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EDITORIAL

Dear valued readers, partly because of the pandemic, it has taken us longer than usual to complete this Spring 2021 issue of *Andrews University Seminary Studies*. We are happy that you can now access it; and with the new year 2022 unfolding before us, we hope and pray that you will be richly blessed.

We have also discovered that several of our international subscribers have not been able to receive our last issue on time because the different postal services we depend on have not always delivered mail as expected. We apologize for any inconvenience you experienced and will continue to resolve all cases of missing journals that you bring to our attention.

The issue before you contains a selection of articles sharing scholarship from various disciplines, including Old Testament, New Testament, Theology, and modern Church History.

First, Mark Östring presents "An Apologia for an Earlier Commencement for Day 1 of Creation: A Structural Analysis Based on a Work Correspondence." The author offers a new assessment of the two-stage-creation position that seeks to separate the creation work of Gen 1:1 from the creation work in Gen 1:2-2:4. He highlights literary and linguistic challenges to such a position and reads Gen 1:1-5 as a cohesive unit that describes the first day of creation. In contrast to the two-stage-creation position, Östring argues that the creation of "the heavens and the earth" in Gen 1:1 does not refer to the universe but to a cosmic-subspace identified as the human universe.

In the second article, "Resolving the Confusion in Revelation 6:11," Edwin Reynolds detects problems in the traditional translation, "until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete" (ESV), as it appears in the opening of the fifth seal of the seven-seal cycle (Rev 6:1-8:5). Reynolds shows that the Greek NT does not contain "the number of" or necessitate such interpolation. He explores the text's grammatical, literary, and historical aspects; and concludes that the intended meaning does not include a quantitative completion of a certain disputed number of martyrs. Instead, the text suggests a qualitative completion of the character of the faithful believers. Reynolds's work sheds light on the Christology of the book of Hebrews in relation to Christ's function as a priest after his resurrection.

Our third article is a study by Francis Gayoba, on "Classical Theism in John Wesley's Sermons," that explores how Wesley's doctrine of God relates to the strict classical theism found in the Anglican Articles of Religion. Did the English reformer move away from the official theology of the Church of England in which he remained a faithful member until his death? Gayoba

supports his affirmative answer by analyzing how Wesley relates to the attributes of God (omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, eternity, and love). Wesley's preaching modified classical theism to allow for the temporal eternity and reciprocal love of a God who is personally involved in human time and affairs.

In the fourth article, "Acceptance to Expedience: A Comparative Analysis of Ellen G. White's and Arthur G. Daniells's Counsel for Race Relations," Jon-Philippe Ruhumuliza presents research that aims for a deeper understanding of the relations of racism and church policies. This is accomplished by a study of two major figures in Adventist church history: Ellen G. White and Arthur G. Daniells. While the latter served as a General Conference president (1901-1922), the former functioned as the prophetic voice and moral conscience of the church. Through careful analysis of primary texts, Ruhumuliza shows how the longest serving GC president sought to support his policy initiatives for racial separation by a selection of White's statements on the topic. Ruhumuliza demonstrates how these selections were at times incomplete and taken out of their original context, distorting the actual perspective of White who opposed race-based policies.

In addition to these articles, our book reviews introduce twenty-one recent and important books among which you may find resources that are helpful for your continuing education and research.

Finally, we ask you to consider our call for articles on the subject of Truth and Information Warfare. See the inside back cover.

We hope that you find this issue of our journal to be a blessing as you "give attention to reading" (1 Tim 4:13).

MFH and *OMG*

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AN APOLOGIA FOR AN EARLIER COMMENCEMENT FOR DAY 1 OF CREATION: A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS BASED ON A WORK CORRESPONDENCE

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Abstract

While Genesis 1 indicates the first Creation workday was foundational and unique, there is scholarly disagreement about when the first day commences in the text. This paper summarizes and evaluates the various scholarly positions on the commencement of the first day and analyzes the structural form of the text to evaluate the strengths of each position. Examination of the Gen 1:1–5 structure supports the conclusion that it is a cohesive unit describing the first day. This paper identifies weaknesses in evidence that has been advanced in support of separating Gen 1:1–2 from the creation week. Using a structural analysis based on a work correspondence, an apologia for the position that the first day commences from v.1 is provided. Also provided is biblical evidence that the merism "the heavens and the earth" (אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ) is best regarded as a cosmic subspace. The conclusion of this paper is that Gen 1:1–5 is best understood as an account of two creation projects: (1) a cosmic subspace, identified as the human universe, and (2) light, both of which were created during the first day of the creation week.

Keywords: first day, structural analysis, work correspondence, evening theory, cosmic subspace, human universe.

Introduction

Christians who hold a high view of Scripture, yet acknowledge the proven success of the scientific method, face the hermeneutical challenge of integrating scientific conclusions into their biblical worldview. There is an epistemic risk, though, that Christians who are favorable towards science may feel compelled to integrate scientific conclusions into their worldview wherever they can and reject scientific conclusions only where absolutely necessary. Sometimes postsecular people may reject religious beliefs in favor of scientific conclusions even though there may be greater warrant for particular religious

teachings.[1] A possible example of this risk includes the widespread approach of Christians who, either consciously or subconsciously, integrate current geological dating models into their interpretation of Gen 1:1–5. This integration may run contrary to a plain reading of Genesis, which suggests that the earth was created within the same recent, short time frame in which biological life was created.[2] A postsecular approach can result in attempting to locate or accommodate deep geological time in the text of Genesis. Gerhard Hasel has pointed out the problems with taking concordist approaches regarding the interpretation of the duration of the days of creation.[3] Similar problems arise when attempting a concordist approach with the text respecting the age of the earth. The critical question in this specific instance, from a textual perspective, is when the first day of creation commences in the text itself. To mitigate this epistemic risk of concordism and exegetically resolve the teaching of Genesis, it is valuable to carefully consider the literary unit describing the first day of creation.

There are significant reasons to hold that the opening unit of Gen 1:1–5 is foundational for the rest of the first creation account in Gen 1:1–2:3.[4] This unit sets the cosmic stage for the main divine work story line. The literary cadence "and there was evening and there was morning, one day" (author's

[1] Alvin Plantinga notes, "It isn't automatically current science that has more warrant or positive epistemic status; perhaps the warrant enjoyed by Christian belief is greater than that enjoyed by the conflicting scientific belief" (*Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion & Naturalism* [New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011], 120).

[2] While not endorsing the young universe position, statements of the Seventh-day Adventist pioneer Ellen G. White infer that she was advocating that the planet Earth itself was created relatively recently (*Spiritual Gifts* [Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press, 1864], 3:92; *The Spirit of Prophecy*, 4 vols. [Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press, 1870], 1:87; *The Signs of the Times*, 20 March 1879 [see section: Chapter 8—Disguised Infidelity]; *Patriarchs and Prophets* [Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1890], 112).

[3] Gerhard Hasel, "The 'Days' of Creation in Genesis 1: Literal 'Days' or Figurative 'Periods/Epochs' of Time," *Origins* 21.1 (1994): 5–38.

[4] The terms "first and second creation accounts" may concern scholars holding to the unity of the received Hebrew text. Richard Davidson's comments are helpful: "Instead of comprising multiple sources, I find that Genesis 1 and 2 provide a unified dual perspective on creation—and the God of creation. Genesis 1:1–2:4a gives the picture of an all-powerful transcendent God *(ʾelōhîm*) and a cosmic view of creation. In Genesis 2:4b–25, God is further presented as the personal, caring, covenant God (*YHWH ʾĕlōhîm*), and creation is described in terms of humankind and their intimate, personal needs" ("The Genesis Account of Origins," in *The Genesis Creation Account and Its Reverberations in the Old Testament*, ed. Gerald Klingbeil [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2015], 60n4).

translation) (וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד) is first set in motion in this unit, which establishes the temporal markers for the rest of the workdays in the creation account. Basil, the fourth-century theologian who defended the Trinitarian Nicene Creed, pointed out how this unit linguistically identifies the significance of the first day of the creation account: "If then the beginning of time is called 'one day' rather than 'the first day,' it is because Scripture wishes to establish its relationship with eternity. It was, in reality, fit and natural to call 'one' the day whose character is to be one wholly separated and isolated from all the others."[5]

Jacques Doukhan affirms this reading, stating, "The phrase *yom ahad* means literally 'day absolutely unique.' The same word is used for God in the *shema* (Deut 6:4) to emphasize God's absolute uniqueness."[6]

There is, however, scholarly disagreement about where the first day commences in the text and about the scope of the divine work accomplished on the first day, both from a literary perspective and from its physical referent.

This paper reexamines the opening unit of Genesis to explore where the evidence points regarding the temporal boundaries and cosmic scope of the divine creative work completed on the first day. The research strategy is as follows. First, the literary structure of the unit is examined in light of its broader context. Second, the unit is evaluated using a work correspondence, where the analogous nature of the divine "work" to the basic rhythm of human work is considered. Both the text and the Decalogue encourage taking this correspondence perspective on human work. Jean Calvin highlighted the divine accommodation of the first creation account, stating, "Let us rather conclude that God himself took the space of six days, for the purpose of accommodating his works to the capacity of men."[7] Contemporary scholars agree. C. John Collins writes, "The structure of the account shows us that our author has presented God as if he were a craftsman going about his workweek. This comes out from the structure of the account, the six workdays followed

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[5] Basil, *Hexaemeron* (*Homily 2*) (*NPNF*²8:64).

[6] Jacques Doukhan, "The Genesis Creation Story: Text, Issues, and Truth," *Origins* 55 (2004): 26.

[7] John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, trans. John King, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society), 1:78. Some scholars propose that from Calvin's appeal to divine accommodation, it follows that he was not designating six literal days (e.g., Alister McGrath, *Science and Religion: An Introduction* [Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998], 11). However, this proposal has been contended, for example, by Peter van Bemmelen ("Divine Accommodation and Biblical Creation: Calvin vs. McGrath," *AUSS* 39.1 [Spring 2001]: 116). This shows that the hermeneutic of divine accommodation can provide support for literal interpretations of the Genesis text and does not necessarily provide unequivocal support for nonliteral interpretations.

by a Sabbath. It also comes out from the refrain, 'and there was evening, and there was morning, the *n*th day.'"[8]

Theological Framework for Creation

Before commencing any exegetical work, it is important to identify the theological framework of the study. The text brings a present, yet transcendent, Creator-God into clear view, as Kenneth Mathews has noted, one who uses a teleological process to create an inhabitable world and who pauses, at various stages throughout the process, to bless his creation.[9]

The theological framework emerging from the Genesis text also includes the revelation that this Creator-God is not bound by the natural laws he creates, the literary structures that he uses to describe his creative work, or the choices of his creatures who have been gifted libertarian free will.[10] Some raise the divine consistency objection, concerned that it would be ontologically incoherent for a God of order to act contrary to the regularities that he has established,[11] but Alvin Plantinga points out,

> [H]owever, he might have reasons for "dealing in two different manners" with his cosmos; how could we be even reasonably sure that he doesn't? Perhaps he aims to establish basic regularities, thus making science and free intelligent action possible for his creatures. But perhaps he also has good reason for

[8] C. John Collins, *Genesis 1–4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006), 77. Other scholars who identified the use of a work analogy within the first creation account include Victor Hamilton (*The Book of Genesis Chapters 1–17*, NICOT [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990], 119, 121); John Lennox (*Seven Days That Divide the World: The Beginning According to Genesis and Science* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011], 49); Henry Morris (*The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976], 55); and John Sailhamer (*Genesis Unbound: A Provocative New Look at the Creation Account* [Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 1996], 95). Unfortunately, the term "analogy" has been associated with literary yet nonliteral interpretations for the creation days. Gerhard Hasel has cogently argued against this nonliteral interpretation ("The 'Days' of Creation," 5–38). An analogy does not necessarily use different time frames, but since the association of "analogy" with nonliteral interpretations has been established in the scholarly literature, this paper uses the phrase "work correspondence" to indicate that identical time frames could be involved for both the divine creation week and the human week.

[9] Kenneth Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, NAC (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 23, 55–56; Elizabeth Ostring, *Be a Blessing: The Theology of Work in the Narrative of Genesis* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016).

[10] Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 61; Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC 1 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 6, 14.

[11] For example, Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (London: Nisbet, 1953), 1:129.

> sometimes acting contrary to those regularities: to mark special occasions, for example, or to make clear his love or his power, or to authorize what someone says, or to guide history in a certain direction. Why should any of this be in any way incompatible with his unsurpassable greatness?[12]

This theological unboundedness applies exegetically and linguistically as well. While literary structures or patterns may be discerned in the text that evidently point to an orderly process that God follows in his creative work, these observed literary structures should not obscure the possibility that his sovereign creatorship may transcend these structures.

Survey of Previous Exegetical Studies

Single Stage (Young Galactic Universe) Creation Position

Young universe creationists hold that the entire galactic universe, and everything in it, was created during the creation week. Henry Morris maintains that the summary statement in Gen 2:1 "clearly refers to the previous six days, including the first day. However, it includes 'the heavens' in this summary; and the only mention of the heavens during the six days is in Genesis 1:1, a fact which demonstrates that the summary of Genesis 2:1 embraces also the work of Genesis 1:1."[13]

Commentators holding this position consider the phrase "the heavens and the earth" (אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ) to be a merism that refers to the entire created order. Jonathan Sarfati states, "In … Old Testament Hebrew … the words 'heaven(s) and earth' are conjoined, it is a figure of speech called a *merism*, in which two opposites are combined into an all-encompassing term." Further, "throughout the Bible (e.g. Gen 14:19, 22; 2 Kgs 19:15; Ps 121:2), this means the totality of creation, not just the earth and its atmosphere, or our solar system alone."[14]

Young universe creationists find confirmation for this position in the Decalogue motivation for remembering the Sabbath. They note the use of the

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[12] Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Lies*, 107. White points to the same divine unboundedness: "Many teach that … the operations of nature are conducted in harmony with fixed laws, with which God Himself cannot interfere. This is false science, and is not sustained by the word of God. Nature is the servant of her Creator. God does not annul His laws or work contrary to them, but He is continually using them as his instruments." (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 114).

[13] Morris, *The Genesis Record*, 42. In spite of Morris's serious exegetical oversight that "heavens" (הַשָּׁמַיִם) is also mentioned in vv.9, 14–15, 17, 20, 26, and 30, it remains reasonably clear that he held a single-stage (young galactic universe) creation position (Davidson, "The Genesis Account of Origins," 90n96).

[14] Jonathan Sarfati, *The Genesis Account: A Theological, Historical, and Scientific Commentary on Genesis 1–11* (Powder Springs, GA: Creation Book Publishers, 2015), 102, emphasis in original.

phrase "the heavens and the earth" (אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ) in Exod 20:11a, which is identical to the Hebrew phrase employed in Gen 1:1. Sarfati points out, "Further on in the Bible, we see an even more emphatic declaration of God's universal creation. The Sabbath command of Exod 20:8–11 is based on God's creation of the 'heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them' in six ordinary days. This reinforces the merism of totality by going even further: including the sea as well as the contents of everything."[15]

Thus, the young universe position maintains that Gen 1:1–5 describes the initial creation of the entire galactic universe along with the primordial creation of light itself.

Two-Stage (Young Life) Creation Position

More recently, scholars have identified a different frame of reference to pinpoint when the first day of the creation week commences, based on a literary structure of the daily reports.[16] Each day's report for days 2–6 is framed by "And God said, 'Let there be….'" (וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי) and "And there was evening and there was morning, the *n*th day" (וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד). This structure appears in the work report for the first day as well, thus providing potential literary markers for the temporal frame of that day.

John Hartley employs this frame of reference extensively in his analysis of the first creation account. Based on this frame, he notes, "The consistent pattern used for each day of creation tells us that vv.1–2 are not an integral part of the first day of creation (vv.3–5). That is, these first two verses stand apart from the report of what God did on the first day of creation."[17]

Gordon Wenham exegetes this frame in more depth. He identifies seven recurrent formulae that appear consistently throughout the first creation account and notes the significance of these standard formulae with respect to the work report for the first day: "It is the only occasion where all seven elements are present in simple sequence."[18] Wenham sees this as reason to hold that the first day began in v.3.

Collins strengthens this conclusion with his linguistic analysis of the verb forms in Gen 1:1–5. He first observes that it is not clear whether vv.1–2 are part of the first day or stand outside of all of the creation workdays, and then

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[15] Sarfati, 103.

[16] Note that many of the scholars referenced in the discussion below do not hold a young life creation position. However, a significant number of young life scholars refer to the conclusions of these other old earth creation scholars who defend a two-stage creation position.

[17] John Hartley, *Genesis,* NICOT (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000), 41.

