabbath and Sunday in the Post-Apostolic Church" in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation,* ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982), 282ff.

worship was celebrated on Sunday.[2]

Aquinas affirmed a Sunday Sabbath, arguing that the Church had the authority to set Sunday as the time for rest and worship.[3] Three hundred years later Protestants resisted this assertion of ecclesial authority and either denied that one day was more sacred than another or came to advance the idea that Sunday rest and worship had a biblical basis rather than an ecclesial basis.[4] The latter perspective was adopted by English puritans and became a way in which they could uphold the principle of *sola scriptura,* affirm the continued validity of the entire Decalogue, and observe Sunday as the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. Thus the idea of observing Sabbath on Sunday *on the basis of apostolic authority* originated in the sixteenth century.

While there is a consensus about the process whereby the Sunday as a Sabbath rest was added to Sunday worship, scholars have not been able to come to an agreement about the process whereby Sunday came to be a Christian day of worship in the first place. Samuele Bacchiocchi's book, *From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity*, published in 1977, provided a closely reasoned discussion of the topic.[5] The book was based on Bacchiocchi's doctoral dissertation at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. It was reviewed by a broad spectrum of scholars in eighteen journals and a major monograph. This paper will attempt to summarize the reactions of the reviewers and draw some conclusions about the issues at stake.

First, let me describe Bacchiocchi's main ideas. He begins by arguing that Jesus sought to reform the Jewish Sabbath, shearing it of its legalistic rituals and tying it to his work of healing and redemption. He finds nothing in the gospels that suggest the abolition of the Sabbath or that anticipates a new day of worship. Bacchiocchi then focuses on the three New Testament

[2]Werner K. Vyhmeister, "The Sabbath in Asia" and "The Sabbath in Egypt and Ethiopia," in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History,* ed. Kenneth A. Strand (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982), 151–189.

[3]See Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 2a 2ae, 122, 4. "In the New Law the observance of the Lord's day took the place of the observance of the Sabbath, not by virtue of the precept but by the institution of the Church and the custom of Christian people."

[4] John Eck, Luther's antagonist, challenged Protestant views of *sola scriptura* with the argument that "Scripture teaches: 'Remember to hallow the Sabbath….' Yet the Church has changed the Sabbath into Sunday on its own authority, on which you have not scripture." Elsewhere he says, "The Sabbath is manifoldly commanded by God and neither in the Gospel nor in Paul is it set forth the Sabbath was to cease." Johann Eck, *Enchiridion of Commonplaces against Luther and Other Enemies of the Church,* trans., Ford Lewis Battles (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1979), 13, 101.

[5]Samuele Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday* (Rome: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977).

texts that seem to address the issue of Sunday observance. In 1 Cor. 16:1-3 Paul admonishes the congregation to lay by themselves a sum of money for the collection he is making for the Jerusalem church. Bacchiocchi argues that the laying aside of the funds was done individually, not corporately, and thus it does not address the issue of Sunday as a Christian day of worship. He treats Acts 20:7-12 similarly, suggesting that the Sunday gathering was an extraordinary occasion rather than a habitual custom. Finally, he argues that the "Lord's day" mentioned in Rev 1:10 as the day on which John received his revelation, is the eschatological Day of the Lord. Moving to the historical evidence, Bacchiocchi contends that the staunch Judaism of the first-century Jerusalem church discredits any attempt to make it the source of Sunday worship. Rather, Bacchiocchi argues, there were three factors that influenced the adoption of Sunday observance in early Christianity. These factors were (1) the primacy of the Church of Rome (165–212), (2) sun worship (236–259), and (3) anti-Judaism (213–235). He concludes that Sunday has no apostolic authorization and the church should reconsider adopting the seventh day of the week as its Sabbath.

While virtually every review of Bacchiocchi's work notes that he is a Seventh-day Adventist, the reviews come from a broad spectrum of theological positions. These include Roman Catholic, Sunday Sabbatarian, those who take a more neutral position, non-Sabbatarian, and Seventh-day Adventist. I will consider each of these five groups in turn.

In the first category, the Roman Catholic reviewers are complimentary and offer few detailed critiques of Bacchiocchi's thesis.

While Alain Martin questions whether the influence of sun worship began as early as the first century, he states his basic agreement with Bacchiocchi's thesis.[6] Charles Kannengiesser says that though Bacchiocchi's work is suffused with an enthusiasm that may raise suspicion as to the objectivity of his interpretations, it still offers refreshing new perspectives and questions on the subject. While he disagrees with some (non-specified) points of Bacchiocchi's New Testament exegesis, he still finds it an engrossing study.[7] The general Catholic respect for Bacchiocchi's scholarship is exemplified by Dennis Kennedy who states that "Bacchiocchi's book is unfailingly scholarly, readable, and convincing."[8]

This appreciation for Bacchiocchi's work may be explained in part by

[6]Alain G. Martin, review of *From Sabbath to Sunday* by Samuele Bacchiocchi, *ETR* 60.3 (1985): 477–78.

[7]Charles Kannengiesser, review of *From Sabbath to Sunday* by Samuele Bacchiocchi, *RSR* 68.1 (1980): 95–110.

[8]David Kennedy, "A Response to S. Bacchiocchi and J. Primus" in *The Sabbath in Jewish and Christian Traditions, ed.* Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, Daniel J. Harrington, and William H. Shea (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 131.

Andrew Ciferni's comment that Bacchiocchi is carrying on the discussion of the origins of Sunday worship within a context already conceded by most Roman Catholic scholars.[9] Many of the Catholic reviewers find Bacchiocchi's work useful in encouraging meaningful Sunday observance.

The second set of reviews, by Sunday Sabbatarians, is almost entirely negative. Two of the reviewers, Roger Beckwith and Wilfrid Stott, published a defense of Sabbatarianism in *This is the Day: The Biblical Doctrine of the Christian Sunday in its Jewish and Early Church Settings* at virtually the same time that Bacchiocchi's book appeared. [10]

Beckwith states his grave objections to Bacchiocchi's thesis. He finds evidence for the Christian observance of Sunday well before the mid-second century and accuses Bacchiocchi of evading the biblical and patristic evidence by means of special pleading. He disagrees with Bacchiocchi on the origins of the Quartodeciman controversy and argues that the commemoration of Christ's resurrection provides a perfectly intelligible explanation for the rise of the Christian Sunday. He finds Bacchiocchi making bold assertions where he should be more cautious, concluding his brief review with a list of five

[9]Andrew Dominic Ciferni, review of *From Sabbath to Sunday* by Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Worship* 53.2 (1979): 160–62. See also J. H. McKenna, review of *From Sabbath to Sunday* by Samuele Bacchiocchi, *BTB* 9.2 (1979): 94–96. McKenna is unconvinced by some of Bacchiocchi's arguments on the New Testament texts and concerning the relationship of the resurrection appearances to the Eucharist. Yet he agrees with Bacchiocchi that the work represents "the result of a serious effort which has been made to understand and interpret the available sources" (*From Sabbath to Sunday*, 303). He grants that the book "is clear, well written, [and] shows the complexities of Sunday's origins." See also the entirely complimentary view of Gilles Pelland, review of *From Sabbath to Sunday* by Samuele Bacchiocchi, *ScEs* 31.1 (1979): 116–17. Pelland writes, "Not all was said about the origins of Sunday even in the important works of W. Rordorf and C. S. Mosna. The author repeats the analysis of the material, showing the fragility of many of the assumptions commonly received. . . . We are indebted to Mr. Bacchiocchi for a polished work, a richly documented book, which is a step forward in the knowledge of an important feature of the ancient Church." In the journal *Irénikon,* a reviewer suggests that Bacchiocchi's conclusion—according to which, for example, Acts 20 describes an isolated cultural event—is something of a *petitio principii*, [that is, it simply begs the question]. The hypothesis that Sunday began in Rome in the 2nd century has a significant weakness: it does not explain why in the East, where the "Jewish" Sabbath also falls into disuse among Christians, Saturday remains a necessarily liturgical day, on which fasting is prohibited. He also argues that Bacchiocchi's study does not do justice to the patristic theology of the eighth day and it passes rather too quickly over such texts as Ignatius, *Mag.* 9.1. I.P., "Du Sabbat au Dimanche." *Irén* 58.2 (1985): 275–276.

[10]Roger T. Beckwith and Wilfrid Stott, *This Is the Day: The Biblical Doctrine of the Christian Sunday in Its Jewish and Early Church Setting* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1978).

assertions that he finds particularly unsubstantiated.[11]

Wilfrid Stott's review carefully examines Bacchiocchi's treatment of the biblical and patristic evidence. He states that in each case Bacchiocchi rejects the usual exegesis of the passages. He objects that Bacchiocchi makes no mention of the strong emphasis on the "first day of the week" in the accounts of the resurrection in the Gospels. He asks why the Pauline passages are relegated to an appendix and comments that the usual exegesis of these passages is discarded for ones that fit Bacchiocchi's argument. Bacchiocchi's suggestion that sun worship is behind the change to Sunday worship is ruled out by the fact that the early Christians abhorred pagan practices. Stott maintains that the rejection of the Sabbath can only be accounted for if the early Christians were already observing Sunday. Stott believes that the evidence supports an observance of the first day from the earliest days of the church, though Jewish Christians may have observed both days for some time thereafter.

In a review published in the *Anglican Theological Review* Louis Weil states that Bacchiocchi's work appears to cross the line between an objective scientific investigation and the substantiation of a bias.[12] As such, Bacchiocchi's work is insensitive to the significance of other interpretations of the data at hand. Weil says that his bias is also evident in his speculative suggestion that Sunday observance might have been introduced simply as a way of indicating the distinction of Christians from Jews. However, Weil's major objection to Bacchiocchi's work deals with whether the "apostles *instituted* Sunday as the day of Christian observance."[13] He admits that the apostles did not *institute* Sunday in the sense that they did not also *institute* liturgical forms for the celebration of the sacraments. For Weil, the meaning of the word *institute* has a more profound meaning in this context. "The apostolic *institution* of the observance of Sunday must be understood in deeply organic terms, from within the life of the Church, but certainly not explicitly articulated in a set of laws or regulations." From this perspective Weil is able to argue that Sunday is not only of apostolic origin, but it "must also be specifically associated with the

[11]R. Beckwith, review of *From Sabbath to Sunday* by Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Churchman* 94.1 (1980): 81–82. The five points of disagreement are: Bacchiocchi misquotes and misapplies a statement by Epiphanius; he assumes that Christian attendance at synagogue in the late first century shows that they were not observing Sunday; he evades the evidence from the Ebionites; he confuses Narcissus with his co-adjutor Alexander and he dates and locates Alexander's lost treatise inaccurately; and he confuses the Quartodeciman controversy with the different Easter controversy discussed at the Council of Nicea. See footnote 21 for discussion of a further point in Beckwith's review.

[12]Louis Weil, review of *From Sabbath to Sunday* by Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Anglican Theological Review* 61.3 (1979): 420–22.

[13]Weil italicizes the word "*institute"* and its cognates throughout his review.

Church at Jerusalem." Weil concludes that Bacchiocchi's insistence that there is no explicit *institution* for Sunday observance is tantamount to setting up a straw man in order to demolish it.

What seems significant about the reviews by Sunday Sabbatarians is the fact that none of them note the commonality between their position and Bacchiocchi's position. Both positions are Sabbatarian in that they affirm the continuing validity of the Decalogue and its fourth commandment in the Christian era and both affirm the keeping of a Sabbath as a day of both rest and worship.

The third set of reviews summarize Bacchiocchi's ideas and take a neutral stance in relation to them. Gerald Borchert comments that Bacchiocchi's book "is doubtless regarded by many scholars as the best biblical-historical study written by an exponent of Sabbatarianism."[14] Ronald Jasper compares Bacchiocchi's book with Beckwith and Stott's volume and suggests that Bacchiocchi's is a more exciting book to read, providing more radical ideas on the origins of Sunday. He calls it a fascinating and eminently readable book that along with Beckwith and Stott, provides a useful contribution to the debate on the origin and meaning of Sunday. He does caution the reader to remember Rordorf's statement that early evidence is all too scanty, and certain proof on many points is still not possible.[15] Agreeing with that sentiment LeMoine Lewis, writing in *Church History*, admits that Bacchiocchi makes the reader aware of how much previous studies built on gaps in the evidence. However, Lewis remains unconvinced that Bacchiocchi's reconstruction really bridges the gap from Sabbath to Sunday.[16] In a similar vein, the Orthodox scholar Andrew Louth notes that "Bacchiocchi's thesis is a piece in a jigsaw of second-century Christianity that might have been designed by Walter Bauer. . . . With evidence so slight and hypotheses so fragile, the methods of research and argument employed need a corresponding delicacy which Bacchiocchi does not always display."[17]

A fourth set of reviews come from non-Sabbatarians. Many agree with some of Bacchiocchi's biblical interpretations, but strongly dissent from his ultimate conclusion. This is where the most significant discussion of Bacchiocchi's ideas is found.

John Hughes, writing in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, com-

[14]G. L. Borchert, review of *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness* by Samuele Bacchiocchi, *RevExp* 78.1 (1981): 111–12.

[15]Ronald Claud Dudley Jasper, review of *From Sabbath to Sunday* by Samuele Bacchiocchi, *JEH* 30.4 (1979): 475–76.

[16]Lemoine G. Lewis, review of *From Sabbath to Sunday,* by Samuele Bacchiocchi, *CH* 50.03 (1981): 329.

[17]Andrew Louth, "Review of From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity," *JTS* 31.1 (1980): 206.

pliments Bacchiocchi for writing a richly detailed and clearly written work.[18] His main objection to Bacchiocchi's thesis is based on Pauline theology. He notes that Paul, the author whose writings and theology seem explicitly to preclude any form of Sabbatarianism, is relegated in Bacchiocchi's work to an appendix that follows the bibliography! He notes that Bacchiocchi gives scant attention to Gal 4:8–11 and Rom 14:5–6 and concentrates his attention on Col 2. Hughes finds inconceivable Bacchiocchi's argument that Paul simply condemned a perverted observation of Jewish religious traditions. Instead he contends that Paul seems categorically to have denied the necessity of obeying any *this-worldly* religious regulation (Col 2:23) because "Torah and the Mosaic covenant belong to the old order of creation, but the Christian belongs to the new."

One of the scholars with whom Bacchiocchi spars most directly is Willy Rordorf whose 1962 book *Der Sonntag* was translated into English and published in 1968 as *Sunday: The History of the Day of Rest and Worship in the Earliest Centuries of the Christian Church*.[19] Thus, Rordorf's review of Bacchiocchi's book is a significant one.[20] In Rordorf's opinion, Bacchiocchi has ploughed over the same ground again and found nothing new; he has merely rearranged the evidence that had already been discovered. Nonetheless, Rordorf summarizes the content of Bacchiocchi's book at length without comment. He concludes by granting that the structure Bacchiocchi builds is seamless [*fugenloses Gebilde*], constructed with diligence, and well documented. An uninformed person might easily be persuaded by it. But then, Rordorf asks whether it is really true. Is it possible that the whole church committed a mistake without attracting any attention from anyone until Ellen White arrived in the nineteenth century and proclaimed the real truth?[21]

[18]John J. Hughes, review of *From Sabbath to Sunday,* by Samuele Bacchiocchi, *JETS* 23.3 (1980): 256–57.

[19]Willy Rordorf, *Sunday: The History of the Day of Rest and Worship in the Earliest Centuries of the Christian Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968).

[20]W. Rordorf, review of *From Sabbath to Sunday,* by Samuele Bacchiocchi, *ZKG* 91.1 (1980): 112–16.

[21]The implication of Rordorf's assertion seems to be that Ellen White originated Saturday Sabbatarianism. In fact, its roots can be found in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Luther's associate, Carlstadt, appears to have toyed with it. A group of Anabaptists in Moravia adopted it. Seventh Day Baptists organized their first church in 1650 in London. It was a Seventh Day Baptist who first advocated the Seventh-day Sabbath to followers of William Miller in 1843 and it was Seventh Day Baptist ideas that persuaded the Millerite Adventist Joseph Bates to adopt the seventh-day Sabbath. His work persuaded James and Ellen White, who began to keep the seventh-day Sabbath six months before Ellen White claimed to see anything related to the Sabbath in her visions.

Beckwith also mentions Ellen White in reference to Bacchiocchi's "Seventh-day

Rordorf then proceeds to knock on the structure that Bacchiocchi has built in order to demonstrate that it is empty. He restricts himself to just five objections:

1. If Jesus was solely concerned with rediscovering the original intent of the Sabbath, why did he have such a serious confrontation with the Jewish authorities? Rordorf seems to imply that the Jewish authorities believed that Jesus really did intend to abolish the Sabbath. He asks, "Does Bacchiocchi intend to say that one should only do acts of love on the Sabbath but not on regular week days?"

2. Paul and the book of Hebrews are not dealt with adequately. The Christological and salvation-history foundation of the early Church Fathers' view of the Sabbath is ignored. Rordorf argues that the early Christians didn't feel bound by a literal obedience to the Sabbath commandment because they understood that in Christ's work of salvation the eschatological Sabbath had begun.

3. It is just plain unbelievable that the Roman church in the 2nd century adopted Sunday worship by adaptation of the Roman sun cult. The Roman church could not have instituted Sunday observance because it never possessed that kind of power. Besides that, the book of Barnabas, which gives the first witness of Sunday worship, is not a Roman document.

4. The three NT texts which speak of Sunday worship in apostolic times cannot be that easily swept under the table, nor is the explanation of Rev. 1:10 satisfactory.

5. The attempt by the author to make us believe that the observance of the Eucharist may have occurred on any day of the week—whenever they felt like it—must certainly be rejected.

Adventist thesis." He says, "It should be remembered that Mrs. White, the nineteenth-century 'prophet' of Adventism, maintained that the early Christians observed the Jewish Sabbath, and that it was only when Constantine was converted, in the fourth century, that he substituted the Christian Sunday, derived from sun-worship. Stated in this form, the theory is completely at variance with the abundant historical evidence for the Christian observance of Sunday before the fourth century, and it is a sign of progress that Bacchiocchi revises the theory radically." R. Beckwith, review of *From Sabbath to Sunday,* by Samuele Bacchiocchi, Chm 94.1 (January 1, 1980): 81–82. Beckwith has misrepresented Ellen White's position. See E. G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press,1911), 52–53: "In the first centuries the true Sabbath had been kept by all Christians. . . . That the attention of the people might be called to the Sunday, it was made a festival in honor of the resurrection of Christ. Religious services were held upon it; yet it was regarded as a day of recreation, the Sabbath being still sacredly observed. . . . While Christians generally continued to observe the Sunday as a joyous festival, [Satan] led them, in order to show their hatred of Judaism, to make the Sabbath a fast, a day of sadness and gloom. In the early part of the fourth century the emperor Constantine issued a decree making Sunday a public festival."

Rordorf's conclusion is that the Christian Sunday is certainly older than Bacchiocchi wants to admit. It is rooted in Christology and therefore can be observed with a good conscience by Christian churches. However, he argues that the Christian church should not transfer the real meaning of the Sabbath commandment to Sunday. "The early church certainly did not do that before the time of Constantine and later only because it was forced on it. In this respect," Rordorf says, "I agree with the SDAs; but I do not draw the same conclusions as they do."

One of the most thoughtful, irenic, and comprehensive reviews of Bacchiocchi's work comes from Andrew J. Bandstra, now emeritus Professor of New Testament Theology at Calvin Theological Seminary.[22] He begins his review by noting that Bacchiocchi's book confronts the reader with one of the fundamental questions of New Testament theology: How much continuity is there between the old and new covenants and in what sense is the new covenant radically new? Before returning to this question in his conclusion, Bandstra examines the details of Bacchiocchi's thesis.

There is much that he can agree with. In regard to the material on Christ and the Sabbath, he agrees with Bacchiocchi's basic approach. He agrees in the main with Bacchiocchi that the resurrection appearances could hardly have suggested a weekly commemoration of the resurrection. Certainly 1 Cor 16:2 refers to a private setting aside of funds not to a Sunday worship activity. He agrees with Bacchiocchi that Acts 20:7–12 probably refers to a special meeting rather than an established weekly meeting. In his judgment, Acts 20:7–12 has no probative value for regular Sunday worship as a consistent practice of the New Testament church. He believes Bacchiocchi is correct in asserting that there is no evidence that the early Jerusalem church substituted Sunday for Saturday as the day of rest and worship. He feels that Bacchiocchi is correct in concluding that Acts 15 does not give proof that Sunday observance had been recognized by the entire apostolic church or that it had been adopted by the Pauline churches. He grants that Bacchiocchi is successful in challenging the oft-stated contention that in the NT Sunday was more or less consistently substituted for Saturday as the Christian day of rest and worship.

However, he has reservations regarding Bacchiocchi's treatment of the resurrection and the Lord's Supper. He suggests that John 20 may speak indirectly to the appropriateness of the first day of the week for an encounter with the risen Lord. Concerning "the Lord's day" of Rev 1:10 he believes that both the specific function of giving the time of the vision and the close connection with the risen and exalted One suggest that it should be understood either as Easter Sunday or, more likely, Sunday itself. The early Christian church in Jerusalem recognized its freedom in regard to the place and time

[22]Andrew J. Bandstra, review of *From Sabbath to Sunday,* by Samuele Bacchiocchi, *CTJ* 14.2 (1979): 213–21.

for holding specifically Christian meetings. The early Jewish-Christian church in Jerusalem insisted that the keeping of the Sabbath was not mandatory for the Gentile church. The Acts 15 account does suggest that, just as circumcision was not required of the Gentiles as a religious rite, so too the keeping of the Sabbath as the day of rest and worship for the Gentiles was not enjoined by the Jerusalem church. In the end, Bandstra's opinion is that Bacchiocchi's thesis does not deal adequately with the concept of fulfillment as freedom to choose the place and time of worship. Towards the end of his lengthy review Bandstra attempts to outline in four steps how "Sunday observance" rests on the foundation of "Biblical theology" and "apostolic authority."[23] He concludes, "When the church felt obligated to recognize a certain day as the day of worship for Christians, it appropriately designated or recognized the first day of the week. . . . While 'Sunday observance' is not explicitly enjoined or consistently practiced in the New Testament, the use of Sunday for worship is, nonetheless, something which is in harmony with the witness of the New Testament."

Bandstra feels that Bacchiocchi carefully considers the primary sources, shows remarkable familiarity with much secondary literature over a wide spectrum of theological scholarship, and gives competent analyses of the material considered. He finds that Bacchiocchi's treatment of the patristic texts is helpful in describing the variety of factors at work in specifying Sunday as the uniquely Christian day of worship and, in some circles, the day of rest. In the end he believes Bacchiocchi's book is an excellent instrument for all to reflect upon the problem of continuity and radical newness of the new covenant.

Not long after Bacchiocchi's book was published, a group of scholars associated with the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Research in Cambridge, England issued a collaborative volume that covered some of the same ground previously covered by Bacchiocchi.[24] While it deals more extensively with the Old Testament and later church history, the heart of the volume addresses the same issues that Bacchiocchi does, agreeing with some of his positions and challenging others.

D. A. Carson's treatment of Jesus and the Sabbath fits this pattern.[25] He

[23]First, Bandstra suggests, the church agreed that Jesus *fulfilled* the symbolic aspect of the Old Testament Sabbath. Second, the fulfillment was understood *from the beginning* by the Jewish Christians themselves to allow *freedom* as to time and place of specifically Christian gatherings. Third, both the Jerusalem church and Paul agreed that neither circumcision nor the Sabbath was required of the Gentile church since neither was *essential* to the Christian faith. Fourth, there are some hints in the New Testament that the first day of the week is the appropriate day to make contributions (1 Cor 16) and encounter the risen Lord (John 20:19, 26; Rev 1:10).

[24]D. A. Carson, ed., *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982).

[25]D. A. Carson, "Jesus and the Sabbath in the Four Gospels" in *From Sabbath to*

agrees with Bacchiocchi that Jesus contravened the Halakic Sabbath without contravening the Torah concerning the Sabbath. He agrees that Bacchiocchi is right to protest against those commentators who insist that John intends by 5:17–28 to abolish the Sabbath.[26]

Yet he disagrees with some details of Bacchiocchi's interpretation of the disciple's plucking grain, the suggestion that in this case Jesus is rebuking the Pharisees for failing to take Jesus and his disciples home for lunch on Sabbath, and his connecting the rest referred to in Matt 11:28–30 with the Sabbath incident in Matt 12:1–14.[27]

In one of his conclusions, he states that "There is no hint anywhere in the ministry of Jesus that the first day of the week is to take on the character of the Sabbath and replace it." However, the lordship of Jesus over the Sabbath is ultimate and it is just possible that Jesus Himself replaces the Sabbath (85, 84).[28]

In the same volume Max Turner discusses Sabbath and Sunday in Luke/Acts.[29] He questions Bacchiocchi's affirmation that Christ identified his mission with the Sabbath in order to make it a fitting memorial of his redemptive activity. He disagrees with the reasons that Bacchiocchi gives for his argument that Jesus' lordship over the Sabbath is grounded in His having made the day for man's benefit.[30] In his opinion, the Son of Man has (perhaps) a permanent authority that transcends the law and the institutions revealed therein. However, it is going too far to suggest that the Sabbath is abrogated, and "not even a glimmer of the dawn of the 'Lord's Day' is yet to be seen in the Lukan sky."[31] On the other hand, Turner says, "Bacchiocchi's claim that the Sabbath is especially hallowed is barely more obvious."[32] He agrees with Bacchiocchi that the resurrection narratives provide no hint that a new day was to be celebrated in honor of the risen Christ. In his concluding discussion of the material in Luke, Turner suggests that Luke's Jesus is continually subordinating the Sabbath to the demands of His own mission. Jesus presents the law as being fulfilled but simultaneously being transcended in His teaching and ministry.[33]

As far as Acts is concerned, Turner disagrees with Bacchiocchi's argu-

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Lord's Day, ed. Carson, 57–97.

[26]Ibid., 82–4.

[27]Ibid., 62, 87 n. 24, 75.

[28]Ibid. 85–4.

[29]Max M. B. Turner, "The Sabbath, Sunday, and the Law in Luke/Acts" in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day,* ed. Carson, 99–157.

[30]Ibid., 102–3.

[31]Ibid., 104.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid., 106, 113.

ment that in Acts 15 James indicates a theological commitment to the law.[34] In his opinion, the centrality of the law was displaced and it was not to be imposed on Gentiles. Turner affirms that there were many factors that would contribute to the continuity of Jewish Christian (seventh day) Sabbath observance and he asserts that we have, as yet, found no firm evidence for the belief that the teaching of Christ had a significant effect on the pattern of Jewish-Christian Sabbath observance.[35] On the other hand, the mention of the first day of the week in Acts 20 by a Gentile in a Gentile church must have been deliberate, according to Turner. He suggests that it is perhaps best understood as an echo of the resurrection appearances. If this is correct, then the path to the "Lord's Day" in Gentile settings would be relatively simple. Turner disagrees with Bacchiocchi's argument that the meeting in Acts 20 occurred on Saturday night. However he grants that it would be going too far to see in this account a paradigm of first day observance.[36]

Turner concludes with three observations. First, he explicitly agrees with Bacchiocchi that first-day Sabbath observance cannot easily be understood as a phenomenon of the apostolic age, dismissing Beckwith and Stott's argument that Sunday was established as the Lord's Day shortly after the resurrection. Second, he cannot accept Bacchiocchi's claim that Christ renewed the church's theological commitment to the seventh-day Sabbath.[37] Finally, he agrees with Bacchiocchi's contention that Sunday was only gradually patterned after the Jewish Sabbath but disagrees with his affirmation that Sunday worship began only in the post-apostolic period.[38]

In a further chapter in the same volume, D. R. DeLacey discusses "The Sabbath/Sunday Question and the Law in the Pauline Corpus," focusing more on the question of the law than on the specific issues of Sabbath and Sunday. However he does interact with Bacchiocchi on at least two of those specific issues. Concerning Col 2:14, although he is unconvinced by all aspects of Bacchiocchi's argument, he admits that Bacchiocchi is "surely right in his conclusion that this passage cannot be interpreted as stating that the Mosaic

[34]Ibid., 153 n. 203.

[35]Turner presents six factors that contributed to continued Sabbath observance among Jewish Christians. These include: habit and religious conservatism, social pressure, fear of stronger forms of sanction, missionary policy, strong conservative leadership at Jerusalem, and theological conviction (124–126).

[36]Ibid., 123–33.

[37]Turner comments, "In some ways this position is more theologically coherent and intrinsically more historically probable than that envisioned by Beckwith." However Turner repudiates it because it is based on an understanding that Jesus hallowed the Sabbath as a memorial of his redemptive activity and because it assumes that the Jerusalem church was committed to the law theologically throughout the period covered by the book of Acts (136, 157 n. 272).

[38]Ibid., 135–7.

laws itself was 'wiped out' in the death of Christ."[39] He also acknowledges Bacchiocchi's point that the majority of commentators have been over-hasty in seeing a *meeting* for Sunday worship in 1 Cor 16:1-3 when the text actually portrays essentially private and individual almsgiving. He argues, though, that Bacchiocchi goes too far in proposing that this suggests Sabbath worship and rules out a Sunday worship. In the end, the issue of the law dominates the discussion. For DeLacey, the law no longer plays any role in the life of a Christian. The Christian's obligation is to fulfill the law of love by walking in the Spirit. He argues that Paul not only opposed the re-establishment of the Decalogue as a law for the Christian life, but was also happy to allow the seventh-day Sabbath to be observed. DeLacey makes a point of stating that this position is quite incompatible with any identification of Sunday as the Christian Sabbath.[40]

Richard Bauckham's discussion of the Lord's Day in the same volume contains a significant response to Bacchiocchi's ideas.[41] To begin with, Bauckham argues against Bacchiocchi's idea that Rev 1:10 refers to the eschatological "Day of the Lord."[42] He then reviews Bacchiocchi's arguments against the Palestinian Jewish-Christian origin of Sunday observance. He grants their validity, but says they miss the point. Certainly Jewish Christians in Palestine continued to rest on the Sabbath and attend the temple or synagogue services, but they also met as Christians in private houses to hear teaching from the apostles and to break bread together. As Bacchiocchi points out these gatherings are not presented as conflicting with the services of the temple or synagogue but rather complementing them. Bauckham argues that when Bacchiocchi stresses the Jerusalem church's conformity to Jewish practices he plays down the distinctive Christian self-consciousness of being an eschatological community. This consciousness then demanded distinctively Christian meetings for Christian fellowship. Since the resurrection of Jesus marked the beginning of the time of eschatological fulfillment, "it would at least have been appropriate for the earliest church to choose the weekly recurrence of the day of His resurrection as the time of its regular meeting."[43]

[39] D. R. DeLacey, "The Sabbath/Sunday Question and the Law in the Pauline Corpus," in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day,* ed. Carson, 173.

[40]Ibid., 175, 184–5.

[41]Richard Bauckham, "The Lord's Day" in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day,* ed. Carson, 211–250.

[42]Ibid., 232. Bauckham's arguments are: 1.Why does John not use the normal LXX rendering of ἡμέρα (τοῦ) κυπίουβ (*hemera tou kuriou*)? Bauckham admits this is not an entirely decisive argument. 2. But if κυριακή ἡμέρα was already a title for Sunday, John could not have used it in an eschatological sense. 3. The interpretation is difficult to sustain in context.

[43]Ibid., 238.

Bauckham also discusses Bacchiocchi's contention that Christian Sunday observance originated in the second century.[44] He evaluates Bacchiocchi's four main arguments as follows:

1. Bacchiocchi claims that Sunday could not have originated in Palestinian Jewish Christianity since they kept Sabbath. But this argument depends on the assumption that Sunday originated as a Christian Sabbath, a day of worship *and rest*. Bauckham argues that there is reason to suppose that Christian worship on Sunday goes back to early Palestinian Christianity not as alternative but as additional to the observance of the Jewish Sabbath.

2. Bacchiocchi argues that the substitution of Sunday for the Sabbath occurred in the early second century as a result of anti-Jewish feeling in the church. But it does not follow that anti-Jewish feelings motivated the introduction of Christian Sunday worship. If Sunday were a recent substitute for the Jewish Sabbath, we should expect far more discussion of the superiority of Sunday to Sabbath.

3. Bacchiocchi suggests that the substitution of Sunday for Sabbath can be explained by the primacy of the Church of Rome. Bauckham finds this to be the weakest of his arguments but also essential to his thesis. Evidence for the authority of the Church of Rome is not convincing. Bacchiocchi's idea fails to account for the universality of the custom of Sunday worship. Unlike Easter Sunday and the Sabbath fast, Sunday worship was never, so far as the evidence goes, disputed.

4. Bacchiocchi posits that the pagan day of the sun is one reason why the Church of Rome adopted Sunday. But he underestimates the resistance to pagan customs in second-century Christianity.

Bauckham and his colleagues conclude that, while Bacchiocchi has usefully stressed the importance of anti-Judaism in second century opposition to Sabbath observance, he has not demonstrated the second century origins of the Christian Lord's Day (272–273).

In sum, the non-Sabbatarian reviewers disagree most clearly with Bacchiocchi (and with Sunday Sabbatarians) on the issue of the law. They contend that the early Christians did not separate the Decalogue from the civil and ceremonial laws and that the death and resurrection of Jesus ushered in a new era no longer characterized by "law" but by love and the Spirit. Thus the New Testament did not require Sabbath observance of any kind from Christian believers. In honor of the resurrection, the first-century church began to worship on Sunday, but the transition away from Sabbath to an exclusive worship *and rest* on Sunday did not occur until later.

Finally, Kenneth Strand, one of Bacchiocchi's colleagues at Andrews University, reviewed *From Sabbath to Sunday* in a nineteen-page article in the journal *Andrews University Seminary Studies*. Strand is favorable toward Bacchiocchi's general thesis, but takes issue with him on a number of points. These include his treatment of the "Day of the Lord" in Rev 1:10;

[44]Richard Bauckham, "Sabbath and Sunday in the Post-Apostolic Church" in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day,* ed. Carson, 251–298. The discussion of Bacchiocchi is on pp. 270–273.

his suggestion that sun worship was an important factor in the adoption of Sunday in the second century; and his reconstruction of the origin of Easter Sunday. He then goes to great length to dispute Bacchiocchi's contention that Roman primacy was able to influence the greater part of Christendom to adopt new festivals such as the Easter Sunday, Saturday fast, and the weekly Sunday. Strand argues that Bacchiocchi falls into confusion on this matter because he fails to treat the material later than the second century in an adequate manner and because he fails to "distinguish properly between Sunday as a day of worship and Sunday as a day of rest" (99). Strand points out that the earliest Christian observance of Sunday was for worship. That role was held side by side with the Sabbath for several centuries. This was distinct from observing Sunday as a day of rest. Even the second-century Roman observance of Sunday which Bacchiocchi calls attention to did not involve making Sunday a day of rest.

As a result of examining the reviews of Bacchiocchi's book, a few summary observations are in order:

1. Any reconstruction of the origin of Sunday that ignores the basic Jewish orientation of the earliest church and the virtual certainty that it kept the seventh-day Sabbath is no longer tenable. At the same time, Bacchiocchi's conclusion that the church should re-consider the seventh-day as a Sabbath has not been taken seriously.

2. It would appear that Sunday Sabbatarians have not only lost out in their attempts to retain the Sunday-Sabbath in the general culture of America and Britain, but their position seems to be losing in the scholarly discussions as well. For example, I am not aware of a significant scholarly response from Sunday Sabbatarians to Carson's *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*.[45]

[45]The published reviews are split between those who find *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* persuasive and those who have reservations. Nigel M. DeS. Cameron finds its conclusions are extensively buttressed and persuasive; review of *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* by D. A. Carson, *EvQ* 57, (1985): 186–187. Brian Lynch does not agree with all the conclusions of the book, but agrees that "most if not all, traditional Sabbatarian arguments are based on wishful thinking and faulty exegesis;" review of *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* by D. A. Carson, *Searching Together*, 12.1 (1983): 8. J. G. Davis says that the authors have "hammered more nails into the coffin of Sabbatarianism;" review of *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* by D. A. Carson, *ExpTim* 94.8 (1983): 251. Alan F. Johnson finds the book convincing and coherent, admitting that it has significantly influenced his thinking. It is now the work to be answered or agreed with in future discussions of the topic; review of *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* by D. A. Carson, *JETS* 27.2 (1984): 219–223.

On the other hand, R. Buick Knox highlights the tentative nature of the book's assertions: "They admit that their exegesis of many passages is probably, possible, likely, inconclusive, debatable, uncertain, or lacking unanimity, . . . though the final summary chapter admits that it would be presumptuous to claim that these conclusions are 'the only satisfactory solution to the problem;'" review of *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* by D. A. Carson, *JEH* 34.3 (1983): 476. Allan Harman suggests that a re-examination of Genesis 2 and Hebrews 4 would show that "there is more to be said for the creation

3. Bacchiocchi's interpretation of Rev 1:10 as the eschatological "Day of the Lord" has not been widely accepted.[46]

4. Bacchiocchi's discussion of the Jerusalem church's attitude toward Judaism and (by inference) the Sabbath, seems to have received rather wide acceptance. However, his discussion of the three factors that influenced the adoption of Sunday observance in the early second century has received some useful criticism. His suggestions that second-century Roman primacy and sun worship gave impetus to the adoption of Sunday observance have been rejected. At the same time, many scholars have come to agree with him that anti-Judaism did have a significant influence in the opposition to Sabbath observance.

5. Distinguishing between Sunday as a day of worship and Sunday as a day of rest helps move the discussion forward. Sunday may well have become a day of worship, regularly or irregularly during the first century without it becoming a substitute for the seventh-day Sabbath. Regardless, the historical evidence on the subject is scant and ambiguous. With three uncertain texts in the New Testament, and with much of the earliest second-century evidence also ambiguous, it is simply difficult to draw hard and fast conclusions about the origins of Sunday worship and about the relationship of Sabbath and Sunday in the first two centuries of Christianity. It must be recognized that we probably will remain ignorant of the actual practice of Sabbath and Sunday among Christians in most locations in the first three centuries of the Common Era.

6. Concerning this ambiguity, if there is any hope of resolving the different approaches to the disputed evidence, it will come from a serious discussion of the presuppositions that are brought to the interpretation of the evidence. This discussion of basic assumptions has begun in Bandstra's review and in Carson's volume *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*, but more explicit

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ordinance view of the Sabbath than appears here:" review of *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* by D. A. Carson, *RTR* 42.3 (1983): 86–87. Arie Blok expresses some angst about the book's findings: "I cannot say that the Fourth Commandment is binding on Christians today in the way that my strict Voetian oriented Dutch Calvinistic upbringing taught me, and yet I see a spiritual peril in neglecting the Lord's Day:" review of *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* by D. A. Carson, *Ref*R 38.1 (1984): 76–77. Andrew Anderson notes that some will be convinced, but others will wish to make more of the Old Testament and the link between the Lord's Day and God's will at creation. "Still others, concerned to preserve for practical and Christian reasons one distinctive day in the week, will fear that if part of the structure is undermined the whole will come tumbling down." Review of *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* by D. A. Carson, *SJT* 38.3 (1985): 455–456.

[46]For a review of the literature on this subject see Ranko Stefanovic, "The Lord's Day of Revelation 1:10 in the Current Debate," *AUSS* 49.2 (2011), 261–284. In this article, presented as a paper in November 2010 at the Sabbath in Text and Tradition Seminar of the Society of Biblical Literature, Stefanovic suggests that it is possible to see a double meaning in the term that would include both the Sabbath and the eschatological "Day of the Lord."

attention needs to be given to it. Perhaps the assumptions that one brings to this study, particularly in relationship to the law, determine the interpretation of the evidence.

7. Finally, there seems to be some similarity between the Roman Catholic position on the origins of Sunday observance and that of the non-Sabbatarian position. Both eschew any direct apostolic authority for Sunday as a day of worship and attribute its origins to the church. This marks a significant shift in Protestant thinking on the subject. Protestant scholars appear to have dropped any attempt to describe Sunday as a Sabbath or as a day of rest. Instead, their discussion of Sunday defends it as a day of worship based on early tradition rather than on the apostolic or biblical basis for the practice.

Andrews University Seminary Studies, Vol. 53, No. 2, 355-368.

THE QUEST FOR "LA SAPIENZA": ROY BHASKAR'S CRITICAL REALISM AND THE SCIENCE AND RELIGION DIALOGUE

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In January of 2008, Pope Benedict XVI prepared to deliver an address at the "La Sapienza" University of Rome on the place of religion in secular societies. However, due to the objection of a number of students and professors, including the entire physics faculty, the university revoked the invitation two days before the scheduled event on January 15. As one of the spokespersons against the papal appearance, the physicist Marcello Cini sent a missive to the University Rector in which he noted "that since the time of Descartes we have arrived at . . . a partition of spheres of competence between the Academy and the Church. [The pope's] clamorous violation . . . would have been considered, in the world, as a jump backwards in time of 300 years and more."[1] For Cini, religion and science present, to invoke Stephen Jay Gould, non-overlapping magisteria.[2] Consequently, any transgression of such inviolable demarcations, any attempt to even reopen a conversation between those two domains of thinking, amounts to a regressive reactionism.[3] On

[1]See Paul Newall, "The Pope and the Gallileo Affair," http://thekindlyones.org/2010/10/16/the-pope-and-the-galileo-affair/.

I first presented a version of this article at the interdisciplinary 2013 Andrews Autumn Conference on Religion and Science. Much of the rhetorical structure and content aimed for that occasion has been preserved here. Additionally, I remain indebted to friends and colleagues whose feedback made an invaluable contribution in crafting this article: Vanessa Corredera, Karl Bailey, and L. Monique Pittman. They enable me to practice the discourse of transversality on a weekly basis.

[2]See, for example, Stephen Jay Gould, "Two Separate Domains," in *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings*, ed. Michael L. Peterson, et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 556.

[3]Of course, there were those who condemned the snubbing of the Pope, including the then Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi who contended that "no voice should be stifled in our country" (Ian Fisher, "Pope Cancels Speech after Protest at University," *The New York Times*, January 16 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/16/world/europe/16pope.html). Or take Giorgio Israel's response printed on the afternoon of January 15 in the *L'Osservatore Romano*. Israel, himself a professor in the department of mathematics at "La Sapienza," argued that "it is surprising that those who have chosen as their motto the famous phrase attributed to Voltaire—'I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it'—should oppose the pope's delivering an address . . . . In this incident there has emerged a part of secular culture that makes no arguments, but demonizes. It does not discuss, like true secular culture does, but creates monsters" (Sandro Magister, "The University of Rome Closes Its Doors to the Pope,"

this count, the very adage of "faith and science" is oxymoronic at best and perilous at worst.

However, as one reads the text of the ill-fated address it becomes clear that Benedict's intent was not to undermine the role of science, but rather to situate it within a broader conversation of what constitutes rationality and human flourishing.[4] As he puts it elsewhere, there is a "necessary relatedness between reason and faith and between reason and religion, which are called to purify and help one another. They need each other, and they must acknowledge this mutual need" as they challenge each other's pathologies.[5] Benedict echoes similar concerns in his 2006 Regensburg address "Faith, Reason and the University" in which he proffers a sustained critique of "dehellenization," namely, a critique of those intellectual tendencies that undermine the synthesis of faith and reason as achieved through the confluence of Christian and Greek thought. Medieval nominalism, Kant's radicalization of Protestant antimetaphysical impulses, and Adolf Harnack's reduction of the Christian message to humanitarian moralism are but some of the forces that have led to the subjectivization and privatization of faith. Benedict rejects such tendencies and instead calls for "courage to engage the whole breadth of reason, and not the denial of its grandeur—this is the programme with which a theology grounded in Biblical faith enters into the debates of our time."[6]

While I am much less sanguine than the Pope about the all-round beneficence of the "hellenization of Christianity," I side with his basic intent to articulate a positive relationship between science and religion, and in the process provide a nuanced account of the modes, scope, and responsibilities of rationality. He rightly suggests that the multilayeredness of reality calls for a textured account of cognition that evades the trappings of evidentialism, scientism, or fideism. In this article I want to elaborate on some of these intuitions via Roy Bhaskar's critical realist theoretical framework.[7] "Intuitions"

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http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/186421?eng=y).