[18] Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 1:6, 17. These seven recurrent formulae are: (1) announcement, (2) command, (3) fulfillment, (4) execution, (5) approval, (6) subsequent word, and (7) day number.

he identifies a transition to the *wayyiqtol* verb form in v.3. Collins notes all the other workdays begin with *wayyiqtol* verb forms.[19] Having demonstrated that the linguistic transition to *wayyiqtol* verb forms corresponds to the commencement of the main story line in a number of Hebrew narratives, Collins concludes, "It follows from this that we should expect that the first workday to begin with God's speech in Genesis 1:3, and this makes good sense in view of the clause types."[20]

Many commentators agree with Hartley, Wenham, and Collins that the first day commences with Gen 1:3.[21] There is also widespread agreement that the phrase "the heavens and the earth" (אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ) is a merism that refers to the entire created order. Exod 20:11 may *prima facie* appear to contain the first creation account within the six workday frame, but John Sailhamer considers that the Fourth Commandment "does not say that God *created* 'the heavens and the earth' in six days; it says God *made* three things in six days—the sky, the land and the seas—and then filled them during that period."[22] Sailhamer concludes, "Exodus 20:11 is thus not speaking of Genesis 1:1, where God 'created' the universe, but Genesis 1:2–2:4, where God 'made' the sky, land, and the seas, and then filled them."[23]

Summarizing the observations of these commentators, Richard Davidson provides ten lines of evidence to support a two-stage creation position:[24]

1. The consistent pattern which Genesis uses, beginning each day with the phrase "And God said," and ending with the formula "And there was evening and morning, day [x]," suggests the first day commences in v.3.
2. *Wayyiqtol* verbs first appear in v.3, and continue for each creation day, providing linguistic confirmation that the first day begins in v.3.
3. The phrase "the heavens and the earth" is a merism referring to the entire galactic universe, which means verse 1 refers to a prior creation event, if the entire galactic universe was not created in the creation week.

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[19] These *wayyiqtol* verb forms occur at the points in the text when God says, "Let there be…." (vv. 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24). Collins suggests that the workdays commence at these points in the text (Collins, *Genesis 1–4*, 42).

[20] Ibid., 42.

[21] For example, Walter Brueggemann (*Genesis* [Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1982], 30); Hamilton (*Genesis 1–17*, 119); Derek Kidner (*Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967], 50); Mathews (*Genesis 1–11:26*), 144–146; and Nahum Sarna (*Genesis* [Jerusalem: JPS, 1989], 7).

[22] Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound*, 106, emphasis in original.

[23] Ibid., 107.

[24] Davidson, "The Genesis Account of Origins," 93–99.

4. The dyad "the heavens and earth" in Gen 1:1 should be distinguished from the triad "heaven, earth and sea" in Exod 20:11, suggesting a two-stage creation.
5. The creation of the dyad "heavens and earth" is concluded in Gen 2:4a and not 2:1, suggesting that the first creation account has a broader focus than only what was created during the six days of the creation week.
6. As Sailhamer points out, the Hebrew word "beginning" (בְּרֵאשִׁית) refers to a period of time and not a point in time, suggesting Gen 1:1 extends back further than the creation week.
7. Genesis emphasizes God differentiating or separating previously created material, suggesting that the material earth was already in existence at the commencement of the creation week.
8. A two-stage creation is supported by the second creation account of the creation of man.
9. The intertextual parallels that exist between Gen 1–2 and the construction of both the wilderness tabernacle and the Solomonic temple, which occurred in two stages.
10. God's creative activity often involves a two-stage process, such as the creation of Israel or of a new heart. As Davidson notes, Israel already existed as a people before God created the nation of Israel and a new heart is not created ex nihilo, but rather renewed from what was present before.[25]

Davidson has accumulated weighty and persuasive evidence, but this does not preclude careful reassessment of each line of evidence.[26]

Two-Stage (Young Human Cosmos) Creation Position

Another reading of Genesis 1:1–2:3 sees the text as a description of the creation of the human universe—namely, that the entire first creation account involves the creation of our human world in six divine workdays, followed by the seventh day of rest. This position is held by some Seventh-day Adventist scholars.[27]

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[25] Davidson, 98n111,112.

[26] Using a textlinguistic approach, Daniel Bediako has arrived at similar conclusions (*Genesis 1:1–2:3 in the Light of Textlinguistics and Text-Oriented Literary Studies* [PhD diss., Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, 2009]; "Genesis 1:1–2:3 as a Historical Narrative Text Type," *Valley View University Journal of Theology* 1 [2011]: 18–35).

[27] Such Seventh-day Adventist scholars include Niels-Erik Andreasen ("The Word 'Earth' in Genesis 1:1," *Origins* 8.1 [1981]: 13–19); Ferdinand O. Regalado ("The Creation Account in Genesis 1: Our World Only or the Universe?" *JATS* 13.2 [Autumn 2002]: 108–120); Doukhan ("The Genesis Creation Story," 12–33); and William Shea, "Creation," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD; Review & Herald, 2000), 419–420.

Niels-Erik Andreasen studied the semantic scope of the Hebrew word "earth" (הָאָרֶץ) and concluded, "The best we can say about the creation of the earth in Genesis 1:1 is that it concerns this world, our earth, and that it involves the ecological system within which we live." He added that his word study

> does not allow us to conclude that Genesis portrays a second stage of a two-stage creation, first the matter of the planet, then the earth, with a temporal interval in between. It does allow a distinction of perspective between our world system, heaven and earth, and the earth as dry land with its life and territories, but any temporal distinction between them we will have to introduce on our own initiative, without the help of the Bible.[28]

Ferdinand Regalado endorses Andreasen's position, pointing out that the Hebraic mind perceived the world as a concrete unity and was not much concerned about other worlds. Also, ancient Jews did not perceive this world as being preexistent.[29] Thus, he concludes, "The creation narrative is talking only about our world and is silent about the creation of the entire universe, as we understand the universe today."[30]

Doukhan has identified several lines of evidence within the syntax and literary structure of the first creation account that describe the creation of the human cosmos. He points out the *inclusio* formed by Gen 1:1 and 2:4a, which leads him to hold "that the introduction refers also to the same work of creation and not to another probable pre-creation."[31] He finds that the parallelism between the structures of the first and second creation accounts "suggests that just as the second creation story reads in one breath with no gap inside, the first creation story should imply the same one-breath reading."[32] Finally, Doukhan notes that in Exod 20:11, the "commandment does not suggest either that the biblical creation story was also concerned with some kind of pre-creation."[33] He concludes, "It is clear to me then that the biblical text does not imply any kind of gap theory…. For the intent of the text is clear: God created all the human cosmos (heaven and earth) during this first week. The text means to tell us that everything, 'all' (emphasis on the seventh day), has been created during the first week and says nothing about a pre-creation."[34]

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[28] Andreasen, "The Word 'Earth,'" 17–18.

[29] Regalado, "The Creation Account in Genesis 1," 116–120.

[30] Ibid., 120.

[31] Doukhan, "The Genesis Creation Story," 29.

[32] Ibid., 30.

[33] Ibid., 31.

[34] Ibid., 31. It could be suggested that Doukhan's position is motivated by a commonly held prejudice towards the gap theory. However, it would be a genetic fallacy to impugn his conclusion by surmising about his motivation. Also, Doukhan has confirmed in a personal communication that he still does not support the gap theory (email message to author, May 12, 2021).

A Close Reexamination of the Text

After this survey of the main positions regarding where the first day commences in the first creation account, we can reexamine the exegetical data. The key issues are (1) the merism "the heavens and the earth" (אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ) and the literary termini associated with it, and (2) the frame for each of the workdays 2–6: "And God said, 'Let there be….'" (וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי) and "And there was evening and there was morning, the *n*th day" (וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד). We'll examine these in reverse order.

Workday Frame

A number of commentators have noted that there are actually eight divine commands issued during the first creation account that are distributed across six divine creation workdays.[35] The distribution of the divine commands is shown in table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of divine commands across the creation workdays

Day Number	Divine Command Frequency	Day Number	Divine Command Frequency
Day 1	One (1): v.3	**Day 4**	One (1): v.14
Day 2	One (1): v.6	**Day 5**	One (1): v.20
Day 3	Two (2): vv.9, 11	**Day 6**	Two (2): vv.24, 26
Day 7	None (0)		

Prima facie, there seems to be a conspicuous correspondence between this distribution and the frequently identified "formed/filled" parallelism between days 1–3 and days 4–6. This parallelism is based on linguistic and thematic correspondences existing between the respective days and can be set out diagrammatically thus (see table 2):

[35] Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 55; Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 115; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 6; and Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1984), 88.

Table 2. Parallelism between Days 1–3 and Days 4–6[36]

Day Number	Forming the Environment	Day Number	Filling the Environment
Day 1	Light	**Day 4**	Luminaries
Day 2	Expanse or Sky	**Day 5**	Birds and Fish
Day 3	Land and Seas	**Day 6**	Animals and Humans
	(Plants)		(Plants for food)
Day 7	Divine Rest		

To conclude that the distribution of the divine commands in table 1 provides structural support for the position that the only creative work accomplished on the first day was the creation of light is tempting, yet premature. Lawrence Turner notes there are disturbances to exact symmetry in this parallelism:

> The balance between the first and second triad is *almost* exact. The lower waters separated on the second day are not gathered together or named "seas" until the third day. Thus there is some ambiguity as to whether their creation belongs to the second or third day (and "waters" of course were present before God's first creative command, 1.2). The symmetry elsewhere in the account tempts one to favour day 2, thus balancing the creation of aquatic creatures on day 5, but a case could be made for opting for day 3, thus producing an "asymmetrical" reading. Similarly, the repetition of common elements on each day is *almost* precise. The fourth element, that of evaluation, is missing from the second day (producing *seven* evaluations in the whole week). And the non-conformity of the seventh day is absolute. Such disturbances to exact symmetry in the creation account give advance notice of a tendency to be found throughout Genesis. The book confounds the reader's expectations. Chapter 1 reveals at the outset that not everything can be predicted, and that the narrative will contain surprise, complication and interest.[37]

Wayne Grudem highlights more disturbances:

> The proposed correspondence between the days of creation is not nearly as exact as its advocates have supposed. The sun, moon, and stars created on the fourth day "as lights in the firmament of the heavens" (Gen. 1:14) are placed not in any space created on Day 1 but in the "firmament" (Heb. *raqia*') that was created on the second day. In fact, the correspondence is quite explicit: this "firmament" is not mentioned at all on Day 1 but five times on Day 2 (Gen. 1:6–8) and three times on Day 4 (Gen. 1:14–19).

[36] See Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part I* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961), 16; Lawrence Turner, *Genesis* (London: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 19; and Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 7.

[37] Turner, *Genesis*, 20–21.

> Of course Day 4 also has correspondences with Day 1 (in terms of day and night, light and darkness), but if we say that the second three days show the creation of things to fill the forms or spaces created on the first three days, then Day 4 overlaps at least as much with Day 2 as it does with Day 1.[38]

Thus, although the symmetry identified in table 2 was developed on the linguistic and thematic correspondence with the proposed parallel days, there are linguistic and thematic correspondence with other days. The proposed parallelism between days 1–3 and days 4–6 therefore appears forced in a number of places. William Lane Craig has expressed his skepticism about the proposed parallelism, concluding with the statement, "It seems to me that this parallelism that has been constructed is not something that's really there in the text but rather it's imposed on the text by the mind of the interpreter."[39] This raises the question whether the symmetry in table 2 actually forces our reading of the text into a structural straitjacket, obscuring interpretations that extend beyond the parallelism. This includes the possibility that day 1 commences prior to God saying, "Let there be light!"

What becomes apparent from the distribution of the divine commands is that the text does not consistently allocate a unique divine command to each day. There are two divine creative commands issued during the third and sixth days, and there is no divine creative command recorded for the seventh day.

The difficulty resulting from distributing eight commands over six days has not eluded commentators. Wenham describes the arrangement as "highly problematic."[40] Claus Westermann is even more pessimistic, advising, "All attempts to bring the works of creation into a systematic order must be given up."[41] However, using a work correspondence can resolve this issue. Each of these divine creative commands indicates a new phase of divine creative work that commences *during* a creation workday. This would mean they are not being used as literary markers for the commencement of the day *itself*,

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[38] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 302.

[39] William Lane Craig, "Excursus on Creation of Life and Biological Diversity (Part 7): The Literary Framework and the Functional Creation Interpretations," Reasonable Faith, 6 March 2019, https://www.reasonablefaith.org/podcasts/defenders-podcast-series-3/excursus-on-creation-of-life-and-biological-diversity/excursus-on-creation-of-life-and-biological-diversity-part-7.

[40] "The arrangement of 1:1–2:3 is itself highly problematic. Briefly, the eight works of creation are prompted by ten divine commands and executed on six different days. Many attempts have been made to discover a simpler, more symmetrical arrangement underlying the present scheme. None of these suggestions has proved persuasive" (Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 6).

[41] Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 89.

allowing substantial progress in explaining why there can be two divine creative commands on the third and the sixth day—there were two phases of divine creative work during those days. It also reinforces why there are no divine creative commands on the seventh day. The text states God rested on the seventh day, logically indicating no divine creative commands were issued that day. This conclusion using a work correspondence can be stated clearly and unequivocally—it is not necessary that *any* particular creative command of the Creator be temporally aligned with the commencement of the actual creation day within which he issues it. They simply record the Creator's announcement and simultaneous commencement of a new divine work project during their respective creation days, the exact timing of which could occur at any time during those days, dependent on the sovereign will of the Creator.

The structure of Gen 1:2–5 suggests a different temporal alignment for verse 3. Based on the Hebrew words for "darkness" (חֹשֶׁךְ) and "light" (אוֹר), the following double-inverted chiastic structure can be identified:

Table 3. The tight double-inverted chiastic structure of Gen 1:2–5 ESV[42]

Section	"darkness" (חֹשֶׁךְ)	"light" (אוֹר)
A	The earth was without form and void, and darkness [וְחֹשֶׁךְ] was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.	
B		And God said, "Let there be light [אוֹר]," and there was light [אוֹר]. And God saw that the light [אוֹר] was good.
B'		And God separated the light [הָאוֹר]
A'	from the darkness [הַחֹשֶׁךְ].	
B"		God called the light [לָאוֹר] Day,
A"	and the darkness [וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ] he called Night.	
A"'	And there was evening	
B"'		and there was morning
Summary	the first day.	

[42] Note the separation of light from darkness in v.4 presupposes the preexistence of the darkness.

This tightly coupled double-inverted chiastic structure of Gen 1:2–5 signifies that the divine creative command "Let there be light!" heralded a number of coterminous primordial events. As the text explicitly indicates, the command heralded the creation of light and second, the commencement of the divine process of reshaping a formless and void earth into a beautiful, inhabitable world for humanity. Significantly for this apologia, the tightly coupled structure indicates that the divine command also heralded the morning period of the first day, as opposed to the commencement of the entire day itself.[43]

An objection can be raised at this point, which is that the familiar symmetric structure of table 2 has been downplayed in favor of an obscure and infrequently, or possibly never previously highlighted, double-inverted chiasm in Gen 1:2–5. It may even appear that this chiasm has been artificially constructed to bolster the conclusion that the divine command in verse 3 heralds the morning of the first day. In response to this objection, it should be noted that the structure of Gen 1:2–5 identified here needs to be evaluated on its own exegetical merits. Otherwise, the objector risks committing a genetic fallacy. Second, it is important to refer to the theological framework of the tension between divine order and unboundedness. As indicated in table 2, the luminaries are paired with light, so it could be insisted, from a spatial perspective, that the luminaries could not be located in "the expanse of the heavens" (בִּרְקִיעַ הַשָּׁמָיִם) because this space was created on day 2. Thus, a rigid adherence to the structure is clearly restricted and inflexible because verse 15 explicitly states that the luminaries were placed in "the expanse of the heavens" (בִּרְקִיעַ הַשָּׁמָיִם). Similarly, from a temporal perspective, caution is needed before applying rigid adherence to the table 2 structure and saying that day 1 could not include verses 1–2 because the structure implies only verses 3–5 should be included in day 1. God's creative schedule is not bound to the literary structures that we derive from the text.

[43] The double-inverted chiastic structure provides structural support for the evening theory for the definition of the biblical day, identified by Amanda McGuire ("Evening or Morning: When Does the Biblical Day Begin?" *AUSS* 46. 2 [2008]: 201–214). With McGuire, Andrew Steinman ("Night and Day, Evening and Morning," *BT* 62. 3 [2011]: 145–150); and H. R. Stroes ("Does the Day Begin in the Evening or Morning? Some Biblical Observations," *VT* 16.4 [1996]: 460–475), I concur that Gen 1:2–5 supports the evening theory, contra Cassuto (*A Commentary on Genesis*, 28–29), Collins ("The Refrain of Genesis 1: A Critical Review of Its Rendering in the English Bible," *BT* 60.3 [2009]: 121-131), and Sarna (*Genesis*, 8). Davidson's attempt to accommodate the position (that the first day commences in v.3) with the evening theory, by saying v.3 describes the sunset on the first day, is intriguing. However, his efforts to divide asunder the appearance of light during the first day results in an unnecessarily complicated disarrangement of the temporal framework for the first day ("The Genesis Account of Origins," 96, 97n109).