[4]The ill-fated address itself was published on January 16, 2008.

[5]Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger and Jürgen Habermas, *Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion*, trans. Florian Schuller (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2006), 78.

[6]Benedict XVI, "Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections," 2006 Regensburg Address, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg_en.html.

[7]Critical realism names a spectrum of philosophical positions ranging from various appropriations of Immanuel Kant's transcendental idealism to different Anglo-American approaches from the 1920s onward, including the pioneering work of theologian-scientists such as John Polkinghorne, Arthur Peacock, and Ian Barbour. For helpful definitions of critical realism see John C. Polkinghorne, *Belief in God in an Age of Science* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 105–9, and Ilkka Niiniluoto, *Critical Scientific Realism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1–2. Niiniluoto lists the following types of realism: ontological, semantic, epistemological, axiological, methodological, and ethical.

is the right word here as I have in mind a certain complementarity of concerns of those two thinkers, rather than an overlap in their respective epistemological approaches. In order to streamline my discussion, I will primarily focus on Bhaskar's critique of "epistemic fallacy," his differentiation between the intransitive and transitive domains of science, and the idea of stratified reality.[8] I will then conclude the article by delineating several implications that Bhaskar's perspective carries not only for the dialogue of science and religion, but also the nature of theological inquiry in relationship to critical realism.

Reality Claims and the "Epistemic Fallacy"

To begin with, Bhaskar poses the following deceptively simple question: "What must the world be like for science to be possible?"[9] In other words, what are the transcendental condition(s) required for someone to be able to undertake scientific inquiry? Note that by "transcendental condition" we are referring not to classical foundationalist presuppositions, i.e. some universal, indubitable epistemic postulates, but rather the necessary conditions for X—X standing for an activity, practice, etc.—to be conceivable at all.[10] For example, we might ask, "What is the transcendental condition for something like speech to be possible?" Presumably, our response would point to the necessity of language in whatever form, including winking and the crooning of whales. Now, notice how Bhaskar asks what the *world*, and not the *mind*, must be like for science to work. That simple distinction carries a hefty polemical punch, one that aims, quite explicitly, at Immanuel Kant's transcendental idealism. On Kant's terms, as one might recall, "any inquiry of the form 'what must be the case for ϕ to be possible,' the conclusion, X, would be a fact about us and that ϕ must invariably stand for some universal operation of mind."[11] In short, Kant reduces the transcendental question about cognition to epistemology, or rather, human subjectivity.

Notwithstanding his sympathies for Kant, Bhaskar diverges from him on this point and instead argues that questions of ontology, rather than those of epistemology, ought to frame our transcendental concerns. In so doing, he rejects the subjectivist, "idealist and individualist cast into which Kant pressed his own inquiries."[12] That is, he forgoes the focus on the "'unknowable

[8]Critical realism as it applies to Bhaskar's thought is a contraction of two interrelated lines of exploration: his "transcendental realism" (philosophy of science) on the one hand and his "critical naturalism" (special philosophy of human sciences) on the other. See Roy Bhaskar, *Reclaiming Reality: A Critical Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy* (New York: Verso, 1989), 190.

[9]Roy Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science* (New York: Verso, 2008), 13, 26.

[10]See Levi R. Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects* (Ann Arbor, MI: Open Humanities, 2011), 43. I am indebted to Bryant for some of the ideas and wording in this paragraph.

[11]Roy Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1998), 5.

[12]Ibid., 5.

'noumena' or things-in-themselves which haunt Kant's philosophy." At the same time, he "does not dispense with them in the same way as Kant's idealist successors did—by denying that there is a world independent of the knowledge minds may have of it."[13] He is interested, instead, in the ontological conditions that account for the possibility of knowledge by asking: "What must the world be like for science to be possible?"

This form of argumentation, I should add, is absolutely central to Bhaskar's proposal. It leads him to reject the "epistemic fallacy" and its "failure to differentiate ontological from epistemological considerations."[14] Put succinctly, the fallacy names unwarranted inferences about the *being* of objects from our *knowledge* of them, in effect allowing epistemology to set the bar for what is ontologically real.[15] One hears such things regularly, I suspect, when teaching undergraduate classes in philosophy, ethics, or related disciplines. For example, students will say, "There are so many different, incompatible understandings of A, therefore one true A does not exist." In other words, they reason from the fact of pluralism to metaphysical or ethical nihilism, often couched, rather curiously and paradoxically, in some insipid language of inclusivity and empathy. A similar kind of logic can be seen, to use a more highbrow example, in the case of logical positivists and their insistence on the principle of verifiability—the claim that propositions that cannot be verified or falsified, excluding tautologies, are meaningless statements.[16] Here too the order of knowledge is inverted by reducing the reality of *being* to the level of *empirical knowing*.

Bhaskar's language of *intransitive* (ontological dimension) and *transitive* (epistemological dimension) aspects of scientific inquiry mirrors such a differentiation of ontology and epistemology. In regards to the intransitive dimension, he reminds us that "knowledge is 'of' things which are not produced by men at all: the specific gravity of mercury, the process of

[13]Andrew Collier, *Critical Realism: An Introduction to Roy Bhaskar's Philosophy* (New York: Verso, 1994), 22.

[14]Roy Bhaskar, *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom* (New York: Verso, 1993), 138. On Kant and critical realism see Michael Friedman and Alfred Nordmann, eds., *The Kantian Legacy in Nineteenth-Century Science* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).

[15]Bhaskar, *Realist Theory*, 26. For a good summary of this point see Margaret Scotford Archer, Andrew Collier, and Douglas V. Porpora, "Introduction," in *Transcendence: Critical Realism and God*, ed. Margaret Scotford Archer, Andrew Collier, and Douglas V. Porpora (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1. A similar logic is at play in Descartes's *Discourse on Method* where we have a shift from epistemological considerations of what the we can indubitably know to claims about what is essentially real and true, i.e. the mind. On this point see John Cottingham, "General Introduction," in *Meditations on First Philosophy*, by René Descartes, edited by John Cottingham (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), xxx.

[16]Bhaskar, *Realist Theory*, 27–8.

electrolysis, the mechanism of light propagation. None of these 'objects of knowledge' depend upon human activity."[17] Namely,

> surface appearances are only the experimental, or empirical, aspect of deeper structures and mechanisms which allow the surface appearances to be explained, and about which it is possible to gain knowledge. There is thus a fundamental ontological distinction to be made between the underlying causal mechanisms of nature and the observable patterns of events within nature, whether these are observed in the natural world itself, or under the somewhat more artificial world of the carefully controlled experiment. The underlying causal mechanisms may be said to be the intransitive object of scientific inquiry, whereas the empirical regularities are the transitive products of scientific investigation.[18]

Thus even if we assume, as we ought, that perceptions do not give us right representations of external reality, we should not automatically infer that we cannot say anything meaningful about it, or that correspondence theories of truth, even chastised ones, are untenable.[19] As Kees van Kooten Niekerk rightly notes, conceptualizations of the world are "constrained by the character of our sensations. Our sensations permit different conceptualizations of trees and rivers, but unification of trees and rivers under one common concept would ignore many obvious differences. . . ." In other words, "sense-experience sets narrow limits to what can be accepted as faithful (or true) statements about the (mental or internal) world."[20]

That being said, Bhaskar rightly contends that "any adequate philosophy of science must find a way of grappling with this central paradox of science: that men in their social activity produce knowledge which is a social product much like any other";[21] in other words, it has to account for the transitive

[17]Bhaskar, *Reclaiming Reality*, 21.

[18]Alister E. McGrath, *A Scientific Theology: Reality*, vol. 2 (New York: T&T Clark, 2002), 213.

[19]For instance, see Hilary Putnam, *Reason, Truth, and History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 73. For this reference to Putnam I am indebted to Kees van Kooten Niekerk, "A Critical Realist Perspective on the Dialogue between Theology and Science," in *Rethinking Theology and Science: Six Epistemological Models for the Current Dialogue*, ed. Niels Henrik Gregersen and J. Wentzel Van Huyssteen (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 57.

[20]Niekerk, "A Critical Realist Perspective," 57. Similarly, Murphy writes: "While concepts are human contrivances and not pictures or representations, they are shared by a real world. And *given* a stable set of concepts, we can go on to formulate sentences, most of whose criteria for acceptance (or acceptance as true) can best be described as a combination of coherence and empirical adequacy. . . . Given a stable conceptual system, truth is, in part, a function of the way the world is" (Nancey Murphy, "The Limits of Pragmatism and the Limits of Realism," *Zygon* 28 [1993]: 354, cited in D. Paul La Motagne, *Barth and Rationality: Critical Realism in Theology* [Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012], 47). See also Michael Devitt, *Realism and Truth*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 24.

[21]Bhaskar, *Realist Theory*, 11.

dimension of knowledge. Such recognition of the theory-laden, linguistically mediated, systemically intertwined, and culturally reflective character of knowledge calls for an account of epistemic fallibilism. Again, this does not preclude the possibility of judgmental rationality about the world, i.e. the ability to provide more or less adequate approximation of what reality is *really* like.[22] Philosophical approaches that refuse the very possibility of such critical adjudication—including various forms of subjectivism and anti-realist constructivism—Bhaskar describes as "endemically aporetic."[23] In that regard, he would readily concur with Benedict's observation that we as human beings are "not trapped in a hall of mirrors of interpretations; one can and must seek a breakthrough to what is really true."[24]

On Stratification and Meta-Reality

In addition to these reflections on the relationship of ontology and epistemology, Bhaskar reminds us that different disciplines—physics, chemistry, biology, sociology, and so on—have as their focus different strata of reality, each being irreducible to the other.[25] Reminiscent of Aristotle's

[22]Archer, Collier, and Porpora, "Introduction," 2.

[23]Roy Bhaskar, *Plato Etc.: The Problems of Philosophy and Their Resolution* (New York: Verso, 1994), 16. See also Michael Redhead, *From Physics to Metaphysics* (New York: University of Cambridge, 1995), ch. 2; John R. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1995). For a similar assessment in the field of moral philosophy see Samuel Scheffler, "Introduction," in *On What Matters*, by Derek Parfit, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), xxxiii. Very few philosophers, including postmodern ones, actually subscribe to the contention that *all* reality is but a linguistic construct. In fact, postmodern thought, in many of its incarnations, simply represents a more radicalized form of critical realism. Note, for example, Umberto Eco's point: "Even though the interpreters cannot decide which interpretation is the privileged one, they can agree on the fact that certain interpretations are not contextually legitimated. Thus, even though using a text as a playground for implementing unlimited semiosis, they can agree that at certain moments the 'play of musement' can transitorily stop by producing a consensual judgment. Indeed, symbols grow but do not remain empty" (Umberto Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation* [Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994], 41–2).

[24]Benedict XVI, "Culture and Truth: Some Reflections on the Encyclical Letter Fides et Ratio," in *The Essential Pope Benedict XVI: His Central Writings and Speeches,* ed. John F. Thornton and Susan B. Varenne (New York: HarperOne, 2007), 368, as cited in Ralph Del Colle, "David Bentley Hart and Pope Benedict: Atheist Delusions, the Regensburg Lecture, and Beyond," *Nova et Vetera* 9, no. 2 (2001): 307.

[25]For an alternative account of multi-layered reality see Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1996), 29-32. For this connection to Polanyi I am indebted to McGrath, *A Scientific Theology: Reality*, 219. Bhaskar notes: "A general pattern of scientific activity emerges from this. When a stratum of reality has been adequately described the next step consists in the discovery of the mechanisms responsible for behavior at that level. The key move in this involves the postulation

emphasis on the interdependence of ontology and methodology, Bhaskar points out that "only the concept of ontological depth can reveal the actual historical stratification of the sciences as anything other than an accident. For this can now be seen as grounded in the multi-tiered stratification of reality, and the consequent logic-of-discovery *that* stratification imposes on science."[26] Such an ontology of stratified emergence has numerous implications, not least of which is the idea that methodology in the sciences cannot be encapsulated in *a priori* foundationalist points of departure. It is the object or strata that "determines the form of its possible science."[27] It stands to reason, therefore, that "each scientific discipline demands an approach to its subject area which is determined by its own distinctive features—a notion which is encapsulated in the Greek phrase *kata physin*, 'according to its own nature.'"[28]

The concept of "emergent order" that Bhaskar articulates here bears similarities to the philosophical notion of "supervenience" according to which "higher-level properties supervene on lower-level properties if they are partially constituted by the lower-level properties but are not directly reducible to them."[29] One simply cannot, for example, explain various forms of social interaction by looking at leptons or brain scans of the prefrontal orbital cortex.[30] Instead, "emergent phenomena are frequently taken to be irreducible, to be unpredictable or unexplainable, to require novel concepts, and to be holistic."[31] Such principle of emergence prevents one from

of hypothetical entities and mechanisms, whose reality can then be ascertained. Such entities need not be smaller in size, though in physics and chemistry this has normally proved to be the case" (Bhaskar, *Realist Theory*, 169).

[26]Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism*, 14. For this reference to Bhaskar I am indebted to James K. Dew, *Science and Theology: An the Assessment of Alister McGrath's Critical Realist Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 109–10.

[27]Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism*, 3.

[28]Alister E. McGrath, *The Science of God: An Introduction to Scientific Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 18.

[29]Nancey C. Murphy and G. F. Rayner Ellis, *On the Moral Nature of the Universe: Theology, Cosmology, and Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 22–3.

[30]The pluralistic aspect in the sciences can also be seen in the tendency "towards a diversification of conceptualities, methods, approaches, paradigms, and cognitive values. A discipline like biology, for instance, is organized in historical as well as in experimental departments, and among its methods defined historical inference, morphological descriptions, chemical analysis, refinement [or critique] of the theory-structure of Darwinism, and so on. Hence, even within the natural sciences disunity has indeed become a matter of fact" (Niels Henrik Gergersen and J. Wentzel van Huyssteen, "Introduction," in *Rethinking Theology and Science: Six Models for the Current Dialogue*, ed. Niels Henrik Gregersen and J. Wentzel Van Huyssteen [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998], 3–4).

[31]Mark Bedau and Paul Humphreys, "Introduction to Philosophical Perspectives on Emergence," in *Emergence: Contemporary Readings in Philosophy and Science*, ed. Mark Bedau and Paul Humphreys (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), 9.

settling on any particular, all-encompassing method of investigating the different strata.[32] What is needed, instead, is an allowance for polysyllabic or multileveled accounts of reality whose ontological "depth" may never be descriptively exhausted.[33]

It is in this context that Bhaskar proposes his concept of meta-reality that connotes "both the idea of transcendence, that is going to a level beyond or behind and between reality, while at the same time the 'reality' in the title makes it clear that this level is still real, and so part of the very same totality that critical realism has been describing all along."[34] That is to say, meta-reality names attempts to capture the unified nature of things, a sense of wholeness that eludes normal scientific inquiry. The evocation of transcendence here, as Bhaskar understands, it not a matter of arbitrary fiat, but rather describes the grammar of a critically astute re-enchantment of reality against various forms of modernistic or naturalistic reductionism. Of course, such turn to transcendence, and with it the discourse of the "whole" and "limits," is not only the provenance of religion; non-theistic philosophers such as Iris Murdoch too have argued that the idea of transcendence is synchronous with both ordinary human experience and science.[35] "The idea of a self-contained unity or limited whole," Murdoch writes, "is a fundamental instinctive concept. We see parts of things, we intuit whole things. . . . The urge to prove that where we intuit unity there really is unity is a deep emotional motive to philosophy, to art, to thinking itself."[36]

While much more could be said about Bhaskar's particular brand of critical realism, even our limited discussion is suggestive of implications his approach might have not only for the dialogue of science and religion, but also questions of theological method. In the section to follow, I will briefly explore six such areas of interest.

[32]Bhaskar, *Realist Theory*, 171. This is in contrast to Edward O. Wilson who claims that "we are approaching a new age of synthesis, when the testing of consilience is the greatest of all intellectual challenges. Philosophy, the contemplation of the unknown, is a shrinking dominion. We have the common goal of turning as much philosophy as possible into science" (Edward O. Wilson, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* [New York: Knopf, 1998], 10).

[33]For a helpful delineation of concept of "depth" see Iris Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* (New York: Penguin, 1993), 55.

[34]Roy Bhaskar, *Meta-Reality: The Philosophy of Meta-Reality* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002), 175. For this reference to Bhaskar I am indebted to Alister McGrath, *The Open Secret: A New Vision for Natural Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 52.

[35]For an excellent discussion of transcendence in contemporary thought see Regina M. Schwartz, ed., *Transcendence: Philosophy, Literature, and Theology Approach the Beyond* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

[36]Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, 1.

The Dialogue of Science and Religion: Some Tentative Proposals

1. Bhaskar's double entendre on epistemic *mimesis*, i.e. the idea that knowledge while pointing to reality is always somehow conditioned, entails a word of caution to both practitioners of science and theology. All forms of inquiry, as van Huyssteen points out, "share alike the groping and tentative tools of humankind: words, ideas, and images that have been handed down and which we refashion and reinterpret for our context in light of contemporary experience."[37] It is that recognition, in fact, that gives "science a degree of kinship with other forms of human enquiry."[38] Consequently, someone operating from the perspective of Bhaskar's theoretical starting point will be critical of the proverbial fact/value distinction and the implied empiricist reductionism of what constitutes "true" knowledge. Iris Murdoch rightly reminds us, for example, that "almost all of our concepts and activities involve evaluation. In the majority of cases, a survey of the facts will itself involve moral discrimination. Innumerable forms of evaluation haunt our simplest decisions."[39] In that sense she would concur with Nietzsche's insistence, as would I, that truth requires a "training in truthfulness." It also requires "self-critical honesty" given that the pursuit of truth leads us into a "complex and uneven terrain where influences, prejudices, doubts, histories, loves, emotions, politics, experiences all jostle for a fair hearing. There is no one systematic rationality that can accommodate all of this."[40] That applies to all forms of knowing, including science and theology.

2. Both critical realism and theological inquiry have a share in their mutual commitment to the ontological intransitivity of reality. While precluding forms of naïve correspondence theory of truth, as referential discourses they both reject the argument that descriptions of reality amount to little more than solipsistic projections or putative truth statements furtively twisted to conform to a scientist's agenda.[41] After all, "theological propositions about the world

[37]Wentzel Van Huyssteen, *The Shaping of Rationality: Toward Interdisciplinarity in Theology and Science* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 218.

[38]See John C. Polkinghorne, *Scientists as Theologians: A Comparison of the Writings of Ian Barbour, Arthur Peacocke and John Polkinghorne* (London: SPCK, 1996), 4.

[39]Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, 26. Murdoch, in other words, contends that "facts on their own, understood as discrete pieces of data, do not constitute a neutral truth which is capable of conveying some sense of meaning or saying anything essential about the world. They are not inert but connected to value by individual (moral) judgment, an unavoidable and continuing mode of evaluation and knowledge" (Heather Widdows, *The Moral Vision of Iris Murdoch* [Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005], 60).

[40]Giles Fraser, "On the Genealogy of Morals, Part 7: Nietzsche Contra Dogma," Cif Belief, *The Guardian*, December 8, 2008, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/dec/08/nietzsche-part-seven.

[41]See for example Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts*, vol. 80, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).

concern *the same real world* as scientific statements,"[42] which in turn reminds us that Christianity, in distinction to some other religions, is unintelligible apart from its reality claims. That is why a critical realist theology—or at least a Christian theology sympathetic to the ontological intransitivity tenet of Bhaskar's critical realism—will spurn proposals that define religion as being *only* a meaning-generating endeavor (à la Peter Berger's "sacred canopy").[43]

3. While Roy Bhaskar's critical realism provides a helpful theoretical framework for addressing the dialogue of science and religion, we need additional specificity concerning the character of rationality informing such a dialogue. In that regard, van Huyssteen's nonfoundationalist critical realism provides invaluable suggestions. Building on Calvin Schrag, Huyssteen's approach accords a prominent role to "transversal rationality," i.e. a form of reasoning "where our multiple beliefs and practices, our habits of thought and attitudes, our prejudices and assessments, converge."[44] Transversality, in other words, enables us to envision spaces of convergence hospitable to both personal convictions and interdisciplinary normative judgments informed by the criteria of "intelligibility and optimal understanding, responsible judgment, progressive problem-solving, and experiential adequacy."[45] How this might work out in practice is a whole different issue, one that goes beyond the purview of this article. Pointing to an exciting area of exploration, however, I would suggest that much could be gained from juxtaposing van Huyssteen's conception of rationality and Hans Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, particularly his notion of "fusion of horizons" (*Horizontverschmelzung*).[46] Exploring the dialectics of epistemology and hermeneutics, knowing and understanding, might open new ways for science and religion to interact in a truly transdisciplinary fashion. Ursula King shares such sentiments when she notes that

> a "fusion of horizons" will lead to larger horizons, to new views and shared understanding. This fusion is also important for the dialogue between science and religion, and it is likely to be far more creative and holistic than advocating a strongly adversarial stance between these universes of discourse and knowing. . . . Fusing and expanding the horizons of both

[42]Niekerk, "A Critical Realist Perspective," 78.

[43]See Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Doubleday, 1967), especially ch. 1 and 2.

[44]Van Huyssteen, *The Shaping of Rationality*, 136. Calvin Schrag popularized the concept of "transversal rationality" in his *The Resources of Rationality: A Response to the Postmodern Challenge* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), particularly ch. 6.

[45]Ibid., 12. For a good discussion of this issue see Kenneth A. Reynhout, "The Evolution of van Huyssteen's Model of Rationality," in *The Evolution of Rationality: Interdisciplinary Essays in Honor of J. Wentzel Van Huyssteen*, ed. Wentzel Van Huyssteen and F. LeRon Shults (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 7–12.

[46]Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 302–7.

> science and religion through creative dialogue from many perspectives could be of immense benefit for humankind.[47]

4. The affirmation of transversal rationality implies additional levels of opportunity and responsibility. For one, theology must refrain from laissez-faire special pleadings when its specific reality claims are being questioned. I think that this needs to be stressed—particularly in the Adventist context—as there is a tendency at times to shield the authority of the Bible and privileged hermeneutical approaches from the onslaught of science by resorting to a curious type of epistemological nihilism. Not infrequently, theology attempts to insulate itself from criticism by piggybacking on those accounts that define religion as a protected domain. Such shielding comes through stratagems of subjectivization, demythologization, and "cultural-linguistic"[48] sequestering of either the Kantian, Hegelian, Wittgensteinian, or some other variety, at times bordering on the disingenuous. We cannot stress enough, therefore, that the dialogue between science and religion needs to commence with a high degree of respect for scientific inquiry and a willingness, in principle, to be corrected and changed. It is true that scientific theories are often fraught with ideological overlays, in the same way that theological interpretations are. Yet, theology ought not to hide behind the sophistry of perpetual deferment, one that implicitly claims, "We will accept scientific discoveries once or as long as they fit our doctrinal bill." Caution and critical distance are prudent; equivocation and intellectual dishonesty are not. Niekerk is thus correct in reminding us that

> theology has an interest in science with regards to the performance of its proper task. The reason is the critical realist assignment of theology. This assignment involves the task of subjecting the realist claims of particular versions of a Christian worldview to a critical assessment, and in order to do so theology has to take into account the compatibility of those claims with science. . . . [A] serious consideration of the scientific understanding of the natural world is part of the critical assignment of a theology that purports to be realistic.[49]

5. A theology sympathetic to critical realism will concur that reality cannot be reduced to any particular strata or to a particular scientific method.

[47]Ursula King, "The Journey beyond Athens and Jerusalem," *Zygon* 40, no. 3 (September 2005): 538. For the reference to King I am indebted to Kenneth A. Reynhout, "The Hermeneutics of Transdisciplinarity: A Gadamerian Model of Transversal Reasoning," http://www.metanexus.net/essay/hermeneutics-transdisciplinarity-gadamerian-model-transversal-reasoning. While the suggestion to explore the relationship of van Huyssteen and Gadamer is a product of my own research, I am grateful to Reynhout for directing me to important resources and possible avenues of exploration.

[48]I am adapting George Lindbeck's term here to name a canopy of fideistic approaches to religion and theology. For Lindbeck's delineation of the concept see *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), 40–1.

[49]Niekerk, "A Critical Realist Perspective," 80–1.

Of course, this raises all kinds of questions, including the place of philosophy and theology in the stratification of reality. Murphy, for example, proposes a hierarchy of sciences where metaphysics/theology ends up on top as the most generalized approach to reality. In that context, theology will be interested in accounts that point to the "depth" of reality—here variously understood as the "ground of being" or "inexhaustible mystery"—while fully acknowledging that the idea of "depth" need not be stated in theistic terms. Equally important, I believe, is the claim that theology is also horizontally related to the various strata. In that sense, "critical realism encourages a connectivist approach to theology, by insisting that its correlation with the various strata of reality be explored, both as a means of intellectual enrichment and as a matter of intellectual responsibility."[50] Such an affirmation opens up a whole new space for a chastised natural theology, one that is demonstrative rather than prescriptive. It privileges the language of inferences, fittingness, and resonances as it probes perennial human interests in the idea of transcendent in relationship to human well-being. With that in mind, I concur with Benedict's insistence that a principle task of philosophy and theology is to "sift the non-scientific element out of the scientific results with which it is often entangled, thus keeping open our awareness of the totality and of the broader dimensions of the reality of human existence—or science can never show us more than partial aspects of this existence."[51]

6. Finally, Bhaskar's recognition of the transitive domain and the way human cognition is shaped by individual, institutional, and cultural factors, pushes the discussion of science and religion, invariably so, into the domain of ethics. That is, the scope of the dialogue must go beyond matters of metaphysics and epistemology to include the issue of moral responsibility. The ethical dimension itself consists of two, broadly-construed layers. On the first level we are confronted with questions of *(mis)conduct* of scientific research, including matters of institutional negligence, deliberate fabrication of data, intentional omission of all known data, authorship and intellectual property, use of animals and human subjects, and so on.[52] Now, of course, I do not mean to suggest that all such considerations somehow need a religious perspective in order to be illuminating and ethically directing. I do, however, maintain the position that some of these questions press against deeper frameworks of meaning and metaphysics. As anyone interested in the field of moral philosophy will readily admit, the moment you focus on matters of applied ethics, questions of metaphysics begin looming in the background.

[50]McGrath, *A Scientific Theology: Reality*, 240.

[51]Ratzinger and Habermas, *Dialectics of Secularization*, 56–7.

[52]John D'Angelo, *Ethics in Science: Ethical Misconduct in Scientific Research* (New York: CRC, 2012). He discusses issues such as institutional negligence, deliberate fabrication of data, deliberate omission of all known data, authorship and intellectual property, etc. Also see Bernard E. Rollin, *Science and Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006) for a good treatment of how ethics is often ignored to the detriment of science and society.

The second level, on the other hand, addresses the questions of *consequences* and *utilization*. I am reminded here of the important claim that Glenn Stassen and David P. Gushee make in their *Kingdom Ethics* where they caution about the science-technology-commerce connection that both exerts pressure on our moral sensibilities and urgently invites ethical deliberations.[53] To overlook the connection of science and capital is as negligent as it is naïve. I do not need to dwell here on the usual stock of ethical quandaries connected with environmental degradation, biotechnology, trans-humanism, nuclear armament, and so on. What I do want to reiterate is, however, the need for the faith and science dialogue to encompass efforts to articulate goods, norms, and judgments that are, in Hans Jonas's words, "compatible with the permanence of genuine human life."[54] It is to insist that ethics cannot be removed from the conversation table as it points to the essential task of constructing moral ontologies that account "of the meaning of our being in the world and how to orient ourselves in the world."[55] In other words, it is to reject the severance of scientific and technological development from fundamental "questions of integral human development."[56] Murphy helpfully notes:

> We claim that ethical knowledge is logically related to knowledge about the way the world is as well as to knowledge of transcendent reality. Thus, ethical judgments should be affected by developments in scientific knowledge but cannot be determined by scientific knowledge alone. This is the *limited* truth in the fact-value distinction . . . . Furthermore, we claim that sciences are not "value-free"; the applied human sciences provide knowledge of means-ends relations, and choice of ends presumes judgments about the good for humanity. Since the natural sciences are dependent on the development of technology (applied science) they to are inevitably tied to the ethical realm.[57]

It stands to reason, therefore, that faith practitioners concerned about science and theology ought to be supportive of organizations and efforts that seek to bring scientists and human rights advocates to the same table. (The Carnegie Mellon University Center for Human Rights Science is one such laudatory forum. It "brings together scientists and human rights practitioners committed to rigorous assessment of the state of human rights around the world").[58]

[53]See Glenn H. Stassen and David P. Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in the Contemporary Context* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003), 257–8.

[54]Hans Jonas, *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 11.

[55]William Schweiker, *Responsibility and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 38.

[56]Benedict XVI, *Charity in Truth* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2009), 20–37.

[57]Murphy and Ellis, *On the Moral Nature of the Universe*, 6.

[58]"Center for Human Rights Science - Carnegie Mellon University," http://www.cmu.edu/chrs/.

In closing, we return to Benedict's reminder that what our civilization urgently needs is the pursuit of integrated or sapiential rationality; a kind of "cosmopolis" (Stephen Toulmin) that convincingly recaptures the mediaeval vision of "an over all harmony between the order of the heavens (the Cosmos) and the order of human affairs (Polis)."[59] As Murphy and Ellis claim, there is a great hunger today "to relate our burgeoning knowledge of the cosmos to the pursuit of human meaning, both in the sense of meaningful, fulfilling ways of life (ethics and politics) and in the sense of the quest for an understanding of ultimate reality (religion)."[60] Benedict strongly echoes this point in *Caritas in Veritate* where he warns against the instrumentalization of reason that severs scientific discoveries and technological development from matters of moral responsibility, virtue, and human rights. "When technology is allowed to take over," he argues, "the result is confusion between ends and means, such that the sole criterion for action in businesses is thought to be the maximization of profit, in politics the consolidation of power, and in science the findings of research." What is frequently overlooked is that "underneath the intricacies of economic, financial, and political interconnections, there remain misunderstandings, hardships, and injustice."[61] Addressing such issues of systemic injustice and imbalance is a complicated endeavor, one that requires both different forms of advocacy and scholarly explorations. But certainly one legitimate way to pursue such a task is to strive to bring faith and reason together, to "overcome the self-imposed limitation of reason to the empirically falsifiable" and "so continually [seek to] disclose its vast horizons."[62] The quest for *la sapienza* or wisdom is more, but certainly not less than that.

[59]Murphy and Ellis, *On the Moral Nature of the Universe*, 2.

[60]Ibid., 2–3.

[61]Benedict, *Charity in Truth*, 143.

[62]Benedict XVI, "Faith, Reason and the University."

DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

REVELATION 6:9–11: AN EXEGESIS OF THE FIFTH SEAL IN THE LIGHT OF THE PROBLEM OF THE ESCHATOLOGICAL DELAY

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The fifth seal of Revelation has most often been treated from an anthropological perspective that appears to be clearly inadequate to account for the depth of this trigger passage located in a climactic setting. In and around the fifth seal, the text indeed suggests that the persecution of the last days has occurred. Imminence and delay do seem to intersect in the passage, creating a crisis of eschatological proportions which, in turn, raises questions of theodicy. The purpose of this dissertation is to increase the understanding of the fifth seal as a whole through a focused study of its delay motif in light of similar relevant occurrences in the Hebrew Bible.

The "delay" approach is justified by the important presence of the "How long?" motif in the question section of the fifth seal and the call to "wait/rest for a little while" in the answer part. The occurrence of the word χρονὸς (the duration aspect of time) also points to an extension of time in connection with the crisis pointed out in the text. Further, delays and apocalypses are closely related where persecution and martyrdom often raise the question of eschatology and, by the same token, that of theodicy.

After the introduction, chapter 2 of this dissertation surveys the dominant views on the fifth seal from the second century to the present. Chapter 3 deals with the exegetical analysis of Rev 6:9 in order to come to terms with the stage setting of the delay question. Chapter 4 surveys the usage of the "how long" motif in the Old Testament and the Jewish and early Christian apocalyptic tradition and probes the imminence/delay tension from the interaction of the fifth seal with preceding context. Chapter 5 completes the exegetical and theological analyses of the resolution section of the fifth seal (6:11) and addresses issues of fulfillment in the text and the succeeding context to derive the theological meaning for the interval. The last chapter synthesizes the findings of the entire study.

Regarding the timing of the eschatological fullness, everything, even the delay, stays within God's control and he is not subjected to the human time perception. He controls human history according to his benevolent purposes and establishes the time of the end. God's answer does suggest that the End coincides with (1) the totality of the eschatological people of God as determined by the wisdom of God's purposes, (2) the fullness of God's missionary program through radical sacrificial witness, (3) the fullness of the measure of iniquity, (4) the general resurrection of dead witnesses, and (5) the transformation of the cosmos.

By delaying the final judgment, the theodicy in the fifth seal appears to be founded on the mercy of God in favor of the inhabitants of the world. Therefore, in God's program, the theological meaning of the interval is that time is allowed to save the inhabitants of the earth and the fifth seal is an invitation not to let death stand in the way of radical witnesses in order to accomplish that purpose.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE REALITY OF ANCIENT ISRAEL: CONVERGENCES BETWEEN BIBLICAL AND EXTRA-BIBLICAL SOURCES FOR THE MONARCHIC PERIOD

Name of researcher: Christie G. Chadwick
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Date completed: May 2015

Problem

Many scholars cast doubt on the historicity of the events in the Pentateuch and this skepticism has now been extended to the period of the judges, the united monarchy of Solomon and David, and sometimes beyond. There is a group of academics that maintain that the entire Hebrew Bible is a creation of the Late Persian-Hellenistic period in which no reliable history can be found. However, very few of these have seriously taken the archaeological evidence (including relevant material culture and ancient Near Eastern texts) into account. Does this evidence support such a late date for the composition of the Hebrew Bible or an early date, as traditionally believed? Does the text better reflect the social, cultural, and historical reality of pre- or post-exilic Israel? Can the Hebrew Bible be used as a reliable source for the history of Israel and Judah during the pre-exilic period?

Method

This study approaches the subject by looking at the material culture and ancient Near Eastern texts independently from the Bible and at the Bible independently of extra-biblical evidence, focusing specifically on the books of 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings. Within each chapter, an analysis of selected biblical texts relevant to the pre-exilic period was made, then tested, by comparing them with the archaeological correlates pertaining to the pre- and post-exilic periods to determine convergences between biblical and extra-biblical sources.

Conclusions

This study has shown that in a variety of aspects, the books of 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings reflect the social, cultural, and historical reality of the period it professes to describe, that is, the Iron Age I and II, pertaining to the pre-exilic period. Therefore, it would seem that Samuel and Kings can be used as a reliable source concerning the social history of Israel and Judah during the pre-exilic period.

UP FROM SEA AND EARTH: REVELATION 13:1, 11 IN CONTEXT

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Date completed: February 2015

Problem and Method

The wide spectrum of usually unreconcilable ways sea and earth have been interpreted in Revelation 13: 1 and 11, as chapter 2 exposes, prompts questions such as What did John mean in Rev 13:1, 11 by coming up from the sea and the earth or land? What could his original addressees have understood when they heard it for the first time? These are the basic questions this dissertation aims to answer through a reconstruction of the original context shared by John and his first-century Asian audience, and, in that light, of the sources he most probably used to paint his literary fresco. The analysis of these sources, both canonical and non-canonical, in chapter 3 made manifest the singular way in which John uses the sea and earth/land motifs in comparison to the ways they were used in his milieu. The linkage with the Old Testament is more connected than any of the non biblical groups of literature analyzed.

Results

At the outcome of exegesis, chapter 4 made evident a complex array of evocations, drawn basically from the history of OT Israel, concurring in the images John piled up in Rev 13, sea and earth/land. It is precisely in virtue of such an inherent multivalence of his chosen terms that he could address a variety of circumstances with one and the same set of words and images. Thus, in regard to Rev 13: 1, 11, it would be more proper to speak of "meanings," rather than of only "meaning."

Conclusion

In conclusion, both sea and earth in Rev 13:1, 11 are multivalent, evocatively pointing to several paramount moments and events in the OT history of salvation, with Israel as its foremost protagonist. God's creation, the Exodus, the Babylonian exile, the postexilic restoration, as well as Jesus' victory over-death are among those hallmarks, contrasted by John with their counterfeit by Satan. The ancient Near Eastern treaties which first served as God's chosen sociocultural, historical, and literary framework for those events are also a clue for their interpretation in the spiritualized, Christ-centered re-application John makes of them in his Revelation to the seven churches of Asia. A Christian Israel is treading the same wrong path its ancestors trod in the past during their spiritual journey. The same dangers and consequences are ahead, according to the covenantal dynamics still in place: Deceit in the form of false prophetism springing from the church itself as a spiritual land, in tandem with a flooding tide of spiritual slavery through paganism seducing

the wayward many while threatening, hand in hand with hostile local Judaism, a remnant of faithful witnesses to the Lamb.

Thus, a new God-sent prophet, in the fashion and the lineage of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel, again calls many to repentance, and the faithful few to endurance. John's familiar and carefully chosen words and images are intended to be more evocative than referential for his primary public. The same principles—good and evil—are at work in the first-century Asian scenario, although with different institutional customs and disguises. Thus, John's Revelation is aimed at showing who's who behind the apparel, at warning against the consequences of flirting with evil, and at helping people to take the right side in the conflict between the Lamb and the Dragon by letting them know in advance who the victor will be in the end.

CLEANSING THE COMMON: A NARRATIVE-INTERTEXTUAL STUDY OF MARK 7:1–23

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Date completed: March 2015

Purpose

The conflict story of Mark 7:1–23 between Jesus and the religious leaders over the issue of defilement is the meeting point of a variety of disciplines: purity studies, Jewish studies, exegetical studies, Historical Jesus studies, and studies on Jesus and the law. The crux of the passage, the meaning of the parable in v. 15 and the ensuing "cleansing" in v. 19, has been interpreted very differently. Scholars doing exegetical studies and studies on the relationship between Jesus and the law have maintained that the Gospel writer correctly reflects in 7:19 the meaning of Jesus' parable (7:15), abrogating the clean/unclean categories of Lev 11. Scholars doing purity, Jewish, and recent Historical Jesus studies have generally argued that Jesus could not have abrogated these food laws in the social and religious setting of his day. The controversial remark in a narrative aside must be Mark's comment on Jesus' saying to accommodate the Christian community in the later part of the first century.

Chapter 1 introduces the narrative-intertextual methodology used in the subsequent chapters. This methodology allows a careful examination of the literary material in Mark's Gospel in the first part of the dissertation and a careful examination of purity issues arising out of the Hebrew Scriptures and the Second Temple period in the later part.

The narrative analysis in chapters 2–3 reveals that Mark uses space, time, props, movement, prefixes, verb tenses, and technical terminology meticulously and astutely to develop the themes in the pericope and build a cohesive literary unit. The central theme of the entire pericope is "touch defilement," which is first introduced in the observation that the disciples eat with defiled (unwashed) hands. It is augmented with a conflict over authority.

Chapter 4 examines the interrelationship of purity terms in biblical literature of the later Second Temple period. In the major reference works predating the 1970's, the purity terms κοινός; ("defiled"), ακάθαρτος ("unclean"), and βέβιλος ("profane") were more or less used interchangeably. Since the 1970's though, studies examining the topic of purity have differentiated these terms. An assessment of 1 Macc 1:47, 62; Mark 7:1–23; Acts 10–11; and the parallel passages of Acts 21:28 and 24:6 leads to the conclusion that κοινός/κοινόω). is a term unique to the Second Temple period and distinct from other purity terminology. It is best defined as an intermediary defilement that a clean person/object acquires by coming in contact with an unclean person/object. Since κοινός impurity is unknown in the Hebrew Scriptures, Mark is correct in attributing it to the "tradition of the elders."

Scholarship has generally connected allusions in Mark 7:1–23 to the clean/unclean animals of Lev 11. Chapter 5 assesses the intertextual allusions based on literary, thematic, and logical parallels. In each category Mark indeed refers to Lev 11, but not to the section on clean/unclean animals (Lev 11:1–23, 41–43). Instead, the allusions always point to the section on touch contamination by a carcass (Lev 11:24–40) or the section containing holiness language (Lev 11:44–45). Mark underlines the topic of touch defilement and ethical purity by means of these allusions to Lev 11.

Conclusion

A concluding chapter summarizes the findings. In Mark 7:1–23 neither Mark nor Jesus abrogates the clean/unclean distinction of Leviticus. Instead, Mark in v. 19 correctly summarizes Jesus' position that new "traditions," established during the Second Temple period, overextended God's requirements and are hence invalid. In the larger context (Mark 6–8 and particularly Mark 7:24–30), κοινός defilement from Gentiles is therefore an invalid expansion of God's law and, instead, mission to all people is a divine imperative (Gen 12:1–3; Mark 7:24–30; Acts 10–11).

Mark 7:1–23 is shown to be a coherent whole illustrated in four steps. The narrative data demonstrate the unity of the pericope. Jesus' support of the law against Second Temple period additions is found in both vv. 1–13 and 14–23. The passage's marked parallelism to the defilement and holiness theology of Lev 11 exhibits the Evangelist's sensitivity to purity issues. And the congruence of the passage's teaching with the trajectory of mission in Acts 10 demonstrates the heuristic power of this explanation of Mark 7.

A BIBLICAL AND MISSIOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR CROSS-CULTURAL MISSION: A CASE STUDY OF THE LOBI FUNERAL RITES IN BURKINA FASO

Name of researcher: Boubakar Sanou
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Date completed: August 2015

Problem

Converts to Christianity in traditional contexts often face pressure to continue traditional rituals and practices which sometimes contain unbiblical elements. Non-selective performance of traditional practices can produce dual allegiance and syncretism. Such is the case with Lobi Seventh-day Adventists concerning their traditional funeral rites of passage. Some core elements of these traditional funeral rites, in which all community members are expected to fully participate, conflict with biblical teachings on the human condition after death.

Method

This dissertation starts by laying the theoretical and theological basis for addressing the problem. The dissertation then uses ethnographic research of funeral rites among the Lobi people of Burkina Faso to understand the biblical and missiological issues they raise. The process of data collection during my field research was based on observation of people's behavior at a funeral ceremony and on a purposeful sampling of 16 participants for interviews in order to have a personal and deeper understanding of the Lobi cultural and religious contexts in relation to funeral rites. I interviewed three Lobi religious leaders, six Lobi Adventists who took part in traditional funeral rites before becoming Adventists, two Lobi Adventists who continue to take part in traditional funeral rites, four Lobi Adventists who are being pressured to participate in funeral rites, and a Lobi Catholic priest who has published on Lobi funeral rites.

Results

The findings of this dissertation broaden the understanding of the religious and sociocultural significance of the Lobi funeral rites as well as the challenges some traditional practices pose to those committed to being fully biblical Christians. A biblical and missiological framework was developed to address the challenges such traditional rites pose to Christian mission in general and to Seventh-day Adventist mission in particular.