Using a work correspondence to align the first creative command with the commencement of the morning period offers an interesting insight. Several commentators suggest the first creation account provides the divine model for the human experience of work, not only the weekly cycle of six workdays and a seventh day of rest but also the daily cycle of rest during darkness and work during daylight hours. Collins writes,

> We have also discussed the refrain: its effect is to present God as a workman going through his work week, taking his daily rest (the night between the evening and the morning) and enjoying his Sabbath "rest." To speak this way is to speak analogically about God's activity; that is, we understand what he did by analogy with what we do; and in turn, that analogy provides guidance for man in the proper way to carry out his own work and rest.[44]

The human correspondence to the divine model is portrayed in the Hebrew creation hymn: "You make darkness, and it is night…. When the sun rises … Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening."[45] Turner notes the parallel between divine rest at the beginning and end of the first creation account: "What is not noted so often, however, is that the introductory and concluding statements of 'chaos' and 'rest' form a complementary pair."[46] Using a work correspondence, this suggests that divine rest at both literary termini are contained within a creation day; otherwise, the significance of the correspondence of the divine rest at the beginning of the unit for the human workweek is lost. The significance, though, of using divine accommodation with respect to daily divine rest should remain an inference only and should not overshadow the explicit divine rest recorded on the seventh day. Nor should this inference of daily divine rest be pressed too hard. For example, it is logically possible that God performed some creative work during the night, as in Genesis 1:1, and it is clear that the Spirit performed a divine work of conservation and supervision during the primordial nocturnal period, as Gen 1:2 indicates.[47] The critical argument

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[44] Collins, *Genesis 1–4*, 125. This aligns with Calvin's principle of divine accommodation. For other commentators proposing this divine model for each working day, see Hamilton (*Genesis 1–17*, 119, 121); Lennox (*Seven Days*, 49); Morris (*The Genesis Record*, 55). Gerhard von Rad also identifies the daily cycle with our human experience (*Genesis: A Commentary* [London: SCM, 1972], 54–53).

[45] Ps 104:20, 22–23 (ESV). However, it is important to note that the divine model of resting during the night period is not explicitly identified in this hymn.

[46] Turner, *Genesis*, 19.

[47] The present middle indicative verb ἐργάζεται in John 5:17 reveals the Father's and the Son's continuous work of conservation and particularly salvation, even on Sabbath. However, this should not be pressed to mean that humans are now free to work continuously and that there is no longer a divine requirement to rest on the seventh day. Note that Doukhan maintains that "I do not think either that the text allows for the idea of the creation of matter in vv.1–2 during the first night as a part

in this section is that Gen 1:3 should best be aligned with the commencement of the first morning.

Another corollary of the structural analysis of Gen 1:2–5 identified in table 3 suggests that Gen 1:2 is describing the state of the earth during the night period of the first day. To me, this suggests another unique aspect of the first day—it includes the only literary description in the first creation account of the state of God's creation and his divine protection of that creation during the night period, even while his work remains teleologically unfinished.

Literary Terminus for the Commencement of Day 1

Returning to the issue of the commencement of the first day, the structural study of Gen 1:2–5 using a work correspondence shows that there are reasons why v.2 should be included. Does this day commence with v.2, such that v.1 is outside this report, or should verse 1 be included as well? Whether verse 1 is an independent or dependent clause is a fascinating topic but beyond the scope of this paper. For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that Genesis 1:1 is an independent clause.[48]

A number of scholars have noted that the conjunction "and" (וְ) connects verse 1 with the rest of the first creation account. Copan and Craig have commented that "the function of the *wāw* (and) in 1:2 is to connect the various *subsequent* acts of creation with 1:1, as 'the *primary* foundation on which they rest.'"[49] Sailhamer notes, "Though it might seem like a minor point, Hebrew grammar uses this conjunction carefully," adding in a footnote, "The conjunction 'and' (Hebrew: *waw*) at the beginning of 1:2 shows that 1:2–2:4 is coordinated with 1:1, rather than appositional."[50] This provides linguistic evidence that the author intended verse 1 to be connected with verses 2–5.

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of the creation on the first day, that is, before the creation of light in v.3." Doukhan, "The Genesis Creation Story," 31. However, he does not provide any exegetical or theological justification for this perspective, so it appears to be merely an assertion on his part.

[48] Acknowledging that scholars have provided arguments for the clause to be dependent, there are significant reasons to maintain the traditional view that it is independent. See Gerhard Hasel, "Recent Translations of Genesis 1:1: A Critical Look," *BT* 22.4 (1974): 154–167; Jiří Moskala, "Interpretation of *berešît* in the Context of Genesis 1:1–3," *AUSS* 49.1 (2011): 33–44; Davidson, "The Genesis Account of Origins," 61–69; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 11–13; Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 136–139; Paul Copan and William Lane Craig, *Creation Out of Nothing* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 36–41.

[49] Copan and Craig, *Creation Out of Nothing*, 42, emphasis in original.

[50] Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound*, 103, 253n9:2.

For further evidence, we need to identify which closing literary terminus corresponds with verse 1. Based on the phrase "the heavens and the earth," there are two candidates:

> 2:1: "Thus the heavens and the earth [הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ] were finished, and all the host of them" (ESV)

> 2:4a: "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth [הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ] when they were created" (ESV)

A case has been made for each one of these to be the closing literary terminus for the first creation account. The first argument in favor of 2:4a being the closing terminus is that it includes "the heavens," "the earth," and "created" in the order that they appear in Gen 1:1. Also, the verb "created" (בָּרָא), which is used in 2:4a, is only used in the first creation account and never in the second.[51]

However, Cassuto, Copan, Craig, Hamilton, Mathews, and Wenham have provided substantive arguments that 2:1 is the summary statement for the first creation account.[52] The lines of evidence they highlight include: "Generations" (תּוֹלְדוֹת) is a standard structural marker within Genesis that is used to *precede* a historical account, not conclude it (Gen 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2). In 2:4, it is used in the sense of creation. There is a chiastic structure to Gen 2:4:

A: These are the generations of the heavens

B: and the earth

C: when they were created

C': in the day that the Lord God made

B': the earth

A': and the heavens.

As Wenham has observed, this "tight chiastic structure…makes it unlikely that the sources split in the middle of the verse."[53]

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[51] Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 35; Davidson, "The Genesis Account of Origins," 95; Jacques Doukhan, ed., *Genesis*, Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2016), 29–30, 71–72; Hartley, *Genesis*, 55; and Turner, *Genesis*, 55–56.

[52] Cassuto, *A Commentary on Genesis: Part I*, 98; Copan and Craig, *Creation Out of Nothing*, 41–42; Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 4–5; Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 114–115; and Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 49. See also Kidner, *Genesis*, 64; and Sarna, *Genesis*, 16–17.

[53] Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 55, a view supported by Mathews, *Genesis 1:11–26*, 114.

Genesis 2:1 already provides a fitting summary statement for the first creation account. A second summary statement for the first creation account in 2:4a could have been added to make the conclusion more emphatic, but this does not diminish or negate the summarizing role of Gen 2.1.

In the Hebrew text, Gen 2:1–3 already provides a chiastic conclusion to Gen 1:1, so the argument that Gen 2:4a enjoys a greater linguistic connection to 1:1 than 2:1 is significantly weakened when considering the entire seven day unit:

A: "created" (1:1) (בָּרָא)

B: "God" (1:1) (אֱלֹהִים)

C: "the heavens and the earth" (1:1) (אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ)

C': "the heavens and the earth" (2:1) (הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ)

B': "God" (2:2a,3a,3b) (אֱלֹהִים)

A': "created" (2:3b) (בָּרָא)

Confirmation that Gen 2:1 is the concluding statement for the first creation account in the divine testimony is provided in the Decalogue (see table 4):

Table 4. Identifying the literary correspondence between Genesis 1:1–2:3, Exodus 20:11, and Exodus 31:17b through the phrase "the heavens and the earth" (אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ)

Time Period	Creation Account Genesis 1:1–2:3 (ESV)	Decalogue Summary Exodus 20:11 (NASB)	Reiteration of Sabbath Covenant Exodus 31:17b (NET)
	In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth [אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ].	For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth [אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ],	for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth [אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ],
Six Days	The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.	the sea,	
	Detailed account of the creation of the contents of the heavens, the earth, and the sea.	and everything that is in them,	
	Thus the heavens and the earth [הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ] were finished, and all the host of them.		
Seventh Day	And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.	and He rested on the seventh day; for that reason the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.	and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.

Note: Different English translations of each passage have been employed in this table to clarify that the merism at the commencement of all three passages is identical.

Against this, Sailhamer argues that the space referred to in Exod 20:11 as "the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them" is different from the space referred to in Gen 1:1. First, Exod 20:11 testifies that God "made" (עָשָׂה) the space rather than "created" (בָּרָא) it, which he maintains refers to

God forming the promised land for his chosen people rather than creating the universe. Second, he defines the space in Exod 20:11 as the triad (1) "the heavens," (2) "the earth," and (3) "the sea" and its contents, rather than the dyad (1) "the heavens" and (2) "the earth" referred to in Genesis 1:1.[54]

However, Sailhamer's conclusions can be challenged. As Mathews points out, the first creation account uses the verbs "create" (בָּרָא) and "made" (עָשָׂה) interchangeably, suggesting that a substantive distinction between the divine creative processes implied by both verbs should not be inferred.[55] Additionally, Exod 20:11 and 31:17 quote the phrase "the heavens and the earth" (אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ) verbatim from Gen 1:1, as table 4 highlights. This strengthens the connection between Exod 20:11, Exod 31:17, and Gen 1:1. If this linguistic connection is severed, it leaves the commencement of the six days in Exod 20:11 and Exod 31:17 linguistically floating because neither of these make any explicit or implicit linguistic reference to anything in Gen 1:3–5. It appears that both Gen 2:1 and Exod 20:11 refer to the contents of the space as well as the merism, highlighting the fact that, rather than referring to the localized triad "sky," "land," and "sea," the author intended these summary statements to comprehensively refer to the entire first creation account of Gen 1:1–2:1, rather than just the opening statement of Gen 1:1. The Exodus references to the sea and what is in them further strengthens the connection with the content of Gen 1, which also refers to the creation of things in the seas.

It is possible that the phrase "the heavens and the earth were finished" refers back to the unordered state of the earth in Gen 1:2 instead of the creation of the heavens and the earth in verse 1, with tohu wabohu (תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ) meaning "unfinished," therefore forming the inclusio with 2:1. However, there are a number of weaknesses in this proposition. First, the meaning of tohu wabohu (תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ) describes the earth being waste, void, empty, and disordered, with the primary focus being that the earth was uninhabited, uninhabitable, and inhospitable[56] rather than "unfinished." Second, from a textlinguistic perspective, the statement seems to be a stative-descriptive clause rather than a teleological clause.[57] A much stronger candidate for a teleological clause is "in the beginning" (בְּרֵאשִׁית). As Mathews points out, this beginning "anticipates the 'end' of the universe," and "creation's 'beginnings' were initiated with a future goal intended, an eschatological purpose."[58]

[54] Sailhammer contends that Gen 1:1 is separated from 1:2–2:4a (*Genesis Unbound*, 29).

[55] Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 128, 130.

[56] See Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 131; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 1:6, 15–17; Doukhan, *Genesis*, 51–52.

[57] Bediako, *Genesis 1:1–2:3*, 105.

[58] Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 126–127.

This indicates that the teleological "beginning" (בְּרֵאשִׁית) forms an inclusio with "finished"(וַיְכֻלּוּ) rather than with the stative-descriptive clause "without form and void" (תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ).

Confirming or Denying a Two-Stage Creation?

Recognizing that the widely accepted literary structure of Genesis 1 may not be as clear as presented, the various positions can be reevaluated. Copan and Craig consider that a two-stage creation is in view in Gen 1:1–3.[59] Collins's identification of the transition to *wayyiqtol* verb forms in verse 3 also appears to provide substantive evidence in support of the two-stage creation. Collins's discourse analysis of *wayyiqtol* verb forms in other narrative sections in the Hebrew Scriptures shows that this transition indicates when the main story line begins,[60] but he acknowledges in a footnote that "since this verb form can be used for embedded storylines, we cannot mechanically identify the occurrence of the verb form with this function."[61]

Thus Collins's study does not demonstrate that the story line in the foreground of every narrative is fully aligned with the temporal markers that are associated with the narrative. He simply asserts that the first day commences with the transition in verbal forms. Certainly, where narrative settings are presented, a movement from *qatal* or descriptive clauses to *wayyiqtol* forms indicates movement from background to foreground material. When this transition occurs at the beginning of narratives, what precedes is often antecedent information. Gen 1:1–2 certainly fits here. However, the question is what Gen 1:1–2 is antecedent to in the narrative. Textually, it is certainly antecedent to the creation of light in verse 3 and the organization of an inhabitable world in verses 3–31. However, it is not necessarily antecedent to the commencement of the first day, as commonly assumed. It is this assumption that is questioned in this paper.

The parallel creation account in Gen 2:4–25 highlights this fact. Here the transition to *wayyiqtol* verb forms commences at Gen 2:7: "Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground" (ESV). Here, the foreground story line in Gen 2 focuses on the creation of the man and his wife and their Edenic home.[62] However, aligning the transition to *wayyiqtol* verb forms in Gen 2:7 with any of the identifiable temporal markers or dimensions in Gen 1:1–2:3 or Exod 20:11, is not justified. Therefore, it is not temporally justifiable to align the transition in Gen 1:3 to the commencement of the first

[59] Copan and Craig, *Creation Out of Nothing*, 60–64.

[60] Collins, *Genesis 1–4*, 42–43.

[61] Ibid., 21n33.

[62] Collins, "The *Wayyiqtol* as 'Pluperfect': When and Why," *TynBul* 46. 1 (1995): 136. Refer also to Alexander Adrason, "Biblical Hebrew *Wayyiqtol*: A Dynamic Definition," *JHebS* 11 (2011): 24.

day itself either. Collins is justified only in aligning the verbal transition in the text to the commencement of the story line of that account, and possibly to the commencement of the morning period of the first day. It is overreaching linguistically to conclude that "we should expect the first workday to begin with God's speech in Genesis 1:3"[63]—the first day itself may have commenced earlier in the text, as the structural analysis presented shows.

Collins may respond by saying there are no explicit temporal markers in the second creation account, which is why it is unjustifiable to align the transition in verbal forms in Gen 2:7 to any particular temporal marker. However, the parallelism between the two creation accounts is confirmed both by the hinge verse Gen 2:4 and the structural correspondence that Doukhan has identified between them.[64] Based on this parallelism, we should attempt to identify Gen 2:7 either as commencing the first day or possibly the sixth day of the creation week, both of which are unjustified in the text. This demonstrates the temporal confusion resulting from mechanically aligning the transition to *wayyiqtol* verb forms in the creation accounts to temporal markers associated with those accounts.

Davidson and Lennox have built on Collins's linguistic study to defend a two-stage creation process.[65] However, if the first day of the creation week is not aligned with the transition to the *wayyiqtol* verb forms in verse 3 but rather should be aligned with verse 1, as argued in this paper, the first stage of the creation event should not be separated from the creation week. A two-stage creation could have easily been accomplished within the first day, just as occurred on the third and sixth days, with the period between the first and second stages simply being the night period of the first day.

Davidson presents ten lines of evidence (see above) in support of a two-stage creation that separates Gen 1:1–2 from the creation week. This paper has addressed four of Davidson's lines of evidence and will focus on another in the next section.[66] For his sixth evidence, Davidson refers to Sailhamer's observation that the Hebrew word for beginning (בְּרֵאשִׁית) "does not refer to a point in time but to a period or duration of time which falls before a series of events."[67] Even if Sailhamer's observation is correct, it is

[63] Collins, *Genesis 1–4*, 42.

[64] Doukhan, "The Genesis Creation Story," 16.

[65] Davidson, "The Genesis Account of Origins," 52–53; Lennox, *Seven Days*, 52.

[66] The lines of evidence addressed are: (1) that the first day is framed by the formula "And God said" and "And there was evening and there was morning, the *n*th day"; (2) Collins's linguistic analysis of the transition to *wayyiqtol* verb forms at v. 3; Collins *Genesis 1–4*, 42,43; (4) the distinction between the dyad "heavens and earth" and the triad "heaven, earth, and sea"; and (5) the literary terminus for the end of the six workdays. The third line of evidence will be addressed in the next section.

[67] Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound*, 38.

important to highlight his acknowledgement that the "length of that period of time is not specified."[68] Wenham notes that the period of time following "beginning" (בְּרֵאשִׁית) is unspecified.[69] If the series of events following the "beginning" is a series of work projects that commences with the work project of creating light, and this first project commenced at the dawn of the first day, then this "beginning" period could be contained within the preceding night period of the first day.

For his seventh evidence, Davidson notes the emphasis on God separating previously created materials. However, this ignores de novo creation projects that occurred during creation week, such as the creation of the marine animals, which were not separated from anything. God could have commenced the creation week with a de novo creation event, even if most of the other creation events involved a process of separation.