Conclusion

Mission always takes place in particular contexts in which religion, culture, and many other factors play significant roles in people's approach to what matters to them. A thorough understanding of a people group's socio-

cultural practices is therefore a prerequisite to any effective cross-cultural communication of the gospel to them. By investigating the cultural meanings associated with one of the most important rites of passage among the Lobi in Burkina Faso, evaluating them in the light of Scripture, and proposing a biblical and missiological framework for responding to the challenge they pose to Christian mission, this research has the potential to make a significant contribution towards effective ministry and mission.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ATONEMENT CONCEPT IN THE ABOAKYER FESTIVAL OF THE EFFUTU TRIBE IN GHANA AND THE YOM KIPPUR FESTIVAL OF THE OLD TESTAMENT: IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVENTIST MISSION AMONG THE EFFUTU

Name of researcher: Emmanuel H. Takyi
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Problem

Christian missions have operated in Winneba, Ghana, since 1865 with various approaches being used to share the gospel with the Effutu. Though there have been some successes, allegiance of the Effutu to their tribal gods, manifested especially during the Aboakyer (Deer Hunt) festival, raises the need for a missiological bridge or intervention for more effective contextualized ministry among the Effutu of Winneba.

Purpose of Study

This research aims to develop a missiological model based on a comparative study of the Old Testament Yom Kippur festival and the Effutu Aboakyer festival that will potentially facilitate more effective Adventist mission among the Effutu.

Method

To understand the concept of atonement, a literature review of the concept of atonement was done in two parts—the biblical view (comprising the Old Testament and New Testament views) and the African Traditional Religion perspective. Second, an ethnographic research on the Effutu Aboakyer was done to understand its context, particularly the origins, history, and the rituals of the Aboakyer festival. This involved individual and group interviews as well as participant observation. Using the comparative approach method, a comparison of the Aboakyer and Yom Kippur with its typological meaning was done to find (a) similarities between them that reveal points of contact and that will make Yom Kippur comprehensible to the Effutu and also (b) differences that reveal inadequacies in their understanding of atonement that can be remedied by accepting the biblical model of atonement through two phases of atonement provided by Christ's sacrifice. A missiological model that comprehensively and effectively addresses the Effutu situation was accordingly proposed.

Conclusion

Based upon the redemptive analogies (similarities) found in the analysis and the differences that posed as challenges, Yom Kippur expressing the biblical

model of atonement was proposed as the appropriate modus operandi that will potentially facilitate a more effective incarnational mission among the Effutu. This model, which elucidates the two phases of atonement provided by Christ's sacrifice, was found to have the remedy for the inadequacies (differences) of the Effutu understanding of atonement and also the theological insights to give the sanctuary message an eschatological emphasis needed at this time. The model will also put the Effutu history and cosmology into biblical perspective and help the Effutu direct their sacrifices and worship to God rather than the lesser gods.

THE FUNCTION OF 'HOPE' AS A LEXICAL AND THEOLOGICAL KEYWORD IN THE PSALTER: A STRUCTURAL-THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF FIVE PSALMS (PSS 42–43, 52, 62, 69, 71) WITHIN THEIR FINAL SHAPE CONTEXT (PSS 42–72)

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The shape and message of the Psalter has been of central interest for many Old Testament scholars during the last thirty years. At the core of shape scholarship stands the issue of hope. Often this is related to what is commonly considered a major hope-shift in the Psalter, which moves its focus from hoping in the Davidic covenant (Books I–III) to hoping in God (Books IV–V). However, when considering the shape and message of Book II, there is evidence that these two hopes coexist, side by side, as also seen in the introduction to the Psalter (Ps 2).

This dissertation analyzes the nature and function of hope within the shape of Book II. Hebrew lexemes for hope are located in five psalms equally distributed within Book II (Pss 42–43, 52, 62, 69, 71), suggesting a deliberate arrangement of "hope." An analysis of the meaning of hope and related synonyms (chapter 2) is followed by a consideration whether "hope" forms a structural and theological keyword within these five psalms (chapter 3). This is determined to be the case for four of the five psalms, leaving Ps 69 as a final supporting psalm within the extended conclusion of the book (Pss 69–72). The central and final step is to consider if and how these five Hope Psalms fit within the wider context of Book II. Each of the thirty psalms in Book II are analyzed as to their shape function within the book (chapter 4). This analysis reveals that these Hope Psalms not only structurally divide the Book into three main divisions (Pss 42–51, 52-61, 62–72), but also thematically introduce them. For example, the first section appears to locate the initial hope (Pss 42–43) within an eschatological context of God's eternal kingdom (Pss 46–48), which ultimately fulfills the psalmist's hopes and longings. Several lexical links between these sections seem to support this linkage. At the center of the book, there is a climactic crisis, at which point all past hopes and securities are destroyed (Ps 55). This second section portrays a great cosmic war going on between the Messiah and the antagonist introduced in the second Hope Psalm (Ps 52). Hope is particularly required as a response to this climax, and as a necessary aid for perseverance, as also emphasized in the following psalms, which employ two synonyms of trust and refuge. The third section also describes the eschatological kingdom of God, and echoing the first section, is introduced by a similar Hope Psalm in

which the psalmist encourages himself to hope, and finds comfort in hope as he faces difficulties.

In conclusion, the shape of Book II appears to be very deliberately designed to promote hope in its various aspects. Human aspects involve not only self-encouragement to hope in the midst of severe trials, but also to connect hope with God's act of bringing about deliverance. The Messiah plays a significant role in the realization of this hope. His role is two-fold: To bring hope to Israel (1) through a unique marriage union with his bride, Israel (Ps 45), and (2) through his sufferings, which intricately connect human destinies to him (Ps 69). God's role is also portrayed as redeeming man from death (Ps 49) and carrying the load of the people (Ps 68). Structurally, these acts of God and his Messiah function as theological reasons and justifications for the possible entry of humankind into the eschatological kingdom of God. This is demonstrated in the way they create bridge-frames around the first eschatological vision (Pss 46–48). Without these, the distance and rejection felt in Pss 42–44 would have continued. Human response to these hope acts of God include wisdom (Ps 49), reformation (Ps 50) and repentance (Ps 51)—all of which enable humans to enter this future hope. This implies, however, that only those who accept this global call, and follow the set requirements, can enter into the eschatological hope portrayed in Book II. The shape of Book II closely relates hope to this future restored relationship with God, which takes place in the very presence of God. Thus, hope is therefore a deep longing for God's presence, and as Ps 42–43 adds, a deep desire to praise God's name. It is towards this that Book II (and the Psalter as a whole) also moves.

BOOK REVIEWS

Aamodt, Terrie Dopp, Gary Land, and Ronald L. Numbers, eds. *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. 365 pp. Hardcover, $105.00; Softcover, $34.95.

Oxford University Press has recently released a book titled *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet* that is edited by Terrie Dopp Aamodt, Gary Land, and Ronald L. Numbers. Aamodt is currently professor of English at Walla Walla University and earned her PhD in American and New England Studies at Boston University. In addition to the work cited above, Aamodt is currently writing a biography of Ellen G. White. Land, who unfortunately passed away shortly after *Ellen Harmon White* was completed, worked at Andrews University in the Department of History and Political Science for forty years. He received his PhD in American history from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and wrote and edited several volumes on Millerite and Seventh-day Adventist history. These volumes include: *Adventism in America: A History* (1986), *The World of Ellen G. White* (1987), and the *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists* (2005). The final editor, Ronald L. Numbers, is currently Hilldale Professor Emeritus of the History of Science and Medicine and of Religious Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Numbers received his Ph.D. in the history of science from the University of California, Berkeley. He has written two major works on Adventist history—*Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White* (3rd ed., 2008) and *The Creationists: From Scientific Creationism to Intelligent Design* (expanded ed., 2008). In addition to this editorial team, some 20 scholars contributed chapters to *Ellen Harmon White* and Grant Wacker, who is currently Gilbert T. Rowe Professor Emeritus of Christian History at Duke Divinity School, supplied a foreword.

Ellen Harmon White contains 18 chapters that focus on different aspects of Ellen G. White's life and ministry. The opening chapter is a brief biographical sketch that sets the tone for the entire book. The next chapter focuses on White's visions, which is followed by two closely related chapters on the "testimonies" and White's role as a prophet. Chapters 5 to 7 are dedicated to White's role as an author, speaker, and institutional builder, while the next three chapters relate to theological topics (titled: Theology, Practical Theology, and Second Coming). A discussion on White's views on science and medicine follows in the 11th chapter, which is succeeded by a discussion on various aspects of society and culture in chapters 12–15, including a discussion on race and gender. The final three chapters bring this study to a close with sections devoted to White's death and burial, her lasting legacy, and an overview of the biographical treatment she has received from her lifetime to the present.

The authors and editors of *Ellen Harmon White* should be commended for their work for a variety of reasons. First, each chapter makes good use of primary and secondary sources, which are cited at the end of each section. These scholars have each critically analyzed the available material and crafted their respective chapters in a way that they believe most accurately represents

Ellen G. White as a nineteenth- and early twentieth-century female prophet in the American context.

Second, this work is masterfully edited. Unlike some other compiled volumes, *Ellen Harmon White* has a natural flow and evident continuity. The book is not botchy, boring, or banal. The chapters are all of comfortable length (usually between 15 to 20 pages each) and are pleasantly written and very readable. In short, the editors should be congratulated for accomplishing this difficult task.

Third, it is satisfying that this work was brought out by Oxford University Press. An endorsement from this prestigious publisher certainly affirms that Ellen G. White was an important figure in American religious history who possessed a worldwide influence. Undoubtedly, many scholars and students previously unfamiliar with White will be intrigued by her visionary life as introduced in this unique collection of essays.

In addition to its various strengths, *Ellen Harmon White* could have been improved in a number of ways. As Wacker indicates in his foreword, "a historiographical debate" exists regarding Ellen G. White—one that is "as spirited as any in the field of American religious studies" (Aamodt, Land, and Numbers, xiii). As with any debate, two polemical extremes exist which make it necessary for scholars to "walk the line" between each pole. Though the authors and editors attempted to present White in a fair, unbiased, and objective manner, it seems that certain chapters miss this mark.

Several examples illustrate that *Ellen Harmon White* sometimes portrays Ellen G. White in an unbalanced manner. To begin with, the treatment of James White's supposed "five-year moratorium" of his wife's visions is one-sided (cf. 9). While it is true that James White refused to print his wife's visions in the Review and Herald during the early 1850s, the given perspective suggests that he actually controlled his wife's visions for a period of time and was able to practically stop them because he found them to be too radical. It is also claimed in this narrative that James White acted in a quasi-misogynistic manner in relation to his wife, that Ellen White was opposed to her husband's control, and that she grew discouraged by his oppressive censure. What is unfortunate is that the authors and editors do not provide either James or Ellen White's perspective of this situation. Since this affair is emphasized in many places in the book (for example, see 9–10, 83–84, 280) a discussion of the Whites' viewpoints is certainly warranted, especially if Ellen White (as well as her husband) is to be presented objectively.

It should also be mentioned that some chapters (particularly 2 and 3) are not representative of Ellen G. White's entire life in relation to the specified topic. Though chapter 2 is titled, "Visions," this entire section is heavily based on one event in White's early life—the Israel Dammon trial of 1845. Unfortunately, no attempt is made to give a broad sweep of White's visions throughout her lifetime, which raises a valid question: can such a limited perspective accurately represent White as a visionary? This issue is further complicated by the fact that the Israel Dammon trial is hotly debated among historians today. Since different interpretations do (and always will) exist, it

seems unwise to place so much emphasis on this trial—especially since it was necessary to essentially ignore about 70 years of Ellen White's life and visions in order to do so.

Chapter 3 suffers from the same weakness. This section is dedicated to the "testimonies" of Ellen G. White—a term that relates to various writings of reproof in general and a series of publications that appeared between 1855 and 1909 specifically. Rather than provide a representative sampling, this section is limited to letters and manuscripts "from 1845 to approximately the start of the Civil War" (71). Again, one wonders if this chapter accurately portrays Ellen White and her use of testimonies throughout her entire life, especially since the Civil War is considered a major turning point in American history. Did the war (or changes brought on from a war-torn society) affect White and her use of testimonies? Since it is evident that a major shift regarding the Testimonies occurred in 1868 the question is legitimately raised. Prior to this time White published very few personal testimonies. Beginning with *Testimony for the Church, No. 14* (1868), however, she concluded that "personal testimonies should be published, as they all contain more or less reproofs and instructions which may apply to hundreds or thousands of others in [a] similar condition" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church, No. 14* [Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press, 1868], 1–4). Did moral and spiritual degeneracy brought about by the war influence White to present her testimonies in a different manner? Since the latter 50 years of her use of testimonies are not discussed, this chapter is unable to provide any answers. Also, it cannot explore any other developments that undoubtedly took place in her life in relation to this topic.

In his foreword, Wacker indicates that *Ellen Harmon White* "represents the tip of the historiographical arrow in Ellen White studies" (xii). Due to several issues, however, it seems that the "tip" of this "arrow" could have been sharper. In spite of this, it remains sharp enough to leave an indelible mark on American religious studies in general and Ellen G. White studies in particular. It is a work that demands serious attention, and the authors and editors are to be commended for their diligence and effort.

Berrien Springs, Michigan Kevin Burton

Ball, Bryan. *The English Connection: The Puritan Roots of Seventh-day Adventist Belief,* 2nd ed. Cambridge: James & Clarke & Company, 2014. 290 pp. Paperback, £22.50.

The values and ideas of Puritanism form an important part of the American theological heritage. Many of them were also important in establishing the nation. But these values and ideas have receded into the background and sub-consciousness of ordinary Americans. Years from now people may ask, "Who were the Puritans?" But the legacy of their written work will continue to bear witness to the profundity of their theological insights and the breadth of their moral understanding. Dr. Bryan Ball reminds us of this through his exploration of twelve major theological issues of Puritanism, namely: The Sufficiency of Scripture, The Incomparable Jesus, The Lord our Righteousness, The New

Man, Believer's Baptism, A High Priest in Heaven, Gospel Obedience, the Seventh-day Sabbath, The Whole Man, The Return of Christ, and The Great Almanac of Prophecy. This book is a second edition without any revision of the author's earlier work published in 1981, but it now includes a foreword and a conclusion that strengthens the book. Dr. Ball's purpose for writing this book is to draw a connection between Puritan theological ideas and those of Seventh-day Adventists, one of the most important denominations that arose out of the Second Great Awakening in 19th century America. In his own words he says, "It is clear that in its essentials, Seventh-day Adventist beliefs had been preached and practiced in England during the Puritan era."

Like a master theological excavator, Dr. Ball has unearthed long forgotten theological ideas of our Puritan forbearers. What an incredible treasure he has unearthed for us! What we see revealed is a faithfulness to the Word of God that is rarely practiced in our days. Those Puritan theologians faithfully exegeted and expounded the profound truths of Scripture with balance and dexterity. What makes their achievements even more remarkable is that they did this during times of great vicissitude and persecution. Perhaps, because their theology was forged in the furnace of trial and testing, it has a peculiarly profound and balanced quality.

Ball analyzes and explains English Puritan theological thought, mainly in the seventeenth century, through an abundant use of a variety of Puritan writers. He shows a great command of his sources and weaves a very compelling case for a Puritan theology deeply rooted in Scripture. Puritan theology is shown to be biblically based, theologically profound, exegetically sound, practically relevant, and beautifully balanced. An example of this can be seen in Ball's analysis of the Puritan's understanding of the Gospel which reveals how they sought to balance justification and sanctification as well as faith and works: "By our justification we are entitled to God's kingdom that is, saved in hope. By our sanctification we are fitted and prepared for God's kingdom in which no unclean thing can enter" (63). They distinguished sanctification and justification without separating them. The same goes for faith and works. There is a clear distinction but no separation: "True faith is not a faith without works, but a faith that results in works. An idle faith can never be a saving faith" (60). Their understanding of sin, human depravity, and perfection reveals a sound biblical view of hamartiology and profound insights in the human nature that prevents them from falling into the morass of perfectionism.

As Ball attempts to show the Puritan theological connection to Adventist theology, he makes a good point with the following observation: "It is only fair to point out that many Puritans did not hold any doctrines which would later become distinctive tenets of Adventism, with the exception perhaps of belief in the literal Second Coming of Christ at the end of the age." So how did he come up with the twelve theological issues mentioned above? It seems that he partially projected Adventist theological ideas back into Puritan theological thought, in an attempt to make a connection. Some of these ideas, for example the seventh-day Sabbath were certainly not part of mainstream

Puritan thought. While a few Puritans scholars recognized the seventh day as the Sabbath, the majority of them were ardent Sunday keepers. They clearly believed in the principle of Sabbath keeping, but unfortunately they continued to cling tenaciously to the traditional reasons given for Sunday keeping.

Part of the problem in dealing with Puritanism is that it was not a united movement. There were factions on the left, in the middle and on the right. The question must be asked of Ball, which of these theological views is he reflecting in the numerous sources he is using? While the Sabbath was debated by many Puritan scholars, only a very small number of Puritans, outside of the mainstream, accepted the seventh-day Sabbath. Perhaps in his analysis, he should point out that some of the particular ideas that he was putting forth as "Puritan Ideas" were held by very few Puritans at that time.

While Ball has done an excellent job in analyzing some of the great theological issues of Puritan theology, I am not sure how successful he was in connecting their theology to Adventist theology, which was his main purpose for writing this book. At the beginning of each chapter he gives a brief paragraph of an Adventist theologian's view of the particular topic under study for that chapter. However, he doesn't interface these Adventist theological views throughout the chapter with the particular Puritan theological idea. I wanted to see how these two views interconnect and intersect at the various theological points. Perhaps the author assumed that in his analysis of Puritan theology, his readers could easily make the connections themselves. For those who are aware of Adventist theology, the task is easier, but for those who have limited understanding of Adventist theology, the task becomes much more difficult. This is the fundamental weakness of the book, which was also recognized by a previous reviewer (Richard Kenneth Emmerson, *AUSS*, 22.3 [1984]). In other words, this book seems to be more about understanding and analyzing Puritan theological issues rather than about making connections with Adventist theology. The Puritan connections to Adventist theology may be due primarily to the similarity of their hermeneutical method and their continuation of the reformers' focus on sola scriptura. Adventist theologians see themselves as continuing and completing what the reformers started and the Puritans also saw themselves as part of this same tradition.

Nevertheless, Bell's significant contributions should not be overlooked. He presents a very profound analysis of Puritan theological issues, situating Puritan theology within the mainstream of Christian theological thought. He exposes the reader to the richness and vitality of Puritan theology through the variety of sources used and confirms that Puritan theology is biblically sound and practically relevant. Ball's research affirms the seriousness with which these Puritan scholars approached the study of Scripture and shows the remarkable balance of Puritan theology. Thus, in spite of some weaknesses, this book is valuable and well worth the read.

Andrews University TREVOR O'REGGIO

Beale, G. K. and Mitchell Kim. *God Dwells Among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2014. 215 pp. Paperback, $11.88.

This book is a valuable example of a successful intersection of theology and praxis. Both aspects are present in the book's title. The theological conviction that "God dwells among us" motivates believers to respond by "expanding Eden to the ends of the earth."

G. K. Beale's earlier work *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (IVP Academic, 2004) is here reworked for an informed lay readership. Like the earlier volume it emphasizes God's presence in the "temple" as the theological key for motivating effective mission. Those who experience God's presence are called to take that presence to the rest of the world. "Eden" or the "temple" (images emphasizing God's presence) is to be expanded into those places that do not know God—the "outer court" or "outer world." Acknowledging that such a mission is often met with suffering and persecution, the authors believe that they have identified a theologically "compelling conviction" which "propels us through painful sacrifice." The authors' goal and deepest concern is to "strengthen biblical conviction for sacrificial mission" for the long haul (14).

The preface explains the development of the book. Professor of New Testament and biblical theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, G. K. Beale wrote a biblical theology of the temple in a 458-page work published in 2004. Mitchell Kim, senior pastor of the Living Water Alliance Church near Chicago based a seven-week sermon series on Beale's book and then developed the sermons into a lay seminar on theology and mission. Now, a decade after the publication of the original work, the simplified seminar has itself been turned into book format. Clearly Beale and Kim continue to see an important link between temple theology and motivation for mission.

Beale and Kim begin in Genesis 1–2 where God is physically present with the first humans. God's presence makes the Garden of Eden a "temple" of sorts, with Adam and Eve commissioned with expanding Eden by following God's word and by accepting the command to be "fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28). This is a key bible verse for the book's thesis. Even though humanity fails, men and women still have their *raison d'etre*: expand Eden to the ends of the earth. How is this possible? The authors' answer is that worship of God leads to the expanding of Eden. This theological thread followed through both testaments, is the unifying theme as also in Beale's earlier work. For example, after the fall, the patriarchal stories tell of the construction of small shrines or temples in order to continue to experience, albeit in an imperfect way, worship in the presence of God. At God's direction, wandering Israel creates a movable tabernacle for worship, and then Israel's kings build an ever-expanding temple complex.

Where the first humans, the patriarchs, and Israel fail in expanding God's presence in the world, Jesus succeeds. Jesus judges the temple in Jerusalem, calling it to account for its failure to reflect God's presence to others. Jesus

then replaces the temple with himself as the chief cornerstone ("Eden Rebuilt: Jesus as the New Temple in the Gospels"), and the church is established as the organic entity following Christ and expanding to fill the earth ("Eden Expanding: The Church as the New Temple").

Two-thirds of the way through the book, Beale and Kim express concerns about contemporary approaches to church growth that emphasize sociological studies and contextualized technique and models, rather than theological analysis. They are convinced that God's dwelling place expands only through teaching the Word of God, not by marketing methods to attract converts. They mention several megachurches by name (Willow Creek and Saddleback) and gently critique their approach arguing that "a biblical exploration of the characteristics of a healthy church should be the starting point," and that "theology must undergird our concepts and frameworks of both church health and church growth" (112).

The Christian canon concludes with a return to Eden, the New Jerusalem described as a place not requiring a temple because the whole cosmos has become a temple (Revelation 21–22). Beale and Kim conclude their work with one more reminder of their crucial theological foundation for Christian mission: "The mark of the true church is an expanding witness to the presence of God in the invisible temple: to our families, the church, our neighborhood, city, country, and ultimately the whole earth" (165).

For the reader who has not yet explored theological themes shared by Genesis, the prophets (especially Ezekiel and Isaiah) and the book of Revelation, there are many insights and interesting associations in store. I appreciated the fresh perspective in the chapter "Eden Remixed," where connections are made between the creation of the world and the construction of the tabernacle (61). Readers hear that temples and tabernacles are not only constructed for humans to experience God's presence, but that they also reflect God's longing to be with humanity. For those who may not find the line of thought entirely convincing, the argument does help to cast light on the artistry of tabernacle and temple: "the parallels between the creation of the tabernacle and creation of the heavens and the earth remind us of the ultimate purpose of the tabernacle: to fill the entire heavens and earth with the consummate, end-time glory of God" (62–3).

The short treatment of Jesus as the new temple in the gospels is surprising. The tension between Jesus and the temple and his eventual replacement of it is discussed only briefly as the authors seem to want to get as quickly as possible to the Church as temple. However, a close reading of the gospel accounts shows the first-century church replacing the Jerusalem temple with Jesus. What does this mean for the theme of this book? What does this mean for mission to the "ends of the earth"? The observation that "Matthew seems to construct his Gospel on the framework of 1 and 2 Chronicles" (96) sounds similar to the approach taken by Rikki E. Watts (*Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark*, Baker Academic, 2000), who argues that Mark tells the Jesus story by reworking Isaiah. If gospel authors are reworking temple imagery

from a variety of Old Testament sources, how might we better grasp their Christology?

Another oversight appears to be a lack of discussion of Ezekiel 1 and the "movable temple" going into exile with God's people. How might this imagery deepen a temple theology about moving out and mission? Perhaps Beale's earlier work remedies the matter.

Aside from questions about minor points (does "be fruitful and multiply" really refer to mission?) and a missing caution not to read Christian mission back into Old Testament texts, one wonders how Beale and Kim understand the forming of the Old Testament. Which direction is the "reworking" of the temple motif going? Is Genesis shaping later reflections on the temple and God's presence? Or is the temple shaping understandings of creation and Eden? Perhaps an answer to such a question is impossible.

An important concern about the overall thesis of the book is the assumption that God is not already in the "outer" places of our world. Early on in the book, a diagram illustrates the similarities Beale and Kim find between Eden and earthly temples (22). This diagram, if I understand it correctly, assumes that God is not already in the "outer world." This is why God needs humanity to reach the world. And that God enters the world through sanctuaries (49). This is not only a theological problem, but also a missional problem. Is there a danger that what missionaries share when they show up is left unevaluated? No book can do everything, but is there a need for some caution here?

Personally, I could not help but think of the Sabbath as another way to approach this important theme identified by Beale and Kim as temple theology. The Sabbath as a "sanctuary in time" (Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath,* first published 1951) provides a rich theology for experiencing the presence of God and therefore a powerful motivation for mission to those who do not yet know a God who longs to be with us.

All could agree with Beale and Kim on the importance of Bible study, prayer, and mission to the "ends of the earth." All can embrace the promise spoken by Jesus that immediately follows Matthew's "great commission": "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

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KENDRA HALOVIAK VALENTINE

Gregory A. Boyd. *Benefit of the Doubt: Breaking the Idol of Certainty.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013. 269pp. Paperback, $16.99.

Gregory Boyd (PhD, Princeton), theologian and pastor, has written an excellent book titled *Benefit of the Doubt: Breaking the Idol of Certainty.* In my review, the bracketed numbers are page numbers from his book. Frank Viola describes it as "one of the best books ever written" (see back cover). Rachael Evens praises it as "a profoundly theological look at the important role of doubt in Christian faith" (1). Bruxy Cavey comments on its "hugely helpful

insight" on "how to leverage doubt in deepening our trust in God" (2). For Roger Olson, besides the Bible, this is the one book that all conservative Christians should read (2).

The twelve chapters of the book are helpfully organized in three sections on "False Faith"—the idea that faith is free of doubt; "True Faith"—an exposition on biblical faith; and "Exercising Faith"—biblical and personal insights on a rational and flexible faith (18). While Boyd affirms that we can be confident concerning Jesus Christ (12), he proposes the thesis that "it is simply impossible for people to be concerned that their beliefs *are true* unless they're genuinely open to the possibility that their current beliefs *are false*" (14); therefore, faith without doubt is not only false faith but it is harmful faith (15).

The way Boyd unpacks his provocative thesis makes for a fascinating read. In Section One, Chapter 1 ("Embracing the Pain") describes how the certainty of Boyd's early Christian faith was shattered by doubt when he was exposed to the scientific study of evolution. Chapter 2 ("Hooked on a Feeling") is a masterful critique of the irrational, gullible, magical, sadistic, inflexible, dangerous, and dishonest arrogance of an unexamined faith that is afraid of progressively seeking and learning more truth. Chapter 3 ("The Idol of Certainty") argues that true worship involves loving God and may be compromised by a false worship which involves the idolatry of faith in the certainty of our beliefs.

In Section Two, Chapter 4 ("Wrestling with God") presents the biblical relations of faith and doubt as illustrated in the experiences of Jacob and Job who manifested authentic faith in God while they wrestled and argued with Him. Chapter 5 ("Screaming at the Sky") uses the faith struggle of Christ to introduce Boyd's struggle back to faith through passionately shouting his anger and frustration at God. Chapter 6 ("From Legal Deals to Binding Love") teaches the nature of true faith as going beyond belief to trust, beyond a contractual deal with God to covenantal love, and beyond viewing the Bible as only a legal code book to the good news of a covenantal relationship with God. According to Chapter 7 ("Embodied Faith"), mental assent to beliefs should be transcended by actions toward others that are informed by a trust commitment which allows for wrestling with doubt without stepping outside of our covenant with God.

In Section Three, Chapter 8 ("A Solid Center") proposes that a faith that can survive the challenges of contemporary doubt must be centered in a historically informed relationship with Christ that leads us into the proper appreciation for the inspiration of Scripture; rather than our understanding of the inspiration of Scripture being the primary ground for our faith in Christ. Chapter 9 ("The Center of Scripture") suggests that the supreme revelation of God in Christ is the center and norm for interpreting the Bible, the early church ecumenical rule of faith, the doctrines of different denominations, and the opinions of Christians, such as "the open view of the future" which Boyd affirms in some of his other publications. Chapter 10 ("Substantial Hope") interprets Bible texts which seem to prohibit doubt as texts that use

hyperbole—seeming to prohibit all doubt—while actually prohibiting only the doubt of God's covenant promises. Chapter 11 ("Stumbling on the Promises of God") points out the danger of overlooking the hyperbolic nature and specific contexts of "biblical" promises resulting in a crisis for faith when these promises seem to be unfulfilled in the "real" world. Chapter 12 ("The Promise of the Cross") discusses the central covenant promise concerning the character of God in whom we trust when we take up our cross, as Christ did, and face death in hope of resurrection.

I find that Boyd's basic message in the *Benefit of the Doubt* is not only correct but also very important for the maturing of Christian faith. At the same time, there are questions that arise from what he has written that deserve critical consideration. Of course, he has addressed some of these questions elsewhere and we should not blame him for not answering every question to our complete satisfaction in a single volume. Nevertheless, here are my questions: Is there not a sense in which belief is a prerequisite to trust since we cannot trust God without beliefs about His trustworthiness (54–72)? How is the historical usefulness of Scripture for facilitating faith in Christ related to the inspiration of Scripture (159–66)? Why would the supreme revelation of God in Christ imply that some parts of the inspired Scripture revelation are less authoritative (165, 168, 175-183)? Is it true that New Testament writers have little concern for the original intended meaning of the Old Testament writers (183)? What is the relationship between the ecumenical rule of faith grounded in early church history and the Protestant principle of Scripture as the rule of faith (167–73)? Should the theological interpretation of Scripture and the scientific interpretation of nature inform each other (28–31, 158)?

Boyd's disciplined researches in this book and elsewhere indicate to me that he is comfortable engaging questions such as those mentioned above. However, in the context of *Benefit of the Doubt*, he is more concerned to testify about how he lives by faith—a subject he reiterates in a "Concluding Word." Rather than manipulating himself into certainty concerning his beliefs, he exercises faith by imaginatively thinking of himself living *as if* God is trustworthy. At the same time, he confesses that he has not been able to consistently think and live this way. I resonate with his testimony that: "I feel the closer I grow to Christ, the more fine-tuned my awareness of my sin becomes. . . . [Yet] I know that I *am*, by the grace of God, a child of God. . . . Correction: I don't actually *know* this, I can't be certain. But I am confident enough to live *as if* it's true, with the confident *hope* that it's true, and with a profound *longing* for the glorious day when, I trust, it will be proved true" (257). I highly recommend the reading of Boyd's book as a tool for facilitating a realistic and resilient faith that can benefit from our inevitable struggle with doubt.

Andrews University MARTIN HANNA

Giussani, Luigi. *American Protestant Theology: A Historical Sketch*. Translated by Damian Bacich. Montreal; Kingston, ON: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013. xxxiv + 238 pp. Hardcover, C$100.00.

Many scholars in the field of American religious and theological history may never have heard the name of Luigi Giussani (1922–2005) because he spent most of his life in his home country Italy. His proficiency in English was limited to reading literacy, and the majority of his writings were not concerned with American religious history. Giussani was a Catholic priest, theologian, high school teacher, professor, and founder of the international movement Comunione e Liberazione. He was closely acquainted with Pope John Paul II and the then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. His influence on Italian and European religious life and culture was tremendous, and he may be considered one of the "most formative theologians of young Italian minds" in the second half of the 20th century (ix). Although most of his works deal with other topics, some of his early writings deal specifically with the history of American Protestant theology. Giussani had a particular interest in Protestant-Catholic dialogue and the experiential religious sense found in American Protestant theology. To make this earlier research available to a broader public, McGill-Queen's University Press translated into English the original Italian edition *Teologia Protestante Americana: Profilo Storico*, a fruit of his post-doctoral research (1965–1969), published by La Scuola Cattolica at Venegono Inferiore in 1968.

The book contains five chapters that are preceded by an introduction by Archibald J. Spencer and followed by three new appendices that did not exist in the original Italian edition. The first chapter on the Puritan origins deals specifically with the religious inspiration for the formation and character of the initial American colonies, its intellectual life and literature, its Congregationalist ecclesiology, its pragmatic attitude, religious alternatives to Puritanism, and issues of the second generation of Puritanism.

The second chapter turns to various aspects of New England theology such as the rise of Arminianism and the unconscious adoption of aspects of human works in the covenant theology. Thus although Calvinists theoretically vehemently rejected Arminianism, they unconsciously implemented some of its aspects in their practice that then threatened their view of God's supreme initiative in salvation. Two large sections in this chapter discuss Jonathan Edwards, his activities in the First Great Awakening, and his literary productions, and critique him and the beginnings of anti-Trinitarian thought, showing Giussani's special interest in the spiritual elements of Edwards' life. Two smaller sections deal with the New Divinity and New Haven Theology respectively, followed by another section on the Mercersburg theology and the conservative reaction to the new trends in Calvinism.

The third chapter constitutes the biggest chapter of the entire book, discussing the theological Liberalism of the 19th and early 20th century. First, Giussani delineates antecedents of the Liberal movement, particularly its epistemology, the emphasis on God's immanence, human positivism, and Christ as the center of reality and life. Afterwards Giussani shows how

liberal theologians promoted these characteristics and which contributions particular American universities (Union Theological Seminary, Chicago School, Boston, Oberlin, etc.) added to the field. The last two sections deal with the Social Gospel, especially as presented by Walter Rauschenbusch and Washington Gladden, and the fundamentalist and humanist reactions to the Liberal movement.

The fourth chapter turns the attention to Realism (empirical trends and Neo-Orthodoxy) and its distrust of the Social Gospel, and exemplifies Giussani's special interest in Reinhold Niebuhr (111–122) and Paul Tillich (122–132). The sections on these two theologians deal particularly with their most important literary productions and their theological contributions.

The final chapter on "recent trends" (pre 1960s) gives a brief survey of neo-liberalism, continuing fundamentalism, ecumenical theology, attempts to reconstruct theology by means of new categories, ethical theology, and radical theology. The three new appendices deal with Reinhold Niebuhr's view of history, the foundations of his ethics, and the philosophy of Edgar Sheffield Brightman (1884–1953).

Those looking for a volume that provides the most recent scholarly insights in American theological history will be disappointed. A perusal of the bibliographic references reveals that the latest sources consulted by the author date back to 1968. Although the last Italian edition, *Teologia protestante Americana: Profilo storico*, appeared in the year 2003, the author evidently abstained from familiarizing himself with the scholarly discussions and discoveries of the last thirty some years. Theological trends, such as black theology, feminist theology, liberation theologies, that trace their origin back to the 1960s were probably too new at the time of writing for the author to make reference to them. The original Italian edition contained several elements, such as a map of the mentioned primary universities in the United States (7) and an extended table of contents (195–200), that were beneficial to the readers but that the present English edition is missing.

Readers will soon recognize that *American Protestant Theology* is not arranged in a "strictly chronological nor thematic" order (xxiii). Giussani took a particular interest in "the personal nature of religion" in American Protestantism which is why he selected specific "organizations, movements, personalities, and key ideas" (xx). One should therefore not expect a comprehensive history of American theology but should be aware of the particular focus of the descriptions and discussions. This is probably one of the big differences between Giussani's volume and more recent works on the history of American theology such as Mark Noll's *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (2002), E. Brooks Holifield's *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (2003), and Roger E. Olson's *The Journey of Modern Theology: From Reconstruction to Deconstruction* (2013).

Considering the author's relative anonymity and the unique emphasis of the book, Archibald J. Spencer's introduction (vii–xxxii) will prove to be of special practical value. The theologian of Baptist persuasion produced

an excellent overview of Giussani's life, work, and theology. Without this introduction many readers would have wondered why a book that has been published almost fifty years ago and that fails to add anything to recent scholarship was republished. Nevertheless, the present work may be of particular interest for a reason that exceeds the brief survey of Protestant theological history in North America: The book was originally written at a time when the world anticipated improved relationships, unity, and reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants (after Vatican II), hopes that many people currently connect to the pontificate of Pope Francis. Guissani's observations of American Protestanism from a Catholic perspective may play a role in the inter-faith dialogue and everyone interested in these should be familiar with his book.

Berrien Springs, Michigan Denis Kaiser

Gnasso, Alessandro, Emanuele E. Intagliata, Thomas J. MacMaster and Bethan N. Morris eds. *The Long Seventh Century: Continuity and Discontinuity in an Age of Transition*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2014. viii + 315. Paperback, $72.95.

This book, published through Peter Lang in 2014, is a collection of papers presented at a conference at the University of Edinburgh in 2013. It is an edited volume containing 315 pages with fourteen chapters. Eleven chapters were written by a single author, and three were written by multiple authors. The main body of the book begins with the Preface on page one and ends on page 298. This is followed by a six-page list and description of the contributors, and finally a ten-page index. Each chapter focuses on the seventh century A.D. within a particular region, moving from England to as far east as Khuzistan.

Two chapters explain the purpose of the conference: the Preface, written by Emanuele E. Intagliata and Bethan N. Morris, and the Afterword, written by Thomas J. MacMaster. Intagliata and Morris state that their purpose is to examine if the seventh century represents a break in the *longue dureé* between the sixth and eighth centuries. In their view, studies in the seventh century have been too fragmented by scholars bound by their respective regions and disciplines. Consequently, a fragmented picture of the history of Europe in the seventh century as well as in the Middle East has been the result. In the Afterword, Thomas J. MacMaster elaborates further that previous scholarship focused on the Latin-speaking West and, specifically, on Christianity and its literature. In the last twenty years seventh-century scholarship has undergone a paradigm shift. For example, MacMaster explains that regions that were not considered important are now considered vital. Thus, this volume integrates works from the regions of Arabia, Iran, Scandinavia, and others in order to create a broader picture of the seventh century. This review will focus on two articles: one, the topic of which is not very familiar to the reviewer, and the second on a region with which the reviewer is familiar.

The first article of this volume after the preface is titled "Sutton Hoo and Sweden Revisited," written by Alex Woolf. Woolf compares and contrasts the

links previously made by scholars between the seventh-century ship burial—Mound 1—at Sutton Hoo in Suffolk, England, with those found in Vendel and Valsgärde located in Sweden. While previous works focused on the links between the burials, Woolf argues from an archaeological perspective that they only have two aspects in common: military gear and using the boat as a burial. He posits that the helmets found in Uppland, Sweden and Sutton Hoo represent a core material culture with the epicenter located at the Danish island of Skåne. The basis of his argument relies on the interpretation that rich burial mounds were constructed by those who were trying to appear powerful. Therefore, the origins of the inhabitants at Sutton Hoo should be found where this type of display of power is not needed, i.e. the Danish Islands, Skåne. His theory is not cited with any examples, and there is no mention of an opposing hypothesis for this type of ship burial. Woolf clearly knows the region under discussion, but his writing style is not as clear as the reader could wish for. In the beginning he argues that the archaeological connections are not as strong between Sweden's burials and Sutton Hoo, but by the end he argues that they represent a core material culture with a different, albeit very similar depositional process. This sounds like the similarities between them are more plausible than he argues, and the connections are not as conflated as he maintains. The differences he describes sound more like regional variations with the core culture found at Skåne. Ultimately, he seems to have a larger purpose: the origin of the Anglo-Saxons. And he is using the burials at Sutton Hoo and Vendel and Valsgårde as a case study.

The second article reviewed is titled "Continuity and Discontinuity in Seventh-Century Sicily: Rural Settlement and Economy." This article was co-authored by Giuseppe Cacciaguerra (eastern Sicily), Anotonio Facella (western Sicily), and Luca Zambito (central Sicily). The primary focus of the article, stated by the authors, is the settlement patterns in rural contexts during the seventh century. They limit their research to material culture and its relevance in an economic and social context. One area of research the authors chose not to include is the distribution of coins in Sicily. This might have extended their paper longer than necessary, yet it would have been a helpful addition especially when discussing the economic contexts. With that minor critique aside, the authors provide other evidence, i.e. amphorae types, that describes Sicily's economic role in the seventh century. Cacciaguerra observed that the presence of transport amphorae demonstrates that Siccly's economy was based on a grain "monoculture" (216). Their writing style was clear and the authors presented the evidence for their points with clarity. Based on the lack of evidence for changes in settlement dynamics, they find that there was more continuity in the seventh century and more evidence of discontinuity in the eighth century. Finally, they maintain that Sicily still belongs to the world of Late Antiquity in the seventh century and not of the Early Middle Ages.

This work is not an introduction to the history of the seventh century nor is it intended to be so. The articles are intended for more advanced students and specialists who already have a working knowledge of this period. And at the end of every article the authors provide a bibliography of primary and

secondary sources, which makes further research easier for those interested. The specialist will appreciate the publication and synthesis of recent data within his/her respective region.

Berrien Springs, Michigan CHRISTOPHER R. CHADWICK

Hiestand, Gerald and Todd Wilson. *The Pastor Theologian: Resurrecting an Ancient Vision.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015. 188 pp. Paperback, $18.99.

Todd Wilson and Gerald Hiestand, senior pastor and senior associate pastor of Calvary Memorial Church (Oak Park, Illinois), cofounded the Center for Pastor Theologians (CPT) in 2006 with Hiestand as executive director. The CPT's mission is to assist pastors "in the study and written production of biblical and theological scholarship, for the ecclesial renewal of theology and the theological renewal of the church" (10).

Their book is an extended appeal to pastors to pursue a life ministry of intellectual rigor and theological study and thus provide essential ecclesial *and* theological leadership to the contemporary church. They define ecclesial theology as "theology that is germinated within the congregation, that presses toward distinctly ecclesial concerns, and that is cultivated by practicing clergy" (18), and they contend that this role of "ecclesial theologian" has been in fact the historically normative role for the pastor (for example Irenaeus, Athanasius, Augustine, Calvin, and Jonathan Edwards). The authors, however, bemoan the long-ago vacating of that role in favor of the more pedestrian "intellectual middle management" pastoral role in the faith community today.

Thus, Hiestand and Wilson assert, the church must confront the "bifurcation of the theologian and the pastor" in order to heal the "theological anemia of the church and the ecclesial anemia of theology" (79). They maintain such healing will come when the neglected paradigm of *ecclesial* theologian (in distinction to the pastor as *local* theologian and *popular* theologian) is restored in the pastorate. "The native home of theology is the church, and the responsibility of the church's theological leadership lies with the pastoral community" (77). To bolster their conclusion, the authors include a comprehensive appendix, replete with a 35-page chart, chronicling the shift of theological study and writing from the pastorate to the academy (from Clement of Rome [1st century] to William Nichols [d. 1712]). The book is moderately footnoted, particularly in the historical overview that covers the span of theologians (clerical [i.e., pastoral], nonclerical, and monastic) from the Apostolic Fathers to the post-Enlightenment church.

In building their argument, Hiestand and Wilson offer two caveats. First is their recognition that *academic* theology, "theology developed and sustained within an academic social location and driven by academic questions and concerns" (69), is essential to the life of the Body of Christ. They maintain, however, that it was *because* the church ceased to provide a receptive environment for clergy to pursue theology in the local church that the siphoning of "the best and brightest minds away from the pastorate to

the academy" (77) eventually resulted in the tacit divorce between theologian and pastor that exists today.

Hiestand and Wilson's second caveat is their recognition that not every pastor is burdened for nor has the proclivity to pursue serious theological reading, study, and writing. (For the authors such reading and study includes the works of Iranaeus, Athanasius, Augustine, Thomas, Calvin, and Luther, along with more contemporary theological luminaries.) The authors assure their readers one can effectively, faithfully shepherd the flock of God without engaging in theological scholarship. But for those pastors "who have unique theological interests and gifting" (80), this book seeks to encourage them to find in the local church a conducive environment for reading, studying, and writing more deeply. Unless such pastors find a supportive faith community for theological study, the syphoning of bright minds from the parish to the academy will continue unabated.

While the book speaks to all who pastor, it clearly targets those who have a penchant for and desire to maintain the continuing discipline of personal study—not simply for the sake of sermon preparation, but also for the personal satisfaction of intellectual and spiritual growth.