Davidson's eighth evidence refers to the two-stage creation account of man in Gen 2. Genesis 1 explicitly states, however, that this two-stage creation was completely contained within a single day, "the sixth day" (יוֹם הַשִּׁשִּׁי). Hence, this evidence actually provides strong support for the position argued in this paper—namely, that the two-stage creation event in view in Gen 1:1–5 could be contained in the first day.

For his ninth evidence, Davidson draws upon the intertextual parallels between the Genesis creation accounts and the two-stage building processes of the wilderness tabernacle and Solomon's temple. However, the problem with this line of evidence is that it does not establish that God always uses a two-stage building process for sanctuary-like entities, nor does it establish that a two-stage sanctuary building process cannot occur within a single day.

Finally, Davidson's tenth evidence that "God's creative activity throughout the rest of the Bible often involves a two-stage process, presupposing a previous creation,"[70] does not establish that divine creative activity always involves two-stage processes. Logically, the regress of the complete series of divine creation and conservation events must terminate in a creation ex nihilo event, thus showing it is not logically possible to hold that all creation events must be two-stage processes. Therefore, some creation events can be ex nihilo or de novo creation events. Furthermore, Davidson has not established that two-stage divine creative processes must involve a temporal interval greater

[68] Sailhamer, 105.

[69] Wenham observes the period of time following בְּרֵאשִׁית is "left unspecified" Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 14. While he says that the context suggests that בְּרֵאשִׁית "refers to the beginning of time itself, not to a particular period within eternity," the question remains whether this is the leading temporal boundary of the human cosmos, the galactic universe, or the entire created order. This, unfortunately, cannot be resolved from the Hebrew term בְּרֵאשִׁית itself.

[70] Davidson, "The Genesis Account of Origins," 98.

than a day. In summary, none of the biblical evidence that Davidson amasses for a two-stage creation demands or requires that a two-stage process be used in every divine creation event, or, if God does employ a two-stage creation process, that the temporal separation between the two stages need extend beyond a single day.[71]

Literally Everything or a Subspace Thereof?

The physical referent for the phrase "the heavens and the earth" (אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ) will now be examined. I concur with the appreciable scholarly opinion that this is a merism referring to two extremities of an entity to denote its entirety.[72] However, a merism in and of itself does not necessarily refer to literally everything—simply to the entirety under discussion. The spatio-temporal extent of a merism is determined by its context and cannot be merely presupposed.[73]

For example, note another merism employed in the first creation account, the phrase "and there was evening and there was morning" (וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר). The author of Genesis uses this merism to refer to one complete day.[74] However,

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[71] This conclusion also applies to Davidson's perspective that Ps 104:5–9 seem to "lend support to a two-stage creation for the raw materials of this earth" ("The Creation Theme in Psalm 104," in *The Genesis Creation Account and Its Reverberations in the Old Testament*, ed. Gerald Klingbeil [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2015], 182).

[72] A case can be made that in Gen 1:1, "the heavens and the earth" does not constitute a merism because these items are immediately individuated from v.2 with "the earth." The elements of a merism are often not individuated. The author appreciates an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out. However, it does not follow that, because elements of a merism are often not individuated, it is necessarily true that they are never individuated. For example, a person could report that they "searched their home from top to bottom looking for their lost keys," and then state that they started at the top in the attic and finished with searching the basement. Genesis 1:1–2 could constitute another exception, where a merism can be individuated immediately after its first introduction because "earth" can be fairly easily individuated within this merism, due to its well-definable spatial distinction from the "heavens."

[73] Neither should one presuppose linguistically that the merism "the heavens and the earth" (אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ) refers to everything created up until that point in time. This merism does not include an explicit temporal dimension to warrant such a presupposition.

[74] "The use of the words 'evening' and 'morning' is a merism" that points to the extremities of the day to denote its totality" (Doukhan, *Genesis*, 54–55). There is scholarly discussion whether this is a merism that refers to the day in its totality or rather uses the two boundaries of the night—namely, sunset and sunrise. Note the discussion between C. John Collins and Andrew Steinman in *The Bible Translator* (Collins, "The Refrain of Genesis 1," 121-131; and Steinman, "Night and Day,"

the equivalent merism "night and day" (or its inversion "day and night") is used elsewhere in the Bible to refer to longer periods than a day.[75] Biblically, though, this merism is never used to refer to the entirety of time, from eternity past through to eternity future. Thus, a merism does not necessarily refer to literally everything. It simply indicates the entirety of the subspace being referred to.

Hence, the common assertion in scholarly literature that the merism "the heavens and the earth" (אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ) refers to the entire created order is not justified. It could simply be referring to a subspace of the created order. Indeed, Nahum Sarna points out that the definite article in Hebrew specifies the observable universe, which cosmologically is not identical to the entire universe, but is only a subspace thereof.[76] As Sarna and many commentators note, there is no single Hebrew word that could be used either to refer to the entire created order or to qualify the merism to show that it does, indeed, refer to the entire universe. Importantly, even if this merism were used elsewhere in the Hebrew Scriptures to refer to the entire created order, we should not assume that the merism is being used in the same way here.[77] Mathews's teleological exhortation is pertinent: "To insist on its meaning as a finished universe is to enslave the expression to its uses elsewhere and ignore the contextual requirements of Genesis 1."[78]

Support for this interpretation of the merism is found in the creation hymn Ps 104. Davidson observes, "With regard to the what of creation, Psalm 104 seems to limit its description to the earth and its surrounding heavenly spheres (the moon and sun) and does not discuss the creation of the universe as a whole."[79] He notes parenthetically that this is "in contrast to what may be implied by the merism 'the heavens and the earth' in Gen. 1:1." However, Ps 104 appears to be a meditation on the entire first creation account, indicated by references to setting "the earth on its foundations" (אֶרֶץ עַל־מְכוֹנֶיהָ) and covering it "with the deep" (תְּהוֹם) (Ps 104:5–6 ESV), which logically occurred prior to Gen 1:2 and ontologically extends

145,150). Steinman provides a cogent argument in favor of the traditional understanding of the "evening-morning" merism.

[75] The merism "night and day" (לַיְלָה וְיוֹמָם) is used in Deut 28:66, Isa 34:10, and Jer 14:17. The inverted merism "day and night" (יוֹמָם וָלַיְלָה) is used, for example, in Lev 8:35, Josh 1:8, and Ps 1:2.

[76] Sarna, *Genesis*, 5.

[77] Douglas Bozung only asserts that throughout the Old Testament, the merism אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ refers repeatedly to all there is, and even then he notes that Cassuto objects to the idea of a merism ("An Evaluation of the Biosphere Model of Genesis 1," *BSac* 162 [Oct–Dec 2005]: 410, 410n24, 411).

[78] Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 142.

[79] Davidson, "The Creation Theme," 187.

back into Gen 1:1. This adds weight to the conclusion, contra Davidson's parenthetical note, that the merism itself could also be limited to a cosmic subspace which may be referred to as the human cosmos.

To find exegetical support for the assertion that "the heavens and the earth" (אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ) refers to the entire created order, scholars may turn to New Testament authors who had access to the Greek conceptualizations of the universe.[80] The opening Johannine account appears relevant. John intentionally quotes Genesis 1:1 when he commences his Gospel with "In the beginning" (ἐν ἀρχῇ). In John 1:3, he also identifies that Christ is the creator of the entire created order. The parallel with the merism אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ seems clear.

However, John first specifically associates the phrase ἐν ἀρχῇ with Christ's primordial existence and his relationship with God. The phrase is not used in immediate association with the Johannine statement regarding the set of created things. Second, the Johannine observation is a metaphysical statement regarding Christ's relationship with the entire created order as its ontological uncaused cause, including everything that was created in Gen 1:1–2:3, as well as everything that has come into existence afterwards. John may, potentially, be referring to created things brought into existence before this creation event. The critical point being made here is that the "beginning" (ἀρχῇ) referred to by John may not be the identical time point or period to the "beginning" (בְּרֵאשִׁית) referred to in Genesis 1:1, though בְּרֵאשִׁית was with little doubt the springboard for John's christological meditation. Christ's preexistence to his creation and his existence through eternity past are in view in John 1:1. In brief, this Johannine statement is not simply a reference to the divine creation of this world, which is the literary intent of Gen 1:1.

Metaphysically, it is valuable to note that many Genesis scholars would hold to an A-theory of time with its notion of temporal becoming, as opposed to the B-theory of time. The A-theory affirms the ontology of our experience of the flow of time. According to this theory, the present exists, but the past no longer exists and the future only exists as potentiality. In contrast, the B-theory considers space-time to be a four-dimensional block and all entities distributed across the time dimension as equally real. Regardless of which theory of time is endorsed, even when these scholars assert that the merism "the heavens and the earth" (אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ) refers to the entire created order, they are still only referring to a subspace of the entire created order, specifically the time slice of four-dimensional

[80] For example, Davidson, "The Genesis Account of Origins," 112n142. As Doukhan observes, "Whether one refers to the creation that took place during the first week (1:1–2:4a) or to the creation(s) that took place before (1:1), nothing that was made was made apart from Him" (*Genesis*, 52).

space-time bounded by the Creation event. They are not referring to the much broader ontological perspective that John had in mind when he penned John 1:3, which is that Christ is the creator and sustainer of everything: past, present and future.[81]

The entire λόγος passage of John 1:1–14 involves some swift and significant temporal transitions, from "in the beginning" (ἐν ἀρχῇ) to the appearance of John the Baptist to the incarnation of the Word. Care needs to be taken when attempting to temporally locate statements such as John 1:3 since the λόγος passage does not constrain itself spatio-temporally to the event described in the first creation account in Genesis.

Further exegetical evidence in the Johannine corpus actually confirms that the merism "the heavens and the earth" is likely referring to a subspace and not the entire created order. Many scholars have pointed out the parallel between the opening chapters of Genesis and the closing chapters of Revelation.[82] The merism reappears in these closing chapters. John sees "a new heaven and a new earth" (οὐρανὸν καινὸν καὶ γῆν καινήν), which contrast with "the first heaven and the first earth" (ὁ ... πρῶτος οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ πρώτη γῆ), which will be no more (Rev 21:1).[83] However, it is biblically apparent that God does not intend to annihilate the *entire* created order and begin completely afresh—some entities from the first world, like God's throne, the righteous angels, saved human beings, and the New Jerusalem, will continue into the new heaven and earth. This provides evidence that the merism "the heavens and the earth" in Gen 1:1 does not necessarily refer to the entire created order.[84]

While the merism "the heavens and the earth" (אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ) should not be identified with the metaphysical view of the entire created order, as in John 1:3, elsewhere the New Testament does indicate a specific entity within the created order brought into existence at this time. Heb 1:10 quotes Ps 102, attributing the laying of "the foundation of the earth" (τὴν

[81] For an introduction to A-and B-theories of time, see William Lane Craig, *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 115–216.

[82] Davidson, "The Genesis Account of Origins," 69. Doukhan commences his paper noting this parallel between protology and eschatology ("The Genesis Creation Story," 13).

[83] In the LXX Gen 1:1, "heaven" is singular, unlike in the MT, so the Greek is parallel and relevant.

[84] Davidson notes that the new heaven and the new earth will not be created *ex nihilo* ("The Genesis Account of Origins," 98–99). However, he has not followed this evidence to its logical conclusion for the cosmic scope of the physical referent of the merism in Gen 1:1. While he uses this as evidence for a two-stage process using preexisting raw material, the first stage of the original creation event in Gen 1:1 could have been a creation ex nihilo or de novo event, as suggested by both the word "created" (בָּרָא) and the fact that no preexisting material is described in the Genesis text.

γῆν ἐθεμελίωσας) to the creative work of Christ but sharpens the temporal location of this event to "in the beginning" (κατ' ἀρχάς). The subsequent reference to "the heavens" (οἱ οὐρανοί) strengthens the linguistic connection to Gen 1:1. Here the temporal locator κατ' ἀρχάς is directly associated with the creative event τὴν γῆν ἐθεμελίωσας, so it is exegetically appropriate to identify this creative work with this particular time. This New Testament statement thus provides a poetic confirmation of the creation de novo of planet Earth in the beginning.

Conclusion

This study shows that there is significant structural evidence that Gen 1:1–5 is a cohesive unit describing the first day of the creation week. This is based on the double-inverted chiastic structure of Gen 1:2–5, the *inclusio* formed by Gen 1:1 and 2:1, and the parallelism between Gen 1:1–2:3, Exod 20:11, and 31:17, which show that Gen 1:1 was intended to be included within the six workdays of creation. The assertion that the first day of creation commenced with the first recorded divine command is weakened by the problematic distribution of eight divine commands over six workdays. A reading of the text that uses a work correspondence identifies these divine commands as describing new phases of divine creative work during the six workdays and not literary termini marking the commencement of each day. The textual fact that there is a transition to the *wayyiqtol* verb forms in Gen 1:3 does not justify alignment of the story line in the foreground to the temporal period and markers associated with the account. The temporal period and markers in the narrative may be associated with the entire narratival canvas rather than with the story line in the foreground, as Gen 2:7 illustrates. Finally, a more accurate understanding of the referent for the merism "the heavens and the earth" (אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ) is a cosmic subspace, possibly the observable universe, but definitely the human cosmos. Also, there is biblical evidence that the creation de novo of planet Earth is being described in this unit. In summary, our structural study of the text using a work correspondence reveals that Gen 1:1–5 describes the divine work undertaken on the first day of the creation, including the creation of a cosmic subspace and primordial light.

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RESOLVING THE CONFUSION IN REVELATION 6:11

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Abstract

In most English versions, Revelation 6:11 includes an interpolation ("the number of") that changes the meaning of the verse. This article evaluates the evidence for changes in the reading and interpretation of the text and the grammatical problems introduced by the interpolation, looking closely at the Greek grammar and syntax of the passage, which does not allow for the interpolation. Then the literary-historical problems with the interpolation are considered, noting the assumptions behind the interpolation and their weaknesses. Finally, the theological problems created by the interpolation are observed. I conclude that the interpolation is unfounded and attempt to address the intended theological understanding of the verse. The idea of completion or perfection is not related to a certain number of people but to the character of the fellow servants and other believers who are to be killed as the plaintive martyrs were.

Keywords: Rev 6:11, martyrs, number, completed, perfected, theodicy.

Introduction

Almost all English versions of Rev 6:11 contain an interpolation not found in any version of the Greek text. In the English Standard Version, the verse reads, "Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been."[1] The interpolation is "the number of." It alters the meaning of the text and promotes a theological idea that creates a problem for biblical eschatology. It is the purpose of this article to address this problem not only grammatically but also literary-historically and theologically.

[1] All biblical quotations in this article are from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise noted.

The Textual Problem and Its Interpretation

The unit under consideration is the fifth seal among the opening of the seven seals on the scroll that the Lamb took from the right hand of the One seated on the throne in Rev 5:7 and began to open beginning in 6:1. When the Lamb opened the fifth seal, John saw under the altar[2] the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony that they held. These martyred persons—or their spilled blood, like Abel's—metaphorically cried out to God for justice: "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (Rev 6:10).[3] Verse 11 is God's response to this question. First, he gives a white robe to each of them. Then, he instructs them that they should rest a little while longer, "until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be completed." The problem is that the added words "the number of" are not found in the Greek. They are inserted, and this seems to significantly alter the meaning of the text.

Although there is nothing in the Greek text about a number, the idea of a number is supplied by most English translations and most commentators. For example, except for the KJV and a few others, most Bible versions contain the interpolated words.[4] In addition, most commentators also include the words in question. Jon Paulien is one of the few who clearly repudiates the interpolation.[5] David Aune very strongly supports the interpolation, giving the translation as "lit. 'until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they were was complete.'"[6] His reason for this translation is that "in early Judaism, the view that the *numerus iustorum*, 'number of the righteous,' has been predetermined by God is first expressed clearly in apocalypses nearly contemporary with Revelation (*1 Enoch* 37–71; 4 Ezra;

[2] This is without doubt an allusion to the altar of sacrifice, probably alluding also to the slaughter of Abel by his brother Cain, as recorded in Gen 4:3–10, which became a prototype of all subsequent martyrdoms (1 John 3:12) and is the first recorded incident in which God answered the cry of the victim's blood for justice.

[3] This cry for justice is a recurring theme of theodicy in Scripture. (See, e.g., Gen 18:20–21; Exod 3:7–9; 22:23; 2 Chr 20:9; Neh 9:9; Job 34:28; Pss 9:12; 18:6; 34:17; 106:44; 107:6, 13, 19, 28; Isa 30:19; Jonah 2:2; Hab 1:2).

[4] The Common English Bible (CEB, 2011) and God's Word to the Nations (GWN, 2003) are the only modern versions I was able to locate that do not include the interpolation. The Darby Bible (DBY, 1884/1890) is an older version that does the same.

[5] Jon Paulien, *The Gospel from Patmos: Everyday Insights for Living from the Last Book of the Bible* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2007), 140.

[6] David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, WBC 52B (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 411.