As one who has spent his life and ministry serving the faith community through the local pastorate, I believe the authors succeeded in their mission to stir up in the reader's mind a renewed desire to plumb the depths of theological reflection and study, whether through a periodic reading of systematic theologies, or more essentially through a deepening quest to daily connect with the Spirit of God and theology who inspired Holy Scripture.

I was particularly motivated by Hiestand and Wilson's eight strategies "on being an ecclesial theologian in a local church" (chapter 8): (1) get a PhD (preferably through a non-residency research program); (2) build a pastoral staff that supports a "robust theological culture in your church" (107); (3) get networked with other pastors sharing a desire for deepening study; (4) guard your study time with a blowtorch; (5) read ecclesial theology; (6) refer to the place where you work as "your study"; (7) build study-and-writing leave into your schedule; and, (8) recruit a pastor-theologian intern. The book unpacks each of these strategies with valuable, practical how-to counsel.

Do you have to be an ecclesial theologian to benefit from their recommended strategies? Clearly not. I was asked to review *The Pastor Theologian* while preparing a lecture for a convention of Seventh-day Adventist North American pastors. My assigned topic was the intellectual growth of the pastor. Hiestand and Wilson's persuasive case for a deepening study life in the pastorate became grist for my plenary lecture. This book will benefit all who read it, whether or not they are or will become ecclesial theologians. The authors have effectively made their case for deepening theological study among pastors.

But let me challenge two of their contentions. First is their call for a new generation of ecclesial theologians in the church. In order to define such theologians, the authors separate pastoral theologians into four categories: local theologian, popular theologian, academic theologian, and ecclesial

theologian. But such differentiation seems to mitigate against the authors' own appeal: "Insofar as pastors bear the day-to-day burden of teaching and leading God's people, they simply *are* the theological leaders of the church" (57, emphasis theirs). Here they speak of pastors generically. But to then declare that the need of the church is for specialist pastors who (through advanced degrees, extended weekly study, and disseminated theological writing) can guide the wider church theologically belies their original premise that local pastors bear "the day-to-day burden of teaching and leading God's people" and are thus the "theological leaders of the church."

So who is it that most effectively serves the faith community? The local theologian (the pastor who faithfully interprets Holy Scripture to the congregants week after week), the popular theologian (the pastor whose sermons and writings extend beyond the local parish), the academic theologian (the pastor who studies, teaches, and writes from the confines of a seminary) or the ecclesial theologian (the pastor who pursues theology as a life specialty in the local parish and who then writes theology for the academy as well as the church)? Clearly all four categories are called by God to minister to the people of God by "doing theology" for the church of God.

Because I concur with their "local pastors are the theological leaders of the church" premise, it is my sense that Hiestand and Wilson needlessly overstate their case for an increase in the ministry of ecclesial theologians. I can support their call for more parish-based ecclesial theologians in our faith community. But it is my conviction that the theological leadership the authors describe will continue to emanate from the local church even in the absence or scarcity of ecclesial theologians.

My second critique is more incidental. The authors' strong recommendation that pastors earn an advanced academic degree (PhD) in seeking to become ecclesial theologians is a worthy goal. But given the time investment, the older the pastor the less likely an advanced academic degree becomes. Given the financial investment, the younger the pastor the less likely it is for him to have the ability to fund such a degree. While the authors recommend non-residency doctorates (as offered in the United Kingdom) to accommodate full-time parish ministry, the reality is that few pastors will have the luxury of pursing even a UK doctorate. Furthermore, there have been influential pastors and/or theologians without advanced academic degrees (Karl Barth, F. F. Bruce, Reinhold Niebuhr, et al) who have made significant theological contributions to Christian thought and church belief and practice. Perhaps then, Hiestand and Wilson's call for an academic doctoral degree might better be embraced as a call for disciplined, focused, and guided theological study. There are many seminary theologians who have demonstrated a cheerful willingness to share their bibliographies, reading lists, and proscribed study plans with a needy, inquiring local pastor.

The Pastor Theologian: Resurrecting an Ancient Vision offers a personally inspiring and professionally valuable appeal to pastors in all stages of life and ministry. Its call to pursue a life of intellectual growth and theological depth is one our profession needs to hear frequently. And its recommendation of

practical pastoral practices elaborated in chapter eight is worth the price of the book. The authors quote Kevin Vanhoozer: "The church is less the cradle of Christian theology than its crucible: the place where the community's understanding of faith is lived, tested, and reformed" (89). It is for that reason that many of us remain pastors in our faith community, and why all of us might benefit from this book.

Pioneer Memorial Church, DWIGHT NELSON
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Newsom, Carol A. *Daniel: A Commentary*. OTL. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2014. liv + 416 pp. Hardback, $50.00.

Carol Newsom teaches Old Testament at Candler School of Theology, Emory University. In 2011 she served as President of the Society of Biblical Literature. Her commentary on Daniel is a successor to the volume on Daniel by Norman Porteous in the Old Testament Library (OTL) series. Newsom's work differs from the previous commentaries on Daniel because it includes extensive treatments of the history of reception of key topics from each chapter of Daniel since ancient times to the present. The history of reception was compiled by Brennan W. Breed from Columbia Theological Seminary. From this part of the commentary, for example, the reader can learn that the person of Daniel was used as a scriptural example by a group of South African theologians who produced "the Kairos Document, a theological rejection of the apartheid regime" (57). When tracing the history of reception of Daniel 8:14, Breed presents a long list of individual and group interpreters such as William Miller, Ellen White, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Baha'i, the Muslim Shi'ites, David Koresh, Harold Camping, and others (318).

Newsom believes that "the Daniel stories originated in the Eastern Diaspora in the late Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods" (21), but behind the compositions of the book she sees the hands of multiple authors. The author follows the thesis that the final date for Daniel's book is the middle of the second century BC, though she admits that "We simply do not know what was going on in Jerusalem between mid-168 and mid-167" because "historical sources are so obscure and contradictory" (26). The situation is further complicated by the fact that "Persecution for religious reasons was basically unknown in Hellenistic culture" (27).

The stories from Daniel 1-6 show that God "is in control of history" and that He "delegates and eventually takes back sovereignty over the earth" (33). In contradistinction with divine sovereignty is the authority of the king whose food, so generously served at the palace, "represents power, both because of its source and because of the nature of the food itself" (50). While the power of the monarch is limited, the rule of the God of heaven is universal and eternal. Newsom states: "In identifying the God of Israel as the 'God of heaven,' the Persian highlight features that YHWH and the Persian god Ahura Mazda share in common, including a concern for cosmic order and

its manifestation on earth" (72). In dealing with the four earthly kingdoms from Daniel 2, the author rightly states that for almost all Jews until the Arab invasions of the seventh century and for most Christians until the time of the Roman emperor Constantine, the four kingdom schema represented the kingdoms of Babylon, a combination of Media and Persia, Greece-Macedonia and Rome (85).

A number of helpful insights into the text of Daniel could be mentioned though I will share here only a few: The story from chapter 3 about Daniel's three friends "models survival as opposed to escape, since the youth live through the furnace" (114). The imagery of Daniel 7 is said to articulate "the classic apocalyptic response to the mystery of evil. It is understood as never fully autonomous but as playing a designated role in a divine drama, a drama that leads to evil's ultimate destruction and elimination" (221). Daniel 8:14 according to Newsome is not "a *vaticinium ex eventu* but an actual prediction. . . . What is clear, however, is that the time permitted for the desecration of the sanctuary is strictly determined, and that at the end of the period it will be made right" (267–68). The author refers to the seventy-sevens from Daniel 9 as "the seventy sabbatical years" (300). Looking at the basic pattern in history one notices that "when kingdoms and kings appear to be at the peak of their power, that is the moment when they will be destroyed" (327).

Even though this volume belongs to the Old Testament Library (OTL), I had sincerely hoped to see more trust given to the historical reliability of the claims from Daniel's book. The same could be said about the unity of Daniel and the traditional view of its authorship. I am one of the students of Daniel who believe that higher critical claims about historicity, unity, and authorship of Daniel lead inevitably to an impoverished treatment of the book's rich themes and messages. Did certain higher critical views lead the author to say that Daniel's book "so spectacularly failed to predict an eschatological culmination of history" (28)? For Newsom, the events reported in Daniel 1 are qualified as "fictitious" (39). The place of Daniel in the history of Neo-Babylon and his existence in general is sadly never stated with certainty. What is one to make of the statement from page 83 that "There is no messianic expectation in the book of Daniel itself?" Then, there is a claim that the story of Daniel 5 is "historical fiction that uses sometimes distorted memories of events" (163). In dealing with the puzzle of Darius the Mede in history, the author does not mention the thesis that behind this royal title may be none other but Cyrus the Great as argued by some scholars.

A certain amount of overconfidence leads the author to make some subjective statements such as that Belshazzar's sin was "idolatry, not sacrilege" (162), or that Belshazzar was "not related to Nebuchadnezzar" (163). In the beginning of the commentary the same speculative type of approach is applied to the origin of Daniel's book. On page 22 Newsom says: "Since the profession of scribe was often hereditary, it is possible that the Danielic scribes who composed chs. 8-12 during the Antiochene crisis were descendants of the authors of Dan 1-6, whose families had returned to Judea." This continues

on page 23: "The Danielic apocalypses of chs. 8-12 and the final form of ch. 7 respond from the midst of one of the most traumatic events in Jewish history, the violent persecutions of Jews by Antiochus IV and the beginning of the revolt against Antiochus by Judah the Maccabee" (23).

Finally in regard to the challenging texts from Daniel 11, the conclusion reached in this commentary is that they "purport to be prophecies but are clearly written after the occurrence of most of the events they prophesy. But they use an account of history to attempt to make real predictions" (336). When reading this statement one cannot help but wonder if this approach to Daniel can still be of any use to the reader of today. While this commentary offers some useful material for the study of Daniel (as mentioned above), it also serves as an example of how *not* to approach Daniel—with speculative views that are not in line with the claims found in the sacred texts.

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Plantinga, Alvin. *Knowledge and Christian Belief*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015. 129 pp. Paperback. $16.00.

Alvin Plantinga has taught philosophy for over fifty years, first at Wayne State University, then at Calvin College, and finally at Notre Dame. He holds honorary degrees from different universities in Europe and the United States, and he is widely regarded as the most influential Christian Philosopher alive. His works include *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism*; *Warranted Christian Belief*; *The Analytic Theist*; and *God, Freedom, and Evil*.

Knowledge and Christian Belief is intended as a shorter and more user-friendly version of *Warranted Christian Belief* but it is also distinguished from it by different emphases. The main thesis of the book revolves around the development and defense of a model, called the Aquinas/Calvin Model (or A/C Model). According to this model, the divinely inspired Scripture and the internal instigation of the Spirit produce faith in human beings (63). This includes belief in the great truths of Christianity. Faith then is here not contrasted with knowledge, but it is identified as a special kind of knowledge. Platinga defines knowledge as a belief produced by properly working cognitive faculties in the right environment that are designed to successfully aim at truth (26–28). The agency of the Spirit is thus likened to other knowledge-producing faculties, such as memory or sensory perception. The only difference is that the faith-producing faculties are provided by the Holy Spirit and are not naturally found in humans (63).

Knowledge and Christian Belief starts out by describing a number of positions set forth by different influential philosophers that have the potential to defeat Christian faith. In Chapter 1 "Can We Speak and Think About God?," Plantinga deals with Immanuel Kant and his followers, who claimed that we cannot say anything about God because we are incapable of thinking in the categories of ultimate reality. If God exists, he is among those "things

in themselves" that we can neither experience nor comprehend. Plantinga identifies this line of thought as self-defeating, because if it were true, we could not think about God in order to come to the conclusion that we are not able to think about him. Furthermore, he points out that Kant's theory fails to account for *a priori* knowledge, for example in the realm of mathematics.

Chapter 2 "What is the Question?" confronts the allegation that Christian belief is in some way irrational, and childish, and somehow connected to cognitive malfunction. The crucial point here is a distinction between *de facto* and *de jure* objections. *De facto* objections against the Christian faith are such that aim at proving the factual beliefs of Christianity to be wrong or incoherent. *De jure* objections, on the other hand, would claim that it is not justified to hold Christian beliefs because it is in some way either unethical or irrational. Plantinga keeps to *de jure* objections in this chapter (his main antagonists are Freud and Marx) and addresses them in different ways. The main point here is that belief is not something that is subject to our voluntary control and is therefore ethically neutral. An objection to this based on an alleged responsibility to believe only that for which we have abundant evidence remains unconvincing. Plantinga recognizes however that this does not give Christian belief any warrant and therefore defines the terms "knowledge" and "warrant" in preparation for further chapters.

In chapters 3–6, Plantinga develops his A/C Model, leaning on texts from Scripture, Calvin and, Aquinas. His main point here is that Christian faith is basic belief. It is not derived from argument, but is delivered to man via his *sensus divinitatis*. This is not to say that the *sensus divinitatis* does not use natural phenomena to awaken faith in God, but the vastness of the sky or the beauty of nature, which often are quoted in experiences of faith, are not very strong as arguments. Thus, an inbuilt cognitive faculty that may be called *sensus divinitatis* best explains the fact that many people begin to believe while witnessing these phenomena. Such a faculty is only to be expected, however, if the Christian faith is also factually true. In short, if it is true, it likely has warrant. If it is not true, it does not. Mere epistemological considerations, as Platinga correctly recognizes, will not solve this issue. The *de jure* question is therefore dependent on the *de facto* question. The extended A/C model that is developed in chapters 5 and 6 claims that the belief infused into humans by means of the *sensus divinitatis* is not just about the existence of God, but also about basic Christian teachings about God's character, the nature of sin, and personal salvation. Also of special interest is chapter 6, "Sealed upon Our Hearts," in which Platinga challenges the Greek idea of the impassibility of God.

Chapters 7–10 address different objections and defeaters to the A/C model. The main objection comes from J. L. Mackie, who claimed that Christian belief can get and needs to get warrant from experience, and that this experience must be of such a nature that it implies the truth of Christian belief. Based on the A/C model, Platinga rejects this claim, because the *sensus divinitatis,* like normal sensory perception, is a direct way to gain knowledge and does not need any form of external evidence. He admits however that

there may be experiences that exclude the possibility of Christian belief being true. Some such phenomena, called defeaters, are addressed in the last few chapters.

Knowledge and Christian Belief presents its reader with a fulminant and very convincing philosophical defense of Christian belief in the face of its modern and postmodern opponents. This book is not only thought provoking and informative, but also relaxing to a certain degree. Platinga confidently and calmly puts citations by Richard Dawkins next to Scripture and shows the philosophical shallowness of the young angry atheists and some of their predecessors. Platinga does not need to raise his voice and he does not take refuge in spurious arguments taken from fields in which he has no expertise.

There is one issue however, that makes his main thesis, the Aquinas/Calvin model, somewhat difficult for the non-Calvinist portion of Christianity. Platinga claims that belief is not subject to our voluntary decision and can therefore not be subject to moral categories (16–17). Thus, we believe what we believe and there is nothing we can do about it. This fits perfectly of course with his emphasis on the *sensus divinitatis* and the working of the Holy Spirit that cause faith in us. In good Calvinist tradition, this causation of faith is sufficient to make us believe and is not dependent on any decision of ours. If this is the case, there is no real reason to search for external arguments to convince others of my beliefs. Platinga does not spell it out, but by implication (and by association with the Calvinist tradition) the reader is led to assume that the *sensus divinitatis* is not a universal phenomenon but is found only in that portion of the populace that accepts the basic teachings of Christianity. Nevertheless, even though man is not capable of rejecting or choosing God, but is chosen passively, blame is put on those who do not believe.

The idea that beliefs are formed involuntarily is central to the A/C model, and thus, the model will not easily pass in Arminian circles. However, the concept of a *sensus divinitatis* as a cognitive function that produces faith in God is not foreign to Arminians, even though we would insist that it is possible to shake it off. In addition, the subsequent argument that our beliefs may have warrant after all remains in place and may prove useful. Other arguments are not mentioned in this review, but are nevertheless deserving of careful consideration.

Therefore, *Knowledge and Christian Belief* is a good read, especially for those who identify as Calvinist, but also for everyone else. It is creative, thought provoking, and not too difficult to read.

Berrien Springs, Michigan VALENTIN ZYWIETZ

Seevers, Boyd. *Warfare in the Old Testament: The Organization, Weapons, and Tactics of Ancient Near Eastern Armies.* Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2013. 328 pp. Hardcover, $34.99.

The need for a comprehensive, up-to-date volume in English covering warfare in the context of ancient Israel has been felt for some time. Yet recently published works on this topic have generally confined their treatment to

narrower time periods, such as the 2003 book by Richard A. Gabriel, which only covers Israel's military history down through David's reign (*The Military History of Ancient Israel*. Westport: Praeger) or Brad E. Kelle's useful volume (*Ancient Israel at War 853–586 BC*. Oxford: Osprey, 2007), which provides a more visually oriented approach to warfare, fortified cities, and fortresses, but focuses solely on the mid ninth through early sixth centuries B.C. The book under review comprises a revision and expansion of the author's 1998 doctoral dissertation submitted to Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, which, given the immense breadth of this subject coupled with the enormous database of currently available information, is an exceptionally broad topic for the comprehensive treatment necessary in a PhD thesis. Yet the author, Boyd Seevers, effectively presents an admirable synthesis of the relevant archaeological and historical sources, shedding light into how warfare was conducted during the Old Testament. And in this published form of his doctoral work he does so in just over 300 pages.

The work is comprised of nine chapters. The first five chapters focus largely on introductory and methodological content. Within this introduction, Seevers adeptly weaves a fictional biographical sketch (based upon the conquest narratives in the book of Joshua) into his discussion, which follows the exploits of an Israelite soldier named Judah, in order to familiarize the reader with the military organization, strategies, and weaponry utilized during the Late Bronze Age. A brief survey of Israel's military history during the period of the Judges (Iron Age I) and the later monarchy (Iron Age II) follows. The final four chapters examine the armies of Israel's antagonists and their appearances in the Old Testament narratives; specifically those of Egypt, Philistia, Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia. As before, Seevers creates additional personal accounts of warriors campaigning with each of these groups, basing his fictitious stories upon historically attested names and events. Comparable treatments of Aram-Damascus and Moab are lacking but needed as both of these political entities had repeated clashes with Israel and, to a lesser extent, with Judah during the tenth-eighth centuries B.C.

The organization of the book is well thought out and its progression flows easily from page to page, which is essential for a broad reading audience. The abundant illustrations, line drawings, and maps are of exceptional quality and greatly assist in understanding the weaponry, events, and personalities discussed in the text.

Nevertheless, there are some noticeable lacunae in the book. The David and Goliath account provides one of the most detailed descriptions of armor and weaponry (1 Sam 17) and while this event is noted and briefly discussed by Seevers (e.g.; pp. 60–65, 164, 169–72), a number of recent studies providing important supporting evidence for a late Iron Age I historical setting for this famous event, notably the conclusions by Jeffrey R. Zorn (Reconsidering Goliath: An Iron Age I Philistine Chariot Warrior; *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 360 [2010]: 1–22) are regrettably neither discussed in the text nor cited in the suggested reading list.

Other military related aspects overlooked by Seevers include the symbolic factors behind the act of (partially) breaking down the walls of an enemy's city, as demonstrated by both Jehoash of Israel and Uzziah of Judah (2 Kgs 14:13; 2 Chr 25:23; 26:6) and more importantly, Uzziah's enigmatic defensive inventions (חִשְּׁבֹנוֹת מַחֲשֶׁבֶת חוֹשֵׁב; devices, the devising of devisers [2 Chr 26:15]; 294) are not mentioned. The latter object seems to indicate an early form of the catapult, yet some scholars suggest that this mysterious phrase may refer to fortified platforms protruding from the top of a city wall that provide defenders with a wider field of fire and the ability to hurl (drop) projectiles directly on top of the attackers massed below them. Moreover, the famous "Ban" is only mentioned in passing, with a note citing the Mesha Stele for comparison (33 n. 15, 75). Seevers neither explains the term nor expounds on its theological interpretation, whether literal, hyperbolic, symbolic, or otherwise.

I also failed to find any significant reference to the military use of towers in Seevers' book. Towers were invaluable for sending and receiving communications (via fire beacons) throughout Israel and Judah (p. 73; attested also in Scripture: Jer 6:1; 34:7) as well as serving as lookouts and redoubts for the surrounding population (A. Mazar, Iron Age Fortresses in the Judean Hills. *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 114 [1982]: 87–109). See the updated synthesis by A. Faust (*The Archaeology of Israelite Society in Iron Age II*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012, 178–89). Strategically located towers on the summits of hills and ridges surrounding both Samaria and Jerusalem during the Iron Age II served a similar purpose (see A. Zertal, "The Heart of the Monarchy: Pattern of Settlement and Historical Considerations of the Israelite Kingdom of Samaria," in *Studies in the Archaeology of the Iron Age in Israel and Jordan,* ed. A. Mazar, JOSTSup 331 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001], 51–60; A. Mazar, "Iron Age I and II Towers at Giloh and the Israelite Settlement," *IEJ* 40 [1990]: 96–101; G. Barkay, A. Fantalkin, and O. Tal, "A Late Iron Age Fortress North of Jerusalem," *BASOR* 328 [2002]: 49–71; and B. Arubas and H. Goldfus, "The Site at Binyanei Ha-Uma and its Role in the Settlement Network Surrounding Jerusalem from the Iron Age until the End of the Byzantine Period," *ErIsr* 28 [2007]: 14–20, 9*–10*).

The book would have benfited from a study of the functionality of forts and border defensives, for instance a discussion and interpretation of Rehoboam's fortification efforts (2 Chr 11:5–12), which Seevers only mentions in passing (69). The ebb and flow of Judah's control over the strategic Negeb and Negeb Highlands in the light of archaeological and epigraphic finds at various sites in these regions would also be a valuable addition. For a detailed examination of this topic, the reader must look elsewhere. The recent volume by Samuel Rocca (*The Fortifications of Ancient Israel and Judah 1200–586 BC*. Oxford: Osprey, 2010), as well as a number of more technical reports and papers readily provide the necessary data, but a summary treatment here would naturally be preferable.