2 Apocalypse of Baruch)."[7] This rationale will be discussed further below; however, this is the position that most commentators take. Craig Keener, for example, writes, "That the full number of martyrs had to be completed before the end was probably a familiar apocalyptic theme to the churches in Asia (1 En. 47:2–4; 4 Ezra 4:35–37). More than this, it reflects biblical sensibilities about justice and the cost of the gospel."[8] Another example is found in Paige Patterson's comments:

> The language … suggests that there are a specified number of martyrs from the tribulation that God had ordained. While this seems strange to modern ears, God may well have ordained that in his providences. Or the expression may mean no more than that the final acts of God's judgment as seen in the pairing of the bowls of wrath will not come until the closing days of the tribulation. By then, all who will have faced martyrdom will have joined their brothers and fellow servants around the altar.[9]

The confusion increases with a number of scholars who attempt to play both sides. The *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* equivocates, "That is, the number should be completed (see RSV). This does not mean that Providence has decreed that a specific number should be martyred."[10] Beatrice Neall says, "From the text it is not clear whether their *number* or *character* is to be made complete, since the word *number* is not in the Greek text."[11] So while she notes that the interpolation is lacking, she sees no grammatical problem with the addition. Joseph Mangina also notes the lack of the wording in Greek, but goes on to argue for the idea nonetheless, though he says that it may not be "an absolutely fixed and determined number."[12] George E. Ladd hedges a bit, saying, "They must wait in patience **until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren should be complete.** [emphasis in original] This statement is surely not to be understood in any

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[7] Ibid., 412. Aune also refers to the Pistis Sophia, in which "the phrase 'the number of perfect souls is completed' (or its equivalent) occurs frequently…and obviously refers to Gnostics" (Ibid.).

[8] Craig S. Keener, *Revelation*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 218.

[9] Paige Patterson, *Revelation: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, NAC 39 (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2012), 185.

[10] "Should Be Fulfilled [Rev 6:11]," *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Commentary Reference Series, rev. ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980), 7:779.

[11] Beatrice S. Neall, "Sealed Saints and the Tribulation," in *Symposium on Revelation, Book 1: Introductory and Exegetical Studies*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 6 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 249.

[12] Joseph L. Mangina, *Revelation*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2010), 104.

mathematical way, as though God had decreed that there must be a certain number of martyrs, and when this number was slain, the end would come."[13] At the same time, Ranko Stefanovic, while first stating that the number might be inferred, based largely on popular Jewish tradition, adds that evidence elsewhere in Revelation (7:13–14; 19:7–8) supports the idea that the fellow servants are to be made complete with reference to character, as the martyrs have been. He concludes, "Revelation transcends the popular Jewish understanding. The text states that the martyrs underneath the altar must rest until their fellow servants, that is, their brothers who are about to be killed, might be made complete with reference to character, as they themselves have been made complete or perfect in character."[14] Paulien writes, "The word 'number' isn't in the original. Instead … the translators have put it in to make sense of the passage. But the passage does make sense as it is. The 'fellow servants' are being 'completed,' perhaps a reference to their character in the final crisis of earth's history (Rev. 19:7–8)."[15] Sigve Tonstad integrates "[the number]" and "[the number of]" into his translation of the passage, acknowledging that it is an interpolation while at the same time implying that it belongs to the syntax of the text. Then he goes on to assert,

> The notion that a numerical goal must be reached before the sordid chapter can be closed must not be taken literally. The process running to completion does not unfold according to an arithmetic measure, but there is an underlying reason.[16]

So the reader is left to wonder whether the interpolation has merit or not.

The Grammatical Problem

As a matter of fact, the insertion, or interpolation, goes contrary to the grammar of the Greek text. I have not found this problem discussed in any of the many commentaries I have consulted, yet it is an important detail to consider for any correct reading of the text.

While "number" is singular, the verb is plural, meaning that "the number" cannot be the intended subject of the verb, either explicit or implied. Nor is "their fellow servants and their brethren" in the genitive case, as would be required if they were the object of the preposition "of." Rather, both "their fellow servants" and "their brethren" are found in the nominative case and function as the compound subject of the plural verb. So it is very clear

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[13] George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), 106.

[14] Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, 2nd ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2009), 245.

[15] Paulien, *The Gospel from Patmos*, 141.

[16] Sigve K. Tonstad, *Revelation*, Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019), 127-28.

grammatically that the added interpolation does not belong to the text, but has been forced upon it. The English translation should read instead, "And a white robe was given to each of them, and it was said to them that they should rest yet a short time, until both their fellow servants and their brethren, who were about to be killed as also they *had been*, were made perfect."

The main verb in Greek is *plērōthōsin*, which is the aorist passive subjunctive third person plural form of the verb *plēroō*. Aune says that "this verb is extremely problematic."[17] *Plēroō* is most often used to indicate filling full (*plērēs*) or fulfilling, but it is sometimes used to signify bringing something to completion or perfection.[18] Local context, of course, must be the determining factor for the meaning in any text. Here the subject of the sentence is people who are about to be killed, just as the slain martyrs had been. God is asking the martyrs to wait a little longer until these others should reach a certain state that God intends for them. That state may be inferred from the parallel in Heb 11:40, where God has something better in mind "for us"—namely, that those who died in faith, often as martyrs (vv.35–39), "apart from us they should not be made perfect." Although the Greek word used there in Hebrews is a different word, *teleiōthōsin*, it is almost a synonym, sometimes used like *plērōthōsin* in this type of context.[19] *Teleioō* signifies achieving a goal, completing, accomplishing, bringing to an end (*telos*), or reaching perfection (*teleios*).[20] A good example of

[17] Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 412. Aune discusses the variant readings and their implications. The best-supported reading is the one found in the text of Nestle-Aland and UBSGNT (*plērōthōsin*), which is both passive and typically intransitive. The primary variant readings were changed to active, transitive forms, he says, because the scribes felt that the verb needed an object like *ton dromon*, "course," as in Acts 13:25, or possibly *ton arithmon*, "number," as in some Jewish documents (*Revelation 6–16*, 385). *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* places Rev 6:11 in either of these two active categories (BDAG, s.v. πληρόω). However, the grammatical, textual, and contextual evidence supports the intransitive, passive reading (as a divine passive with God as perfecter) in Rev 6:11.

[18] BDAG, s.v. πληρόω. When used in reference to a person, the verb speaks of filling someone with powers, qualities, etc. But when used of persons absolutely, without an object, it suggests a state of completeness. In this context, this would mean perfection of character (BDAG, s.v. πληρόω).

[19] There are many parallels in the translation of these terms in various versions of the biblical text, and there is also evidence in literature to support their similarity in meaning in certain contexts. See BDAG, s.v. πληρόω, τελειόω; William D. Mounce, ed., *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), s.v. "Complete," "Perfect"; Warren C. Trenchard, *Complete Vocabulary Guide to the Greek New Testament*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), s.v. πληρόω, τελειόω.

[20] BDAG, s.v. τελειόω. Paulien says that "the passage does make sense as it is. The 'fellow-servants' are being 'completed,' perhaps a reference to their character in the final crisis of earth's history (Rev. 19:7–8)" (*The Gospel from Patmos*, 141).

the similarity is found in Rev 3:2 (NKJV): "I have not found your works perfect before God," where "perfect" is *peplērōmena*, from *plēroō*. Col 4:12 makes the two terms virtual synonyms: "that you may stand perfect and complete [τέλειοι καὶ πεπληροφορημένοι] in all the will of God" (NKJV).[21]

In summary, from the grammatical point of view, there is no merit in the interpolation of adding the words "the number of" into this verse, despite the fact that most scholars accept the interpolation without acknowledging the fact that it does not fit the text grammatically.[22] The point is not that God is waiting for a particular number of martyrs to be reached. Rather, he is waiting for others to achieve a state of perfect faith and trust in God, or faithfulness, to the point that they too will be prepared to lay down their lives for their convictions and their love for God. This statement is thematically parallel to the statement in 12:11, which states that "they have conquered him [Satan, the accuser of the brethren] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony,[23] for they loved not their lives even unto death."

The Literary-Historical Problem

Why have almost all English versions of Rev 6:11 added the same interpolation into the text for no apparent grammatical reason, especially given the serious grammatical problem it introduces? There is a literary-historical explanation.

Many scholars, including Bible translators, take the position that the author of Revelation was literarily dependent on other documents purportedly in circulation at the time he was writing. They look for other writings, primarily pseudepigraphal apocalyptic, that may have been sources for the ideas John expresses in Revelation. Although the evidence is poor for John's use of contemporary

[21] Cf. Col 2:10.

[22] For example, G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999) 395; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 160; Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, BECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 289. Beale observes that the nominative plurals of *hoi syndouloi* and *hoi adelphoi* "must most likely be taken as if they were genitive," recognizing the grammatical discrepancy, but unwilling to dispense with the interpolation (*The Book of Revelation*, 395). Even a scholar of the caliber of Henry Barclay Swete states that "they are kept waiting … till the number of their fellow-slaves is fully made up." He gives no indication of the grammatical problem, observing that the plural verb "implies a scarcely tolerable ellipse of" either *dromos* (course [of life]) or *arithmos* (number), both singular nouns (*Commentary on Revelation: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, and Indexes*, Kregel Reprint Library [Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1977], 91–92). See also Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *The Book of the Revelation: A Commentary* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990), 89; J. Ramsey Michaels, *Revelation*, IVP New Testament Commentary 20 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1997), 108.

[23] Cf. Rev 6:9: "Those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness [testimony] they had borne."

nonbiblical literary sources, there are a few rare similarities that can be found in pseudepigraphal apocalyptic. J. Scott Duvall, along with most commentators, accepts the interpolation with no notation regarding any grammatical problem. He says, "The idea of God setting a predetermined number of martyrs appears in Jewish tradition."[24] For example, in 1 En. 47:1–4, we find this passage:

> In those days, the prayers of the righteous ascended into heaven, and the blood of the righteous from the earth before the Lord of the Spirits…. And with one voice, they shall supplicate and pray—glorifying, praising, and blessing the name of the Lord of the Spirits—on behalf of the righteous ones which has been shed…. The hearts of the holy ones are full of joy, because the number of the righteous has been offered, the prayers of the righteous ones have been heard, and the blood of the righteous has been admitted before the Lord of the Spirits.[25]

In addition, 4 Ezra (2 Esd) 4:35–37 says,

> Did not the souls of the righteous in their chambers ask about these matters, saying, "How long are we to remain here? And when will come the harvest of our reward?" And Jeremiel the archangel answered them and said, "When the number of those like yourselves is completed; for he has weighed the age in the balance, and measured the times by measure, and numbered the times by number; and he will not move or arouse them until that measure is fulfilled."[26]

Finally, we find this statement in 2 Bar. 23:4–5: "For when Adam sinned and death was decreed against those who were to be born, the multitude

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[24] J. Scott Duvall, *Revelation*, Teach the Text Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2014), 108. Osborne also states, "This is a concept strange to most today, but it was a common emphasis in apocalyptic writings to say that God in his sovereignty had established a certain number of martyrs who were yet to be killed before the final judgment" (*Revelation*, 289). Richard Bauckham presents an extended study on these purported extrabiblical sources (*The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* [London: T&T Clark, 1998], 48–56).

[25] Trans. E. Isaac, *OTP* 1:35. Isaac first dates this section of 1 Enoch, called "The Book of the Similitudes," to "c. 105-64 B.C." (*OTP* 1:7). However, he cites J. T. Milik as arguing, based largely on the fact that no fragment of the Similitudes has been recovered at Qumran while the four other sections of 1 Enoch were discovered there, that the Similitudes is a late Christian work. Isaac does not agree. "In conclusion," he writes, "I am convinced that 1 Enoch already contained the Similitudes by the end of the first century A.D." (*OTP* 1:7). If the Similitudes existed by the end of the first century AD, it could have been contemporary with Revelation. John did not necessarily know of the Similitudes or borrow an idea from them, even if they were written first. John claims to be recording only what he has seen and heard in vision and has been instructed to write (Rev 1:19; 22:8, 18).

[26] Trans. B. M. Metzger, *OTP* 1:531. Metzger dates the composition of 4 Ezra to "about A.D. 100," though he adds that it "cannot be placed much after A.D. 120" (*OTP* 1:520). These dates are after the writing of the book of Revelation, so it should not be assumed that 4 Ezra influenced John.

of those who would be born was numbered. And for that number a place was prepared where the living ones might live and where the dead might be preserved. No creature will live again unless the number that has been appointed is completed."[27]

These passages reveal the traditional literary ideas that many scholars believe underlie the textual ideas found in Revelation. However, it is not difficult to observe the differences between these passages and the one in Rev 6:11. Grant Osborne points out that "there are slight differences with regard to who constitutes that number": martyrs in Revelation and 1 Enoch, the righteous dead in 4 Ezra, and all those born into the world in 2 Baruch.[28] The context of the significance of the number is also different. In 1 Enoch, instead of a plaintive appeal to God for justice, we find a spirit of joy, of glorification, of praise, and of blessing to the Lord of Spirits. In 4 Ezra, the righteous want to know how long they must remain in their chambers, but the answer by Jeremiel the archangel is that the times must be numbered, not the fellow servants and brethren of the plaintiffs. In 2 Baruch, it is the number of all who had been born since Adam's sin who must be accommodated in the grave until the resurrection. Clearly, there is little real correspondence between the material in Rev 6:11 and these various incidences of there being a number that must be completed. The passage in 1 Enoch is the only one that might have been able to influence John's thinking, but though it may have convinced many scholars that John meant to express a similar idea regarding number here, the grammatical evidence is still formidable, and the interpolation undermines John's claims that he saw and heard in vision the things which he was instructed to write down (Rev 1:19; 22:8, 18). Clearly, John was not dependent on these sources,[29] and there is little evidence to support the interpolation.

Some speculate that John was referring to the number 144,000, which is found in Rev 7:4–8 and 14:1–5 and is frequently seen as a group of last-day believers redeemed from the earth.[30] They believe that the 144,000 are

[27] Trans. A. F. J. Klijn, *OTP* 1:629. Klijn states that "2 Baruch is probably later than 4 Ezra, since it appears to show an advanced stage of theological development." "Therefore," he concludes, "the Apocalypse of Baruch seems to come from the first or second decade of the second century" (*OTP* 1:617). If this is the case, then it would not have been possible for this idea to have influenced John's writing. Besides, the topic is a different one, and it is difficult to see how the one could have influenced the other.

[28] Osborne, *Revelation*, 289. Of course, there is no number mentioned in Rev 6:11 though Osborne ignores that fact.

[29] The problems of dating and dependency are discussed in the footnotes 24–26.

[30] Alberto R. Treiyer speaks of "the number of those who would also suffer in the short and final trouble of the last generation" (*Seals and Trumpets: Biblical and Histori-*

the ones who, according to 6:11, will be made perfect and sealed for eternal life. While it is true that 14:5 presents them as blameless (*amōmoi*, without blemish), the number is symbolic, not literal,[31] and they are not viewed as martyrs in Revelation. Adding the interpolation in 6:11 does not resolve the problem or point to the 144,000.

Another view is that "the completion of the number of the martyrs mentioned in verse 11 was to await yet another era foretold in Revelation 13." There "an apostate church" was to conduct a war against the true faith.[32] This view is still based on the notion of completing a number rather than completing the process of character perfection by being faithful even unto death (Rev 2:10; 12:11; cf. 1 Pet 4:1).

From a historical perspective, it is interesting to observe that the idea of a number in Rev 6:11 does not appear at all in the Early Church Fathers.[33] The earliest mention of it is not found until the Latin Fathers in the early sixth century, when Fulgentius of Ruspe (c. 467–532) declared that the time of God's vengeance or retribution "is put off by the divine patience so that the number of the saints can be filled up."[34] Later in the sixth century, Primasius (fl. 550–560) said that the holy martyrs preferred to "wait for the completion

cal Studies [self-pub., Adventist Distinctive Messages, 2005], 174). He later identifies these as the 144,000 (*Seals and Trumpets*, 186). See also Dennis E. Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2001), 126; Neall, "Sealed Saints," 249.

[31] This is a topic for another paper, but I will address it briefly. John hears the number 12,000 from each of twelve tribes of Israel (7:4–8)—and this list of tribes does not match any list in the Old Testament (cf. Gen 48–49; Num 1–2; Deut 33:6–25; 1 Chr 2:1–2; Ezek 48:1–8)—but when he looks, he sees "a great multitude that no one could number, from all tribes and peoples and languages" (7:9). See Hans K. LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible: The Biblical-Contextual Approach* (Sarasota, FL: First Impressions, 1997), 147–150. Cf. Rom 2:28–29; 9:6–8, 27; Gal 3:7–9, 26–29.

[32] Oral Edmond Collins, *The Final Prophecy of Jesus: An Introduction, Analysis, and Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 147.

[33] Stephen S. Smalley suggests that the idea is found in Polycarp's prayer at his martyrdom, giving thanks for being counted worthy to "have a part in the number of Thy martyrs" (Mart. Pol. 14). However, Polycarp makes no reference to Rev 6:11, nor is there any hint of an allusion to that passage. It seems to be merely a general reference to the group of martyrs, including Christ, who would have a part in "the resurrection of eternal life" (*The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005], 165).

[34] Fulgentius of Ruspe, *On the Forgiveness of Sins* 2.5.2–3, quoted in William C. Weinrich, ed., *Revelation,* ACCS New Testament 12 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 96.

of the number of other brothers."[35] Bede the Venerable (c. 672/673–735), in the early eighth century, taught that the martyrs would receive a second white robe "when the number of their brothers has been filled at the end."[36] These interpretations were not due to the reading of Jerome's Latin Vulgate since there is no mention of a number in the Vulgate's rendition of the text. Somehow the notion crept in at some point in the interpretation of the text but at a relatively late date.

It seems that there is no literary-historical support for introducing the designated interpolation into the text of Rev 6:11.

The Theological Problem

There is a significant theological difference between the fellow workers and brethren (or fellow believers) being the subjects of the plural verb *plērōthōsin* (they should be completed or made perfect) and the singular noun *arithmos* (number) being the implied subject of the verb. We have seen that adding the interpolation "the number of" into Rev 6:11 is grammatically incompatible with the both the plural subject of the verb and the nominative case of the subjects of the verb, which are turned, by the interpolation, into the objects of the supplied genitive "of." The absence of *hō arithmos* and the genitive in the Greek text is not a grammatical problem. Its presence creates a grammatical problem. But it also creates a theological problem.

What is God asking the martyrs to wait for? Is he waiting for a particular number of people to be killed as they had been, or is he waiting for something more significant? As noted above, some have suggested that God has a particular number in mind that he is waiting for, and when that number has been made up or completed, he will bring the judgment the martyrs are asking for and put an end to the killing. As mentioned earlier, some hold that the number is given in the next chapter—144,000.[37] But that number represents those who will be sealed for salvation, not those who will be killed, and the evidence suggests that it is a symbolic number, as many scholars agree,[38] not a real number of martyrs God is waiting for. Others have suggested that God is waiting in order

[35] Primasius, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 6.11, quoted in Weinrich, *Revelation*, 96.

[36] Bede, *Homilies on the Gospels* 2.12, quoted in Weinrich, *Revelation,* 96.

[37] Neall says, "The number 144,000 should thus be understood as a symbol of the unity, perfection, and completion of God's church—complete because the number has been made up (6:11)" ("Sealed Saints," 262).

[38] E.g., Collins, *Final Prophecy of Jesus*, 165–167; Jacques B. Doukhan, *Secrets of Revelation: The Apocalypse through Hebrew Eyes* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002), 71–72; Duvall, *Revelation*, 114–115; Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*, 130–131; George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), 117; Mangina, *Revelation*, 111; Michaels, *Revelation*, 112–113; Osborne, *Revelation*, 315; Paulien, *The Gospel from Patmos*, 149; Neall, "Sealed Saints," 262–263; Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John*, 186–188.

to replace the number of angels he lost with the rebellion of Lucifer in heaven.[39] But this cannot be derived from the text, which does not speak of a number but speaks about the quality, not the quantity, of those who would be martyred in the waiting period before judgment takes place. Any attempt to focus on the quantity of the martyrs, no matter the number, misses the theological point.

Some have focused on *when* the number will be completed, based on the question, "How long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (6:10). J. Ramsey Michaels says that "their number will be complete when the sixth seal is opened."[40] He offers no explanation for this conclusion, nor does the text, unless one takes the great earthquake in verse 12 as the judgment promised, which makes little sense. The answer to the prayers of the martyrs is explicitly answered in 19:2: "For his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants" (Rev 19:2 ESV), a reference to the judgment on Babylon under the seventh bowl plague (16:19; 17:1, 6; 18:6, 8, 24). Philip Edgcumbe Hughes seems uncertain when this will happen: "The determination as to when their number is complete is in his [God's] hands."[41] Others consider it to be fulfilled at the end of the age, when Christ brings an end to persecution and martyrdom.[42] But despite the question asked by the martyrs in verse 10 ("How long?"), the timing of the completion is not the main point of God's answer to their question.

God sidesteps giving a direct answer to their question. Instead, he changes the issue from when judgment will take place to what needs to take place before they can receive the justice they desire. They are given white robes, indicating their vindication, but they must wait patiently for the rest of their petition. The main point of the passage is God's faithfulness to his covenant promises, an issue of theodicy. It is central to the plot of the book of Revelation.

In the statement of his covenant with his people in Deut 32, God calls his people to look to him for their protection and salvation. They will face many obstacles, trials, enemies, and challenges, but he is their Rock and their salvation. "All his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity,

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[39] I have found no published source for this, but have discussed this idea with a number of individuals over the years.

[40] Michaels, *Revelation*, 108.

[41] Hughes, *Book of the Revelation*, 89–90. Cf. Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*, 126.

[42] Duvall first states, "The idea of God setting a predetermined number of martyrs appears in Jewish tradition…. In this way, God assures the martyrs that judgment and vindication are certain, but only in his sovereign timing" (*Revelation*, 108). Subsequently, Duvall adds, "But delayed judgment should not be taken to mean no judgment. One day God will judge wickedness and vindicate his people. Jesus closes his Olivet discourse with several parables that warn of God's coming judgment on unbelievers at the end of the age (Matt. 24:43–25:46)" (*Revelation*, 109; cf. 110).

just and upright is he" (v. 4). Israel has not been faithful in return (vv. 15–18), but God, though hurt, jealous, and angered by their unfaithfulness, feels pity on them for their lack of discretion (vv. 19–30), and he needs to maintain his faithfulness before their adversaries for the sake of his own reputation (v. 27). God describes Israel's enemies, saying, "Their rock is not as our Rock; our enemies are by themselves" (v. 31). Their vine is like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, and their wine is deadly, like the venom of poisonous serpents (vv. 32–33). "'Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly. For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free'" (vv. 35–36).

> "For I lift up my hand to heaven and swear, As I live forever, if I sharpen my flashing sword and my hand takes hold on judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and will repay those who hate me. I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh—with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the long-haired heads of the enemy." Rejoice with him, O heavens; bow down to him, all gods, for he avenges the blood of his children and takes vengeance on his adversaries. He repays those who hate him and cleanses his people's land. (vv. 40–43)

This is the premise upon which the cry of the martyrs is based. They have been waiting patiently for him to act, but they want to know how much longer they have to wait for the promised judgment and vengeance on their adversaries. Jesus himself raised the issue in his parable of the unjust judge. He asked the disciples to listen to what the unjust judge said about delivering justice because of the widow's continual requests (Luke 18:6). Then he added, "And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily" (vv. 7–8). So when the martyrs cry to God, "How long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" they are claiming the language of God's covenant promises to them.[43]

In giving them the white robes, he is offering them the tokens of their vindication and de facto guarantees of their eternal inheritance. Yet he tells them that they must rest a little longer, for the end is not yet. There are others who must go through a similar experience, to prepare them for receiving the white robes of the overcomer also (Rev 3:5). They must endure the fiery trial in the furnace of affliction that will perfect character and fit them for the new heavens

[43] Joel Nobel Musvosvi, *Vengeance in the Apocalypse*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 17 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1993), 277–280. Michaels notes that the martyrs' prayer "is not a cry for personal vengeance, but an appeal to a 'Sovereign Lord, holy and true,' to bring justice in the world by destroying the powers of evil. It is an eschatological prayer" similar to other biblical prayers (*Revelation*, 108).

and new earth in which righteousness dwells (Jas 1:2–4; 1 Pet 1:6–7; 4:12–13; 2 Pet 3:11–13). This is not about waiting for a number to be complete but for a people to be made complete, ready for eternity with God. They must learn to trust so fully in Jesus and his righteousness for their salvation and they must hate sin so perfectly that they are ready to lay down their lives, if necessary, to attain the goal of salvation (Ps 145:17; Isa 5:16; Luke 1:74–75; Rom 6:19–22; Eph 4:24; Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 1:13–19; Rev 12:11; 22:11).

Conclusion

I have noted a problem in the text of Rev 6:11 that presents the reader with some difficulties. The interpolation "the number of" does not appear in the Greek text; neither does it meet the grammatical demands of the text. The verb is plural and requires a plural subject, found in the compound nominative subjects *syndouloi* (fellow servants) and *adelphoi* (brothers or fellow believers). Further, the preposition "of" would require its object(s) to be in the genitive case rather than the nominative case, producing *kai tōv syndoulōv autōn kai tōn adelphōn autōn tōn mellontōn apoktennesthai*, which would function as the objects of the preposition following the purportedly implied "the number of." Grammatically, there is no evidence that the interpolation is implied or even admissible.

Reviewing the literary-historical case for the interpretation, I have found no substantial basis of support, either in the purported pseudepigraphal parallels put forward as backgrounds for John's thinking in Rev 6:11 or in early Christian quotations of and commentaries on the text. John himself claims to have recorded what he saw and heard in visions and auditions given him by Christ himself or his angel. The purported sources are too different from John's text and context, as well as from each other, to qualify as his sources, and most are dated too late to influence John's text. Similarities are not evidence of borrowing. And all supposed evidence for the interpolation is very late, beginning in the Latin fathers of the sixth century AD and beyond. Even the Latin Vulgate does not contain the interpolation.

Theologically, the interpolation misconstrues the purpose of the passage, turning a qualitative completion or perfection of the character of faithful believers into a quantitative completion of a certain disputed number of martyrs. The question asked by the martyrs in Rev 6:10, "How long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" is a common biblical theme, which is never fully answered in Scripture until Rev 19:2. The purpose in 6:11 is not to answer the martyrs' question, but to provide an assurance that God will be faithful to his covenant promises, as found in Deut 32. He will avenge their blood, but he will do so at the right time, and they must rest patiently upon his promises. He gives them white robes to assure them of their vindication as overcomers in the judgment and as the recipients of all of his promises. But he also informs them that there

are others who must go through the testing experiences that they have gone through in order to prepare them also for perfection of character and reception of the white robes of Christ's righteousness, which is their right of access to eternal salvation (Isa 61:8–11).

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CLASSICAL THEISM IN JOHN WESLEY'S SERMONS

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Abstract

This article examines John Wesley's sermons in order to assess whether his doctrine of God may best be classified in terms of strict classical theism or modified classical theism. His view of God's nature is informed by his inherited Anglican theology, which is blended with his evangelical proclivities. Of relevance to the inquiry into Wesley's theism are several key concepts: (1) the interrelated divine attributes of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience; (2) divine eternity in relation to human time; and (3) divine love. Wesley's sermons that discuss omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience appear to align closely with classical theism. However, in contrast to classical theism, Wesley's sermons dealing with eternity seem to indicate some form of divine temporality. His understanding of divine love and providence contains elements of reciprocity. Thus, when Wesley's view of God's attributes is coupled with Wesley's understanding of divine eternity and divine love, they indicate a departure from strict classical theism toward modified classical theism.

Keywords: John Wesley, Classical Theism, Modified Classical Theism, Anglicanism, Evangelicalism, divine attributes

Introduction

John Wesley's theology can be understood from two perspectives. The first is his loyalty to the Anglican institution and theology, exemplified by his clear affirmation of the Anglican *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion*.[1] Wesley remained a faithful member of the Church of England until his death.[2] He

[1] In *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America,* Wesley included a section called "Articles of Religion," which was his edited version of the Thirty-nine Articles (Charles Yrigoyen Jr., *Belief Matters: United Methodism's Doctrinal Standards* [Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2001], 71).

[2] Wesley's loyalty to the Anglican Church, however, was not blind. He was well aware of her failings and sought to reform the church from within. "I love the

also inherited the theology of those who had gone before him, drawing on "an immense background with a remarkable repertory."[3] One such example of Wesley's inherited theology is his Arminian soteriology.[4]

The second perspective is his evangelical missiological drive, which pushed him to adopt ideas and practices beyond what was acceptable to the Anglican Church at the time, leading to the establishment of Methodism.[5]

Church of England, I hope, as much as you do. But I do not love her so as to take her blemishes for ornaments" (Nehemiah Curnock, ed., *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* [London: Epworth, 1938], 8:332).

[3] Albert C. Outler, *John Wesley's Sermons: An Introduction* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1991), 75. While he placed primary authority on Scripture, Wesley was also influenced by the classics, early Christianity, the Reformation, and the Anglican and Puritan traditions (Outler, *Wesley's Sermons*, 79–88). He regarded the church fathers as "principal sources to be consulted for the proper interpretation of Scripture" though he favored those within the first four centuries of church history (Neil D. Anderson, *A Definitive Study of Evidence Concerning John Wesley's Appropriation of the Thought of Clement of Alexandria*, Texts and Studies in Religion 102 [Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 2004], 38). Wesley consistently defended the "Bible, with the Liturgy, Articles, and Homilies of our [Anglican] Church" (John Telford, ed., *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A. M.* [London: Epworth, 1931], 4:115). David Rainey comments that Wesley "never veered from the foundation of the classical Creeds, especially Nicaea and Chalcedon along with the whole of Christian tradition with varying emphasis in order to develop his distinctive theological approach" ("John Wesley's Doctrine of Salvation in Relation to His Doctrine of God" [PhD diss., University of London, 2006], 316).

[4] By the time Wesley entered the scene, there were already elements of Arminian theology within the Church of England (see Waldo E. Knickerbocker, "Arminian Anglicanism and John and Charles Wesley," *Memphis Theological Seminary Journal* 29.3 [1991]: 79–97). This influence, along with his own readings of Hugo Grotius and Simon Episcopius, exposed Wesley to the teachings of Arminius and led him to accept them (Luke L. Keefer, "Characteristics of Wesley's Arminianism," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 22.1 [1987]: 89). As such, Wesley believed in a God who preveniently provided human beings the free will to choose salvation for themselves, not a God who deterministically chooses some for salvation and (as a result) chooses some for damnation. It is important to note that I am not attempting to present Anglican theology in opposition to Arminian theology. While there may be nuanced differences between the two, it is not necessary to exclude one in favor of the other. It is logically acceptable to subscribe to both Arminian soteriology and the classical theism of the Anglican Church.

[5] "It is possible to imagine that, with a little more vigour on the part of the Church of England, and a little more flexibility on the part of Wesley, it might have been found practicable to retain the gifts and graces of Methodism within the Church of England. Almost all Anglicans deeply regret that the separation between Anglican and Methodist took place" (Stephen Neill, *Anglicanism*, 4th ed. [New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1977], 190).

However, his overarching goal was that his Methodist movement would not "differ from our Church in point of doctrine."[6] Consequently, the Methodist movement was identical to the Church of England except "in some palpable defects about doctrine, discipline, and unevangelical hierarchy."[7] Reflecting on the conflict between Wesley's institutional loyalty and his missiological-relational understanding of the gospel, Frank Baker observes that "although [Wesley's] ecclesiastical odyssey was in general from one pole to the other he was subject to occasional fluctuation," such that, despite his evangelical leanings, Wesley held to some elements of Catholic theology until his death.[8]

It is in light of this perceived "fluctuation" that this article examines Wesley's doctrine of God. Wesley's theism was a product of all the influences mentioned above, filtered through the Church of England and Augustinian Trinitarian theology.[9] Other scholars have competently described his theism, particularly his view of a personal God, his depiction of divine attributes, and even in relation to his soteriology.[10] This study is primarily comparative, observing in more detail Wesley's relationship with his theological roots as he strives for reform and the resulting tensions that arise. I aim to directly explore how closely John Wesley's doctrine of God aligns with Article I of the *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion* of the Anglican Church, to identify areas of possible divergence, and to draw observations about what these distinctions may imply.[11] I have chosen to limit this comparison to Wesley's sermons and,

[6] Telford, *Letters*, 4:131. Wesley's vision was for his movement to create a reformation of personal holiness within the Church of England, not apart from it. Despite his personal loyalty to the Church, his evangelical theology and pragmatic methodology pushed his movement ever further away from the Anglican Church, until, because of the American Revolution, Wesley felt the need to ordain his own ministers in America, separate from the Church of England.

[7] Curnock, *Journal*, 8:332.

[8] Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1970), 138. Keefer notes that it is difficult to label Wesley and his theology because he does not fit the mold. As such, he has been described as "Catholic, Anglican, Pietist, Calvinist, Lutheran, Puritan, Moravian, etc. depending upon the author in question" ("Wesley's Arminianism," 90).

[9] Rainey, "John Wesley's Doctrine of Salvation," 55–62.

[10] Kenneth J. Collins, *A Faithful Witness: John Wesley's Homiletical Theology* (Wilmore, KY: Wesley Heritage Press, 1993), 15–20; Jung Yang, "The Doctrine of God in the Theology of John Wesley" (PhD diss., University of Aberdeen, 2003); Rainey, "John Wesley's Doctrine of Salvation."