Because Seevers devotes a substantial part of the book to presenting background information of relevance to the biblical narratives, which is well

known to established scholars, the primary targeted audiences are undoubtedly students and interested lay persons. The personal sketches he inserts into his narrative greatly reinforce, if not largely fulfill this objective.

While neither exhaustive in its treatment of warfare in ancient Israel nor containing extensive bibliographies for further study, Seevers' book provides a well written and superbly illustrated introduction to the topic of warfare and consequently deserves a place on the required reading lists for both undergraduate and seminary courses that examine related aspects of Israelite and Old Testament history.

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Tabbernee, William ed., *Early Christianity in Context: An Exploration across Cultures and Continents*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014. 640 pp. Hardcover, $42.99.

Early Christianity in Context, edited by William Tabbernee, a specialist of the history and archaeology of the Montanist movement, makes a broad contribution to the study of early Christianity. In the table of contents, the reader will notice that this lengthy 602-page work is divided according to ten geographic regions. Several specialists have contributed to each chapter in the early Christianity manifest each region. After the Introduction, ten chapters cover The Roman Near East, Beyond the Eastern Frontier, The Caucasus, Deep into China, The World of the Nile, Roman North Africa, Asia Minor and Cyprus, The Balkan Peninsula, Italy and Environs, and The Western Provinces and Beyond. After the Table of Contents, there is a list of illustrations and an extensive list of abbreviations from the vast amount of primary sources and journals utilized for research for each article. The main body of the book ends on page 475, after which there is a sixty-one page bibliography and a list of contributors. Finally there are two indices: the first, a subject index; and the second, an index of ancient writings.

The Introduction, written by William Tabbernee, states the purpose for the present volume. According to Tabbernee, the purpose of this book is to focus on the earliest available "material evidence" of Christianity, literary and non-literary. This enables the reader to study the history of early Christianity in a particular location as well as to get a glimpse into the cultural context in which Christianity developed, whether it be in China, Palestine, or the British Isles. Because of the scope of this volume, each chapter is not intended to be exhaustive, but reflects what Tabbernee describes as the "current trends in the study of early Christianity and Late Antiquity as well as the broader movement within the humanities to take account of diverse cultures." Each chapter contains black-and-white maps of the particular regions as well as black-and-white photos of various archaeological remains of architecture or inscriptions. Each chapter is written by multiple authors, whose names are written at the bottom of the first page of every chapter. This review will focus on two chapters of interest to the author.

The first is on the geographic region of the Roman Near East, authored by Lincoln Blumell, Jenn Cianca, Peter Richardson, and William Tabbernee. This chapter is divided into five subsections. The authors begin with an introduction recounting a brief history of Rome's impact on the major geographic regions of the Roman Near East. The subsequent subsections are divided by region: Palestine, Syria, and Arabia. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the complexity of the world in which Christianity was born. While the sections are not exhaustive, the authors describe the primary socio-political events that impacted the various regions. The reader will be introduced to the geography, people, and religions existing at the time, as well as a summary of the various ethnic and religious groups inhabiting the region. By the end of the section the reader will realize the complexity of the Roman Near East, the birthplace of Christianity. Richardson highlights the intricacies of the geo-political situation, in which various Roman leaders organized and re-organized Palestine and Syria beginning with Pompey until Trajan. Tabbernee's section on Jerusalem provides detailed yet concise summaries of the main factors that describe the social, religious, and political background when Christianity began. He argues that the term "Jewish Christianity" to describe Christianity in Jerusalem prior to Hadrian is difficult for two reasons: first, this term is a modern construct; second, the term "Judaism" may be either a religious or ethnic identity. A third option that Tabbernee does not mention is that Judaism could refer to both a religious as well as ethnic identity, especially for describing the community in Jerusalem prior to Hadrian. He highlights some of the significant archaeological finds that give insight into the religious world of Jews and Christians. For example Tabbernee describes the importance of pilgrimages based on the image of a fourth-century sailing ship with a Latin inscription *Domine ivimus* on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. While many specialists of early Judaism and Christianity will be aware of these finds already, the non-specialist will appreciate the detail and brevity in which these finds are described. The authors did well in distilling a wide variety of the literary and archaeological data for the reader in order to highlight the main points of interest.

The chapter on *Italy and Environs* is equally informative and well written. Like the chapter on the Roman Near East, this chapter opens with an introduction describing briefly the socio-political environment when Christianity arrived in Rome. After the introduction, the chapter is subdivided according to the regions of Italy: Rome, Central Italy, North Italy, Ravenna, South Italy and the Islands, and Environs. Peter Lampe provides an excellent summary of the Jewish and Christian presence in Rome. His informative summaries on language, philosophy, education, and paganism in the Roman period are insightful and aid scholars who are searching for more information regarding the *Sitz im Leben* for Paul's letter to the Romans and the cultural background of the Roman world. As an example, Lampe provides evidence from inscriptions that the Jewish community in Rome was composed of Jewish slaves and freed slaves. Also, based on other epigraphic evidence, the freed Jewish slaves of the Roman legate Volumnius, their patron, founded

the Roman synagogue of the Volumneses. Lampe also briefly describes three residential areas in Rome where Roman Jews resided: Trans-Tiberim, Valley of the Appian Way near the Capena Gate, and near the Viminal Gate in the northeast. As stated previously, the specialist will be aware of many of these points, yet Lampe provides a helpful description of the Jewish culture in Rome that many specialists and non-specialists may have overlooked.

There are at least two strengths of this book one notices right away: the unique focus and the wide scope. While much of early Christian scholarship gives primacy to the written sources—and with good reason—this book fills a gap by focusing on available archaeological resources. The broad scope of the work is seen in its endeavor to highlight archaeological discoveries from diverse geographic regions—indeed from the British Isles to the Far East. This work is not a theological investigation into early Christian literature, nor an attempt at a historical development of theological doctrines. The authors certainly use the literature, yet primarily as a source for reconstructing a partial history. They avoid making any arguments either for or against an early orthodoxy. Their primary concern is to highlight the various forms Christianity took during its development in a particular region. They introduce the reader to the greater cultural milieu, and then describe the material evidence in order to elucidate the earliest forms of Christianity in their respective regions. This book, therefore, functions more as an introduction to the role that the literary and non-literary archaeological evidence plays in revealing the diffusion of Christianity in the early centuries. By the end of the book many will appreciate the complexity of a world that influenced and was influenced by Christianity. Because most scholars focus their research on a narrower region, such as Palestine or Italy for example, it is easy to neglect the broader region outside their respective areas. This one-volume work is an excellent tool for students and scholars to gain knowledge of early Christianity outside their respective regions without having to do countless hours of research. And if they would like to study more, the bibliography and indices will aid them in their journey.

Berrien Springs, Michigan Christopher R. Chadwick

Ussishkin, David. *Biblical Lachish: A Tale of Construction, Destruction, Excavation and Restoration.* Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2014. 446 pp. Hardcover, $52.00.

The great significance of the city of Lachish for biblical history, as well as its important role as the archaeological 'type site' for Judah during the Iron Age II period needs no apology. David Ussishkin, the author of the book under review, directed large scale excavations at Lachish from 1973-1987, with supplementary excavation and restoration work conducted at the site until 1994. Subsequently, Ussishkin edited the massive and justifiably highly acclaimed five-volume final excavation report for Lachish, which appeared in 2004. Over the past decade, while scholars and students digested the enormous amount of data and results published by Ussishkin and his team, Ussishkin has also reflected upon his own methodology and historical

conclusions about the site. This decade-long period of reflective thought is clearly evident in this book, which comprises Ussishkin's summary treatment of the history of Lachish, including his latest interpretations and conclusions regarding this great biblical site. The book will undoubtedly be welcomed by all of his colleagues in the field and also celebrated for its ability to present scholarly data and the main results from a major excavation at an important biblical site in a largely accessible semi-popular format, appealing to an informed lay audience as well as scholars in a manner arguably not seen since the death of famed Israeli archaeologist and general Yigael Yadin. Ussishkin offers a complete archaeologically based account of Lachish, from its earliest periods of settlement to the 1948 Arab-Israeli war as well as a history of each of the three expeditions that excavated the site. Lachish was a Canaanite city captured by Israel in the conquest narrative (Joshua 10:3; 12:11; 15:39) and later served as a major fortified administrative and population center for the Kingdom of Judah; second in importance only to Jerusalem (2 Chr 11:9; 2 Kgs 14:19). The majority of the book describes in detail the circumstances surrounding the two well documented destructions suffered by Lachish; the first at the hands of Assyria in 701 B.C. and later by Babylonian forces in 587/6 B.C. Utilizing a variety of evidence, Ussishkin provides captivating and sometimes graphic testimony of the desperate, but ultimately futile attempts by Lachish's brave population to resist these onslaughts as well as the horrifying atrocities committed by the Assyrians during and after their successful siege. He also includes fascinating information and photos relating to earlier archaeological work at the site, especially the British expedition led by James L. Starkey during the 1930's. A selection of photos even depicts life at the British excavation camp, which was later looted and completely obliterated after the staff departed following Starkey's murder by Arab bandits in 1938. Also recounted is the visit of Olga Tufnell to the excavations in 1983. Tufnell, one of Starkey's assistants, almost single handedly completed the task of publishing the results from Lachish and did so in exemplary fashion. Tufnell's return to Lachish provided continuity between the two expeditions that amazingly spanned 50 years. Perhaps my favorite photo in the book strikingly demonstrates this connection by showing a frail and aged Tufnell chatting with a young Orna Zimhoni, the ceramicist and recorder for Ussishkin's project. Sadly, both have since passed away.

Ussishkin does not hesitate to criticize the methodology of several of his late colleagues, notably Yohanan Aharoni (63–64, 101; who briefly excavated at Lachish in 1966 and 1968) Kathleen Kenyon (83–6, 101; who visited the site in 1977) and Rudolph Cohen (101), but he is not above self-criticism either (81, 215–7). Ussishkin takes the opportunity to endorse the "low chronology" position by arguing that the beginning of Philistine settlement occurred no earlier than 1130 B.C. (his relative dating for the beginning of the Iron Age), on the basis of negative evidence, that is, the lack of Philistine monochrome ware at Lachish. Ussishkin even mentions his attempt to persuade Aren Maeir, the excavator of nearby Tell es-Safi (biblical Gath of the Philistines), to accept this view, but to no avail (198–201). Unfortunately,

Ussishkin displays an overly harsh attitude towards scholars that practice traditional Biblical Archaeology; that is, actively search for correlations between the archaeological data and the biblical accounts. For example, Ussishkin remarks that (concerning Aharoni's view): "it should be noted that the intertwining of biblical and historical thinking with the archaeological work was not unique to him, but rather was accepted by many scholars, first and foremost by disciples of the renowned American archaeologist William Foxwell Albright. *Unfortunately, this way of thinking is still accepted by many scholars, determining their worldview and distorting their fieldwork to this day*" (64, italics mine). Certain cases of these regrettable distortions indeed exist among a few conservative scholars who "force the evidence" and, for their faults, Ussishkin's point is well taken. However, there are much more serious abuses deriving from archaeologists and historians who follow an ideology of biblical minimalism that he does not address, which include some of Ussishkin's colleagues at Tel Aviv University. In one of his earlier statements on interpreting archaeological data objectively, without the influence (!) of the biblical accounts, Ussishkin confesses that, in actuality, this is usually not the case ("Archaeology of the Biblical Period: On Some Questions of Methodology and Chronology of the Iron Age," in *Understanding the History of Ancient Israel,* ed. H.G.M. Williamson. Proceedings of the British Academy 143. [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007], 131–41, esp. 131–5). Indeed, it is most certainly not the case with this book; a fact that is readily apparent by simply reading its title. Furthermore, despite his stated definitions of what an archaeologist must and must not do, Ussishkin interacts with the Bible (albeit generally in a critical vein) many times in the book and biblical citations are sprinkled throughout the volume. Not surprisingly, some of Ussishkin's interpretations are controversial, especially his conclusions about the status and makeup of Lachish during the Iron Age IIA. First, despite considerable evidence to the contrary, he continues to argue that podium A and podium B; two adjoining rectangular platforms upon which a multi-storied palace-fort (or perhaps two) stood during the ninth century B.C., were constructed at the same time. Secondly, he compresses Lachish Levels V and IV into two 50-year periods (ca. 900–850 B.C. and 850–800 B.C. respectively), dating Level V based on "general considerations" and by the chronology of other sites. Ussishkin proposes these interpretations even though he admits that Level IV has at least four distinct phases and offers little to support his date of Level V. Both interpretations appear rather arbitrary (16, 204). To compress a major occupational level with four phases into such a short time span seems problematic. The Level IV stratigraphical evidence requires a longer period of time, as does Level V, in my opinion. Perhaps Ussishkin is attempting to evade a much larger issue here, which is the further undermining of the "low chronology" position espoused by his Tel Aviv University colleague Israel Finkelstein. Ussishkin likewise interprets Lachish Level IV as a "fortress city"; a government and military center rather than a residential settlement (207) due to a lower density of domestic dwellings related to this stratum. Again, this is merely negative evidence based upon only limited excavated areas. Indeed,

he later admits that the lack of broad exposure of this level does not present a clear picture of the settlement and character of the site (209). On the other hand, Ussishkin has modified his earlier interpretation regarding the date of Level IV's collapse. Previously, he followed Moshe Kochavi's suggestion that the earthquake recorded in Amos 1:1 and Zechariah 14:5 caused serious damage to the city in ca. 760 B.C. (214–5). After extensive reconstruction and repairs were carried out, the new Level III city emerged. However, because Lachish Level IV pottery closely resembles the stratum A3 pottery from nearby Tell es-Safi, which most likely was destroyed by Hazael prior to 800 B.C., Ussishkin duly recognized the need to revise his own chronology (16, 212) while also maintaining that Lachish may have lasted a few more years before the demise of Level IV. He consequently moved its terminal date backwards approximately 40 years to 800 B.C., making a chronological adjustment that several of his colleagues had recommended for years. The lack of a Level IV burn layer should not rule out the possibility of a human agent. Consequently, the question must then be raised regarding who destroyed Level IV around 800 B.C. In my opinion, a leading suspect would be Jehoash of Israel, in conjunction with his rout of Amaziah of Judah at Beth Shemesh. Israelite soldiers dismissed from mercenary duty earlier by Amaziah also carried out random destructive acts in various cities and towns in Judah (2 Chr 25:13). While Lachish is not specifically mentioned, the date and circumstances seem to correlate with the evidence from Lachish Level IV. Moreover, the biblical accounts make no reference to Jehoash and his soldiers burning Jerusalem, only his destruction of part of the city wall and widespread plundering of the city (2 Kgs 14:14–15; 2 Chr 25:23–24). Consequently, to ascribe the end of Level IV to Jehoash is not an unreasonable assumption. A comparison of pottery from Lachish Level IV with Beth Shemesh stratum 3 may provide needed clarification when the latter is fully published.

I have great hopes that the recently initiated joint Hebrew University and Southern Adventist University excavations at Lachish, directed by Y. Garfinkel, M. Hasel, and G. Klingbeil, will provide critical information regarding the status of Lachish during the tenth and ninth, as well as the eighth century B.C. I am pleased to hear that Ussishkin serves as a scientific advisor for this new field project, providing important continuity once again. We eagerly anticipate the exciting new finds that will hopefully provide several new chapters to the saga of this ancient city so rich in biblical history.

Biblical Lachish, aside from the caveats mentioned above, is a work that deserves to be read by everyone interested in the fields of Hebrew Bible and Near Eastern Archaeology. Perhaps the deepest impression the book made on me was how archaeology vividly revealed the catastrophic plight of Lachish's beleaguered population, whose valiant efforts to resist and survive in the face of great odds tragically failed. The reader cannot help but sense the overwhelming fear and the sheer horror they faced as siege machines battered their fortifications at nearly point blank-range just before Assyrian soldiers poured through the breach, or how desperate messages regarding the encroaching Babylonian army were hastily read and transcribed in a chamber

of the city gate complex. In this way, *Biblical Lachish* admirably represents what "Biblical Archaeology" is truly all about.

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Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *The God We Worship: An Exploration of Liturgical Theology*. The Kantzer Lectures in Revealed Theology. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015. xi + 180 pp. Paperback, $20.00.

Nicholas Wolterstorff is Noah Porter Professor Emeritus of Philosophical Theology at Yale University and Senior Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia. Before coming to Yale, he was Professor of Philosophy at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan for thirty years. His many other books include *Justice in Love, Educating for Shalom*, and *Hearing the Call*.

In his most recent book, *The God We Worship*, Wolterstorff not only examines liturgical theology, but also extensively investigates the introduction of this heretofore little-explored field and its potential approach in reference to J. J. v. Allmen's and A. Schmenmann's works. In the afterword, the author classifies liturgical theology in what he refers to as the "three dimensions of the church's tradition" (166), each of which constitutes a specific theology: (1) the biblical interpretation tradition (biblical theology), (2) conciliar-creedal theology, and (3) liturgy of the church (liturgical theology). While these theologies overlap in their content, he argues that each offers its own emphasis and contribution to the overall picture. The point of liturgical theology is to *explicitly* formulate that which is *implicit* (although, explicit expressions of the understanding of God are, of course, also found in liturgy). The author asserts that in communal worship, Christians everywhere adopt a form of liturgy, an unwritten "script." Having a background himself in the Reformed tradition, he emphasizes concurrent liturgical aspects of major denominations (e.g. confession, intercession, sermon), yet stresses the fact that even newer denominations with no official liturgy per se also follow a loose liturgy of sorts.

In liturgy, one of the most obvious implicit presuppositions about God across the board is that he is worthy of worship. Wolterstorff defines "worship" as an approach to God shaped by the three attitudes of awe, reverence, and gratitude. And although worship can be part of our daily lives, what the author refers to is corporate worship in the context of church services, and this he regards as the most distinct manifestation of churches. Another implicit application of the church is that the worship of God is an obligation of the believer, a duty. Thus, if failing to worship him would mean being guilty of wrongdoing, this would imply that God is vulnerable to being wronged. Confession, a vital part of liturgy, presupposes that God has already been wronged, while intercession and supplication imply that God allows a form of resistance to the coming of his kingdom. Here, the paradox arises

again: God, who is magnificent and unequaled, makes himself vulnerable to such resistance.

Perhaps a more fundamental understanding of God than the two previously explored concepts is the recognition that God, in many of our liturgical actions, is addressed directly—i.e. in the second person. Through such address, an I-thou relationship is formed and thus a mutuality. We address God with the assumption that he not only hears us acoustically, but that he also listens to what we say and is free to respond as he wishes. Additionally, God is seen as speaker, and thus, liturgy becomes mutual acts of addressing and listening.

The fact that God not only allows but also—according to the Bible—desires such communication demonstrates a humility on his part and concurrently an elevation of man. Throughout the book, the author explores philosophical questions to this understanding, such as whether it is anthropomorphic to speak of God as one who listens and speaks to us, an objection he confronts with the concept of analogical extension that he bases on definitions of Aquinas (Chapter 6). In a detailed discussion, the author additionally explores the question of how God's speaking to us can be understood, and compares the interpretations of J. Calvin to that of K. Barth.

In his examination of the Eucharistic liturgy, or the Lord's Supper, the author loyally concerns himself with his own Reformed background of the Calvinistic tradition. He does, however, allude that this particular theological understanding of Communion significantly shapes which presuppositions about God are implicit. He holds that in Communion, Christ offers his body and blood, and the believer responds to this offering through the partaking of the bread and wine. The Eucharist represents how, through the Holy Spirit, Christ dwells within us and sanctifies us.

As a member of a Protestant, non-conformist denomination that has comparatively few established forms of liturgy, one tends to associate the liturgy of the more major denominations with mere form and rote rituals. Wolterstorff's book offers vital insight into a world that in many cases has become foreign to us. It sheds light on the fact that the traditional liturgies of the major denominations incorporate and impart understandings of God that some modern churches quite possibly have missed. Undoubtedly, every form of liturgy runs the risk of straying into routine and unreflective rituals—a challenge that faces not just those churches who practice liturgical traditions. In light of the fact that Christians do not recreate worship but rather invariably adopt one form or another of collective worship, this book serves to give Christians a new perspective on a subject we too often neglect to reflect upon.

Scrutinizing which core beliefs about God are behind our rituals, expressions, and liturgies is a compelling, eye-opening exercise. We rediscover, on the one hand, overlooked aspects of God. This may be experienced when reading biblical liturgical passages, such as the Psalms, which simultaniously provide a paradigm for our worship and point to conclusions about who it is we worship. On the other hand, the worshiper's position towards God

also becomes apparent. No mere mortal can lay claim to comprehending the nature of God in his entirety, and thus, it is inevitable that we naturally place certain characteristics of God in the foreground more than we do others. This occurs not only on the individual level but also collectively and is embodied in our worship. If we become sensitized to these expressions, we become aware of what emphases we are placing.

Such examination, promoted throughout the book, can indeed lead to a strengthening of our liturgies, to a deeper conviction and a more cognizant reflection. Concurrently, we can recognize what is missing in our liturgy and act accordingly, possibly amending it with the addition of certain elements or the removal of others. So that liturgy remains meaningful, it must as far as possible remain the authentic expression of a church's beliefs.

The question of which understandings of God are implicit in our worship is a pertinent one, in that we can glean from the Bible an understanding of wrong forms of worship which God does not tolerate. We gain a deeper sense of God's vehemence over this matter by recognizing that worship invariably illustrates God's essence or his plan of salvation. God does not want to be misrepresented by false forms of worship (be it that of Cain which acted as a false model of salvation or that of the golden calf). Recognizing and avoiding false worship-forms become possible when we discern and assess the implicit assertions about God or salvation in our worship.

Wolterstorff pays heed to philosophical precision in all definitions and approaches. For the layman, this could prove tedious and complex due to his lengthy digressions into philosophical and theological history. Owing to the relevance of the subject to the worshiper, therefore, it would be profitable, in this reviewer's opinion, to rework the subject in prose more suitable to the general public.

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