[11] Wesley's writings are primarily instructive and homiletical in nature. Even so, Luke Keefer argues that while Wesley's writings are not systematic, they are integrative, which does not lessen their value ("Wesley's Arminianism," 91–92). Keefer draws parallels with biblical writings, which are also not systematic but integrative by nature.

though Wesley has also preached on the nature and unity of the Trinity, I have chosen to exclude the subject from this study and focus on selected divine attributes that will be examined below. To make such a comparison, it is necessary to begin with an overview of the theism of the Church of England.

The Anglican Doctrine of God

Though Wesley drew on a wide variety of sources for his theology, the most prominent is the theology of the Church of England. Article I of the Anglican *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion* (1571) summarizes the Church of England's understanding of the unity, nature, and attributes of God.[12] It affirms, "There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."[13]

The first part of the Article delineates the attributes of God, which were drawn largely from the Augsburg Confession.[14] Both the *via eminentiae* and the

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This paper thus treats Wesley's sermons as an integrative theological work, drawing insights on his statements in relation to his belief system as a whole and following his claims to their logical conclusions, whether he explicitly states them or not.

[12] The Articles were the product of a long process, influenced by input from a wide variety of sources. Peter Toon notes that the Articles are "conscientiously eclectic [in that] they make use of the teaching of the patristic period for doctrines of the Trinity, Christology and original sin; of the Augsburg and Württemberg Confessions for the teaching on the gospel and justification; and of the teaching from Geneva and Calvinism/Reformed theology for sacramental understanding" ("The Articles and Homilies," in *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight, rev. ed. [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1998], 147).

[13] Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, eds., *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 2:528. Edward Harold Browne identifies two possible groups that the statements of Article I oppose: the Anthropomorphites, who believed that God had a human form, and the Pantheists, who believed that God is everything and everything is God (*An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles: Historical and Doctrinal* [New York, NY: Dutton, 1890], 19–20). E. J. Bicknell also includes the Anabaptists, who were "reviving all the ancient heresies" (*A Theological Introduction to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England* [London: Longmans, Green, 1919], 28).

[14] Oliver O'Donovan, *On the Thirty-Nine Articles: A Conversation with Tudor Christianity*, 2nd ed. (London: Hymns Ancient & Modern, 2011), 11. O'Donovan notes that in writing the Article, the English Reformers had nothing new to say about God and were simply reiterating what had already been said. Browne views the statement so "common to natural and revealed religion" that it does not even require much exposition or scriptural proof (*Exposition of the Articles*, 19).

via negativa are evident here. God is incomprehensibly above human beings, "everlasting" and "of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness," while possessing no human infirmities such as "body, parts or passions." Of particular interest to this article is one attribute of the *via eminentiae*, "everlasting," and two of the *via negativa*, "without parts or passions." The writings of Gilbert Burnet (1643–1715) and William Beveridge (1637–1708) and others provide excellent exposition on the Articles, giving insight regarding the Anglican theology of Wesley's time.[15]

God is "everlasting," meaning that he "has not a duration defined by succession, but is a simple essence, and eternally was, is, and shall be the same."[16] According to Beveridge, "God…is not measured by time…but is himself eternity: a centre without a circumference, eternity without time."[17] God's time is not sequential and has no duration, for "these words, *before* and *after*, *past* and *to come*, are solecisms in eternity, being only fitted to express the several successions of time by," but God is unchangeable and cannot experience change in time.[18] "Everlasting" in Article I thus means divine timelessness.[19] God is perfect and timeless, even though the results of his pure actuality may be perceived by humans in a succession of time.[20]

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[15] Gilbert Burnet, *An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England*, 3rd ed. (London: Printed for Ri. Chriswell, at the Rose and Crown in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1705); William Beveridge, *On the Thirty-Nine Articles*, vol. 7 of *The Theological Works of William Beveridge, D.D.: Sometime Lord Bishop of St. Asaph*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1846). For easier reading, I have modernized the spelling and punctuation of older texts.

[16] Burnet, *Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles*, 23.

[17] Beveridge, *On the Thirty-Nine Articles*, 18.

[18] Beveridge, *On the Thirty-Nine Articles*, 18. Beveridge later quotes Augustine's idea that God's immutability means timelessness (*On the Thirty-Nine Articles*, 23–24).

[19] Beveridge quotes Tertullian (*Against Marcion*), "There is no time in eternity, itself being all time. That which acts, cannot suffer…. But God is as far from beginning and end as he is from time, the measurer of beginning and ending" (*On the Thirty-Nine Articles*, 22). For God, eternity is "one instant, ever-present and existent," so that, consequently, biblical references to God's past and future should be understood in terms of their result and not as God acting within time (A. P. Forbes, *An Explanation of the Thirty-Nine Articles: With an Epistle Dedicatory to the Late Rev. E. B. Pusey*, 5th ed. [New York, NY: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1875], 5). Within the limits of human understanding, eternity can only be "an endless succession of moments," but God lives "in an eternal present" (Bicknell, *A Theological Introduction*, 35).

[20] Burnet, *Exposition of the Articles*, 26. For Beveridge, divine perfection requires timeless eternity: "Eternity is a perfection, such a perfection, without which the great God sometime would not have been, or sometimes will not be, and therefore can never be absolutely perfect, and so not God" (*On the Thirty-Nine Articles*, 20).

God is "without parts" (Lat. *impartibilis,* "incapable of division").[21] God is a Spirit and does not occupy space, meaning he has "no composition of matter or form" and therefore is "immaterial and indivisible."[22] God is simple and "without mixture or composition," not made up of parts, as human beings are, but is "one most pure, simple, Divine essence."[23] God's being is indivisible. God is not a "metaphysical composition of action and power" or a "composition of essence and existence." [24] Instead, God is pure act and does not have properties distinct from his essence.

God is "without passions" (Lat. *impassibilis,* "incapable of suffering"), which is strongly tied to his immutability and omnipotence.[25] For Burnet, "passion is an agitation that supposes a succession of thoughts" which "arises out of a heat of mind, and produces a vehemence of action. Now all these are such manifest imperfections, that it does plainly appear they cannot consist with infinite perfection."[26] If God does not change, then he does not suffer or feel emotions.[27] God is "not subject to, nor capable of love, hatred, joy, grief, anger, and the like, as they daily arise in us imperfect creatures; but

[21] This is tied to God being "without body." For God to have a body would be an imperfection, for "God, who is everywhere, and is one pure and simple act, can have no such use for a body" (Burnet, *Exposition of the Articles*, 24). Divine simplicity requires that God be without body. "God in himself is a most simple and pure act, and therefore … cannot have any thing in himself but himself, but what is that pure and simple act itself" (Beveridge, *On the Thirty-Nine Articles*, 15).

[22] Forbes, *Explanation*, 5.

[23] Beveridge, *On the Thirty-Nine Articles*, 25–26. Thus, "all that [God] is, He is essentially and not accidentally." All of God's attributes are not separate but part of his "consistent and unchanging being" (Bicknell, *A Theological Introduction*, 36–37).

[24] Forbes, *Explanation*, 6. Being without parts also means that God does not have successive thoughts. "The essence of God is one perfect thought, in which He both views and wills all things…. Distinct thoughts are plainly an imperfection, and argue a progress in knowledge, and a deliberation in council, which carry defect and infirmity in them" (Burnet, *Exposition of the Articles*, 26).

[25] An omnipotent God cannot be influenced by something outside himself. "Whatever suffers does so from an agent stronger than itself, and is in some measure impotent. But God is a Being of immense power. For He, from whom all power is derived, must necessarily be omnipotent" (Edward Welchman, *The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, Illustrated with Notes, and Confirmed by Texts of the Holy Scripture, and Testimonies of the Primitive Fathers*, trans. A Clergyman of the University of Oxford, 3rd ed. [London: Printed for John and James Rivington, 1750], 3).

[26] Burnet, *Exposition of the Articles*, 27.

[27] "There is no increase in [God]. He is not like us, partly in act, partly in power. He is all act, *actus purissimus*" (Forbes, *Explanation*, 11).

he is always the same unmovable, unchangeable, impassible God."[28] Biblical descriptions of God's passions are merely anthropomorphic, "only spoken to come down to man's weakness and to his better understanding the wonderful works of God."[29]

From the statements above, it could be said that the Anglican doctrine of God has much in common with strict classical theism.[30] O'Donovan observes that the statements of the Article "owe more to the philosophical vocabulary of Platonism than they do to the vocabulary of the Scriptures."[31] He describes the influence this way:

> [Early] Christian thinkers pointed out that Platonic philosophers shared the prophets' hostility to crude anthropomorphic ideas of God. The world we know is full of things that come to an end; but God has no end and no beginning, he is 'everlasting.' The world we know is full of things that are limited spatially by their bodies, of things analysable in terms of their constituent elements, of things subject to other forces than themselves; but God is 'without body, parts or passions.' The key term is 'infinite.' We are 'finite', limited. God is 'infinite', unlimited. Whatever bounds our imagination may put upon God (because we are used to thinking only of things that are bounded in one way or another), those bounds must be removed.[32]

He points out that a key theme of a theism influenced by Platonism is a separation between the human and the divine.[33] God is infinitely unlike human beings, and God must thus be understood in terms of this dissimilarity. Article I is visibly a product of these philosophical premises.

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[28] Beveridge, *On the Thirty-Nine Articles*, 26.

[29] Thomas Rogers, *A Short Scriptural Explication of the Faith and Doctrine of the Church of England: As Established in Her Thirty-Nine Articles and Creeds* (London: Printed by M. Lewis for the Editor, 1776), 2. "Since [God] is the most simple essence, and is also immutable, and always infinitely happy, He is utterly incapable [of passions]; and therefore that those things are spoken by way of accommodation to the weakness of men, and not as suitably to the perfections of God" (Welchman, *Thirty-Nine Articles*, 3).

[30] I am using John C. Peckham's definition of strict classical theism as a position within the diversity of classical theism that "affirms, as a tightly connected package, divine perfection, necessity, *pure* aseity, *utter* self-sufficiency, *strict* simplicity, *timeless* eternity, *utter* immutability, *strict* impassibility, omnipotence, and omniscience" (*The Doctrine of God: Introducing the Big Questions* [New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2020], 10).

[31] O'Donovan, *On the Thirty-Nine Articles*, 12.

[32] Ibid., 13.

[33] O'Donovan takes a different approach to the interpretation of the *via negativa* statements in Article I, instead viewing them through the evangelical message, where each statement says something about God's love, purpose, and relationship with humankind (Ibid., 14).

Considering the sources of Wesley's theology, specifically the influence of Anglican theism, how then is Wesley's doctrine of God best understood? He claims to fully support the classical theism of the Church of England, but do his sermons show complete agreement?

Key Concepts of Wesley's Theism

As suggested above, although Wesley affirmed the *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion,* his sermons may indicate some divergence. Following is an examination of his descriptions of the attributes of God, with the goal of discovering whether Wesley's sermons exhibit harmony with what the Anglican Church taught. The following key concepts of Wesley's theism in his sermons will be examined: (1) the interrelated divine attributes of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience; (2) divine eternity in relation to human time; and (3) divine love. Those of Wesley's sermons that I have examined do not deal explicitly with impassibility and immutability, but some mention of these two attributes will be given in relation to the others.

Omnipotence, Omnipresence, and Omniscience

Wesley manifestly believed that God had no limits to his power, presence, and knowledge. Wesley affirmed God's omnipotence.[34] God is sovereign above all his creation.[35] God is not limited by anything outside himself. He wills and acts as he wishes.[36] It is according to his sovereign will that he created the

[34] Collins observes Rene Descartes's distinction of mind and body within Wesley's concept of divine omnipotence. However, unlike Descartes, Wesley rejected the concept of divine withdrawal. Instead, Wesley saw God as actively involved in the affairs of the world through his "continued influx and agency of his almighty power" (John Wesley, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount VI," in *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Albert C. Outler [Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1984–1987], 1:581). Wesley's understanding of God's omnipotence, then, is best understood in terms of his providence for the earth (Collins, *A Faithful Witness*, 18–19; see also Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* [Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2007], 26–28).

[35] Don Thorsen argues that Wesley's understanding of God's sovereignty is best understood in relation to God's holiness and his "relational attributes of love, grace, patience, goodness, and forgiveness." Sovereignty, then, is not to be understood only in terms of the separation between the human and divine but also in terms of the connection between the two, in God's involvement in human affairs (*Calvin vs. Wesley: Bringing Belief in Line with Practice* [Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2013], 7).

[36] God as Creator acts "according to his own sovereign will" and "in the most absolute sense [may] do what he will with his own" (John Wesley, "Thoughts Upon God's Sovereignty," in *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Paul Wesley Chilcote and Kenneth J. Collins [Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2013], 13:548). Wesley differentiates between God as sovereign creator and God as governor: "Whenever … God acts as a Governor,

world at a given point in eternity and appointed the place and duration of the universe.

God's omnipotence naturally results in omnipresence, for he executes his power everywhere: "And it is nothing strange that he who is omnipresent, who 'filleth heaven and earth,' who is in every place, should see what is in every place, where he is intimately present."[37] To undermine omnipresence means also undermining omnipotence: "If there were any space where God was not present he would not be able to do anything there."[38] Where God is not present, he has no "duration," and cannot exercise his power, justice, or mercy.[39] Thus, "there can be no more bounds to his power than his presence."[40]

For Wesley, omnipresence means not only God's presence "in all places" but also "at all times."[41] Thus, God is present not only in space but also in eternity: "As he exists through infinite duration, so he cannot but exist through infinite space" (more on this below).[42] Wesley does make an interesting statement about God's omnipresence: "The omnipresent Spirit … is not only 'all in the whole, but all in every part'"[43] This statement indicates that Wesley understood God to be more present in the world than in the strict classical sense.[44]

God's omnipresence also naturally results in his omniscience, for "if he is present in every part of the universe, he cannot but know whatever is, or is done there."[45] God's divine attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence are exercised to sustain the existence of the world: "All his wisdom is continually employed in managing all the affairs of his creation for the good of all his creatures. For his wisdom and goodness go hand in hand;

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as a rewarder, or punisher, he no longer acts as a mere Sovereign, by his own sole will and pleasure—but as an impartial Judge, guided in all things by invariable justice" (Wesley, "God's Sovereignty," in Chilcote and Collins, *Works*, 13:549).

[37] Wesley, "On Divine Providence," in Outler, *Works*, 2:538.

[38] Wesley, "On the Omnipresence of God," in Outler, *Works*, 4:44.

[39] Wesley, "Omnipresence of God," in Outler, *Works*, 4:44–45.

[40] Wesley, "The Unity of the Divine Being," in Outler, *Works*, 4:62.

[41] Wesley, "Divine Providence," in Outler, *Works*, 2:538.

[42] Wesley, "Unity of the Divine," in Outler, ed., *Works*, 4:61.

[43] Wesley, "Divine Providence," in Outler, *Works*, 2:538–539. Wesley is here alluding to Plotinus, suggesting that the relationship between God and the world is similar to the relationship between the soul and the body in the Neoplatonic sense.

[44] Schubert M. Ogden interprets this statement in the process theism sense of "the world as God's body" ("Love Unbounded: The Doctrine of God," *PSTJ* 19.3 [1966]: 16). Wesley's allusion to the soul-body relationship lends credence to this argument. For a definition of strict classical theism, see footnote 30.

[45] Wesley, "Unity of the Divine," in Outler, *Works*, 4:62.

they are inseparably united, and continually act in concert with almighty power for the real good of all his creatures."[46]

Wesley's statements demonstrate that he saw God's omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience as inseparable. All three must be true, and the denial of one naturally leads to the denial of the others. However, despite God's unlimited capacities, there are things that God cannot do. He cannot "deny himself … counteract himself, or oppose his own work."[47] God does not contradict himself, as Yang asserts concerning Wesley's perspective:

> The just God cannot do an unjust act; the good God cannot do an evil act or the God who hates sin cannot make someone commit sin. The just God cannot predestine unjustly some to life and others to eternal death before they come into the world, without consideration of their responsiveness to his love and grace. The holy God cannot be a minister of sin by coercing some to commit sin without their willingness to sin. "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."[48] God cannot break his promise unfaithfully since he is faithful. God "cannot deny himself."[49]

In addition to God's limitation of noncontradiction (which does not undermine his omnipotence), Wesley also describes God as placing limits upon himself in relation to human beings, specifically in bestowing free will upon them. In creation, God gave human beings the capacity of self-motion, understanding, will, and liberty.[50] God is thus limited in the sense that he does not overpower or override this free will:

> If therefore God were thus to exert his power there would certainly be no more vice; but it is equally certain, neither could there be any virtue in the world. Were human liberty taken away men would be as incapable of virtue as stones. Therefore (with reverence be it spoken) the Almighty himself cannot do this thing. He cannot thus contradict himself, or undo what he has done.[51]

This self-limitation should not be understood in the sense of an "actual limitation in the sovereignty, power, and majesty of God."[52] God is still omnipotent

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[46] Wesley, "Divine Providence," in Outler, *Works*, 2:540.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Wesley, "Sermon on Mount VI," in Outler, *Works*, 1:588.

[49] Yang, "Doctrine of God," 169–170.

[50] Wesley, "The General Deliverance," in Outler, *Works*, 2:440.

[51] Wesley, "Divine Providence," in Outler, *Works*, 2:541. "God's government of the universe is absolute in every particular save only in the activity of free men; and God's providence displays itself, not in overriding human freedom, but rather in affording help to man and assistance in working out his salvation, so far as such assistance can be given without compulsion, without overruling his liberty" (William Ragsdale Cannon, *The Theology of John Wesley: With Special Reference to the Doctrine of Justification* [New York, NY: Abingdon, 1946], 172–173).

[52] Thorsen, *Calvin vs. Wesley*, 9.

and omniscient, but for Wesley, God's foreknowledge is not determinative. Wesley rejected the notion of God's omnipotence "in the sense that God exercises all power and thus creatures exercised none."[53] The concepts of noncontradiction and divine self-limitation apropos of human free will may fit within strict classical theism. Both determinism and libertarianism could coincide with a strict understanding of God's attributes. However, Wesley's emphasis on human free will indicates that to him, God limits his power because of love.

The above statements indicate that Wesley's understanding of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience aligns closely with classical theism (although it does not require it). However, his understanding of God's eternity, which we now turn to, reveals less concurrence.

Eternity

Wesley's 1786 sermon "On Eternity," which Albert C. Outler describes as Wesley's "deepest plunge into speculative theology" at that point in his career, sheds light on his understanding of God's relationship with time.[54] In the sermon, Wesley differentiates between eternity *a parte ante* (eternity past) and eternity *a parte post* (eternity future).[55] For Wesley, time is "in some sense a fragment of eternity, broken off at both ends."[56] Those who exist in the present lie between two eternities—that of the past, and that of the future.

Wesley saw a clear distinction between God and humankind in their experience of time. Reflecting on Psalm 8:4, Wesley asks, "How can he that inhabiteth eternity stoop to regard the creature of a day; one whose life passeth away like a shadow?"[57] Wesley reminds his audience that "God is not man" and that "there is the same disproportion between him and any finite being as between him and the creature of a day."[58] However, Wesley affirms that eternity is a communicable attribute of God. He argues that "angels, and archangels, and all the companies of heaven" are recipients of this attribute and that God intends "the inhabitants of the earth who dwell in houses of clay" but whose "souls will never die" to experience the same.[59] In this sense,

[53] Collins, *Theology of John Wesley*, 28. Wesley vehemently protested the Calvinist teaching of predestination because it distorted the loving character of God: "It represents the most Holy God as worse than the devil, as both more false, more cruel, and more unjust" (Wesley, "Free Grace," in Outler, *Works*, 3:555).

[54] Wesley, "On Eternity," in Outler, *Works*, 2:358.

[55] Ibid., 2:358–359.

[56] Ibid., 2:360.

[57] Ibid., 2:371.

[58] Ibid., 2:371–372.

[59] Ibid., 2:361. Human beings are "pictures of [God's] own eternity" and as such, their spirits are "clothed with immortality."

human beings can be eternal *a parte post.*[60] A person who by faith believes in God "lives in eternity, and walks in eternity."[61] Yet, it is only God who is eternal in both senses, *a parte ante* and *a parte post*, so that "his duration alone, as it had no beginning, so it cannot have any end."[62]

On several occasions in the sermon, Wesley describes eternity in the sense of a "duration without beginning" or "duration without end," in contrast to Beveridge and Burnet, who insist that God experiences no duration or successive time. Unlike time, which "admits of bounds," eternity is "unbounded duration," where measures of length are inapplicable.[63] In his sermon "What is Man?" (1787), based on Psalm 8:3–4, Wesley compares the "poor pittance of duration" of modern human beings to that of Methuselah or the "duration of an angel" or even the duration before they were created to "unbeginning eternity."[64] The usage of "duration" seems to indicate a sequential understanding of time which may also be applied to God, before whom "no duration is long or short."[65] Wesley does differentiate between "finite and infinite duration," but the distinction is the ability of human beings to comprehend endless duration.[66] Eternity is simply a sequence of time having

[60] Wesley even uses the law of the conservation of matter to argue that physical matter is itself eternal *a parte post.* Matter has a beginning but has no end. Even if it may break down and change in form, the substance remains the same (Wesley, "On Eternity," in Outler, *Works*, 2:362). See Thomas C. Oden, *John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity: A Plain Exposition of His Teaching on Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 32.

[61] Wesley, "On Eternity," in Outler, *Works*, 2:369.

[62] Ibid., 2:359. Thomas C. Oden seems to interpret Wesley's words in this sermon to mean that God exists in the eternal present, as one who has "a present relation to all past and future moments" (*John Wesley's Teachings* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012], 1:38). However, I do not see any explicit statement from this sermon that indicates such an idea. One must look to other statements to argue the case.

[63] Wesley, "On Eternity," in Outler, *Works*, 2:365. For those in heaven, any measurement of time is unnecessary, for "when millions of millions of ages are elapsed, their eternity is but just begun."

[64] Wesley, "What Is Man?" in Outler, *Works*, 3:458.

[65] Wesley, "On Eternity," in Outler, *Works*, 2:372.

[66] Wesley, "What Is Man?" in Outler, *Works*, 3:458. Wesley cites an illustration of Cyprian: "'Suppose there was a ball of sand as large as the globe of the earth; and suppose one grain of this sand as large as the globe of earth; and suppose one grain of this were to be annihilated in a thousand years; yet that whole space of time wherein this ball would be annihilating, at the rate of one grain in a thousand years, would bear less, yea, unspeakably, infinitely less proportion to eternity than a single grain of sand would bear to that whole mass.' What then are the seventy years of human life in comparison of eternity? In what terms can the proportion between these be expressed? It is nothing, yea, infinitely less than nothing!"

no end (or in the case of God, no beginning) and not necessarily the "antithesis of temporality."[67] If this is true, then Wesley would not be subscribing to a strict timeless (no succession of moments) understanding of God, but rather an everlasting (a succession of moments without end) view of God's time.

There are statements, however, that indicate a classical view of divine time. In his sermon "On Predestination," where he expounds on God's foreknowledge, Wesley explains that God "does not know one thing before another, or one thing after another, but sees all things in one point of view, from everlasting to everlasting. As all time, with everything that exists therein, is present with him at once, so he sees at once whatever was, is, or will be to the end of time."[68] Thomas C. Oden interprets Wesley's understanding of time to mean that God "inhabits all eternity" and "has a present relation to all past and future moments."[69] This language indicates an "eternal present" understanding of God's relationship to time. Jung Yang argues that, for Wesley, because it is impossible to measure God's eternity, "God's eternity is not the succession of time which has its beginning and end. Rather, God's eternity produces time."[70]

How did Wesley understand God's workings in relation to time? I will here use John Cooper's identification of the question of time as the distinction between "classical Christian theism" and "modified classical Christian theism," wherein the former affirms God's eternity (i.e., strict timelessness) while the latter affirms God's involvement in time.[71] If Wesley did indeed believe God could work sequentially within time, it could be argued that he held to a modified classical Christian theism. Yang affirms Wesley's belief that God can work within time although he "transcends the sphere of time."[72] For example, Wesley understood that God created the world "at that point of duration which the infinite wisdom of God saw to be most proper."[73] Wesley's sermon "The Wisdom of God's Counsels," presents God as actively involved in human history, from the incarnation of Jesus until Wesley's present time.[74] Observing his contemporary ongoing reformations, Wesley says,

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[67] Ogden, "Love Unbounded," 16.

[68] Wesley, "On Predestination," in Outler, *Works*, 2:417.

[69] Oden, *Wesley's Scriptural Christianity*, 31. Oden ties this "present relation to … future moments" with foreknowledge. It is unclear if Oden understands God's "inhabiting" of all eternity in the experiential sense or in the cognitive/knowledge sense.

[70] Yang, "Doctrine of God," 160.

[71] John W. Cooper, *Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006), 321.

[72] Yang, "Doctrine of God," 161.

[73] Wesley, "Unity of the Divine," in Outler, *Works*, 4:63.

[74] Wesley, "The Wisdom of God's Counsels," in Outler, *Works*, 2:551–566.

> And, blessed be God, we see he is now doing the same thing in various parts of the kingdom. In the room of those that have fallen from their steadfastness, or are falling at this day, he is continually raising up out of the stones other children to Abraham. This he does at one or another place according to his own will; pouring out his quickening Spirit on this or another people just as it pleaseth him. He is raising up those of every age and degree—young men and maidens, old men and children—to be 'a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, to show forth his praise who has called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.' And we have no reason to doubt but he will continue so to do till the great promise is fulfilled, till 'the earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea'; 'till all Israel is saved, and the fullness of the Gentiles is come in.'[75]

Wesley's use of the present tense to describe God's actions implies that Wesley perceives God to be working in the present, within time, alongside history. His comments on God's providential acts seem to describe God as such. God is "the eternal, omnipresent, almighty, all-wise Spirit, [and] as he created all things, so he continually superintends whatever he has created."[76] Of course, it is possible to interpret these statements euphemistically, where God is described in human terms but acts within the "eternal present" that only manifests its results within human history. This would be the case if Wesley subscribed to divine timelessness. However, I believe it more likely that Wesley's language instead indicates a more flexible view of God's actions within human time, particularly in light of his statements on the "duration" of divine eternity.

The statements cited above indicate that there is some ambiguity in Wesley's sermons concerning God's relationship with time. His pastoral approach does not attempt to answer specific questions regarding God's temporality or timelessness. For example, Wesley affirms that human beings may receive God's eternity *a parte post* but does not address whether human beings will experience timelessness. The only distinction he indicates is that God's eternity has no beginning. It is quite significant that at no point in his sermon "On Eternity" (and in other sermons I have examined) does Wesley use the descriptive language of divine timelessness such as Burnet or Beveridge utilize.

The discrepancy likely stems from the fact that although Wesley thought of God's eternity "in terms of a temporal rather than timeless duration, he still understood reality from the perspective of Neoplatonic dualism."[77] Thus,

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[75] Ibid., *Works*, 2:565.

[76] Wesley, "Unity of the Divine," in Outler, *Works*, 4:69.

[77] Fernando Canale, "*Sola Scriptura* and Hermeneutics: Toward a Critical Assessment of the Methodological Ground of the Protestant Reformation," *AUSS* 50.2 (2012): 190. For example, Wesley clearly adhered to a dualistic understanding of

Fernando Canale observes that Wesley "hints at the possibility that the time of infinite duration may not change at all and thus infinity may be timeless."[78] However, Wesley does not make his view explicit, nor does he address the logical question of how a timeless God could become temporal.[79] One possibility is that the "evangelical" Wesley pictured a God more involved and intimate with human beings, while the "Anglican" Wesley held to a classical dualistic ontology, thereby creating a logical contradiction in his view of divine time.

Yang observes that "Wesley's God is the author of time who created, controls and works in time, but he is absolutely beyond time and cannot be measured by it."[80] Within this description, however, is a possibility of multiple interpretations. This could be taken to mean strict timelessness ("beyond time") or some element of temporality ("works in time"). My reading of Wesley leans in the direction of some form of temporality, based on three arguments: (1) if Wesley understood the only difference between human and divine eternity is that God has no beginning, then it would make sense that God's experience of time is somewhat analogous to that of humans; (2) Wesley's usage of "duration" indicates a succession of moments; and (3)

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human nature and the dichotomy of body and soul: "But what am I? Unquestionably I am something distinct from my body. It seems evident that my body is not necessarily included therein. For when my body dies, I shall not die: I shall exist as really as I did before…. Indeed at present this body is so intimately connected with the soul, that I seem to consist of both. In my present state of existence, I undoubtedly consist both of soul and body: And so I shall again, after the resurrection, to all eternity" (Wesley, "What Is Man?" in Outler, *Works*, 4:23). Moreover, Wesley viewed the body as temporal but the soul as eternal: "Consider, that the spirit of man is not only of a higher order, of a more excellent nature than any part of the visible world, but also more durable, not liable either to dissolution or decay. We know all 'the things which are seen are temporal', of a changing transient nature; 'but the things which are not seen' (such as is the soul of man in particular) 'are eternal'" (Wesley, "What Is Man?" in Outler, *Works*, 3:460).

[78] Canale, "*Sola Scriptura* and Hermeneutics," 190.

[79] God cannot be both timeless and temporal at the same time—these are contradictory concepts. "Often, laymen, anxious to affirm both God's transcendence (His existing beyond the world) and His immanence (His presence in the world), assert that God is both timeless and temporal. But in the absence of some sort of model or explanation of how this can be the case, this assertion is flatly self-contradictory and so cannot be true. If, then, God exists timelessly, He does not exist at any moment of time. He transcends time; that is to say, He exists but He does not exist in time. He has no past, present, and future. At any moment in time at which we exist, we may truly assert that 'God exists' in the timeless sense of existence, but not that 'God exists now'" (William Lane Craig, *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001], 15).

[80] Yang, "Doctrine of God," 162.

Wesley's description of how God works in human history depicts God as able to enter into and work within human time to demonstrate his love. [81]

Love

Depending on one's philosophical presuppositions, the dynamics of divine love may be described in different ways. For example, classical theism depicts God's love as transcendent, impassible, purely volitional, and unaffected by human love. In contrast, process theism depicts divine love as immanent, passible, and dynamically relational.[82] It is therefore beneficial to examine Wesley's descriptions of divine love, which will shed light on his understanding of God as compared with the classical theism of Anglicanism.

God's love may be described as the center of Wesley's theology.[83] God loves humankind so much that "he is concerned every moment for what befalls every creature upon earth; and more especially for everything that befalls any of the children of men."[84] As noted above, Wesley believed that because of love, God limits his power with regard to human free will. Don Thorsen argues that, for Wesley, emphasizing God's love was more crucial than emphasizing his power, "not that the power of God's sovereignty is unimportant, but that power without love misses out on the full self-revelation of God to people in the Bible."[85] It is through God's love that his other attributes—such as his sovereignty—are to be understood.[86] Wesley viewed God's love as his "darling, his reigning attribute, the attribute that sheds an amiable glory on all his other perfections."[87]

Wesley did not address the question of whether God's love is purely nonreciprocal—that is, whether he can only give love and not receive it.

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[81] Yang even hints that some of Wesley's writings could be interpreted to mean that God experiences his own time in contrast to cosmic time (i.e., analogical temporality). However, he interprets "God's time" to mean that his actions come at their appointed time, "when God does his work either transcendently or immanently in cosmic time according to his infinite wisdom" ("Doctrine of God," 161–162).

[82] See John C. Peckham, *The Love of God: A Canonical Model* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 15–44.

[83] Charles W. Carter, R. Duane Thompson, and Charles R. Wilson, eds., *A Contemporary Wesleyan Theology: Biblical, Systematic, and Practical* (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury, 1983), 1:120.

[84] Wesley, "Divine Providence," in Outler, *Works*, 2:540.

[85] Thorsen, *Calvin vs. Wesley*, 11.

[86] Wesley's problem with Calvinism was that, in the process of emphasizing God's sovereignty over salvation, it made God responsible for reprobation, thereby distorting God's loving character.

[87] John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1866), 387.

Wesley's 1733 sermon "The Love of God" expounds on how humans ought to love God and will experience genuine happiness as a result.[88] Yet, the sermon is silent on whether God also experiences happiness resulting from the love of his creatures.

There are, however, elements of Wesley's sermons that shed light on the dynamics of God's love. In his 1786 sermon "On Divine Providence," Wesley builds on Thomas Crane's imagery of three concentric circles of divine providence. The first circle covers humanity as a whole, not only Christians but also "Mahometans" and "heathens." For support, Wesley cites Psalm 145:9, "The Lord is loving unto every man, and his mercy is over all his works."[89] God grants general providence for all humankind, regardless of their faith. The second circle covers Christianity at large, those who "in some degree honour [Christ], at least more than the heathens do."[90] God provides for them and protects them to a greater degree than the first circle. The third circle is comprised of genuine Christians, composed of "all that love God, or at least truly fear God and work righteousness, all in whom is the mind which was in Christ, and who walk as Christ also walked."[91] God takes particular notice and provides particular care toward those who genuinely love and serve him. It is this group that experiences God's miraculous works.[92]

The "three circles" of providence seem to imply a fore-conditional aspect of divine providence (or love), where God loves humanity in a general way, but offers a special kind of providence/love for those who reciprocate it.[93] God's providential acts are an outworking of his love. While Wesley here uses the terms "general providence" and "specific providence" instead of "fore-conditional love," the principles are present. Genuine love from human beings results in special providence/love from God. If true, this would undermine the concept of pure aseity because God receives love as a condition for a more intimate kind of love or providence.[94]

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[88] Wesley, "The Love of God," in Outler, *Works*, 4:331–345.

[89] Wesley, "Divine Providence," in Outler, *Works*, 2:542. This is quoted from the *Book of Common Prayer.* Of note is that, while most other translations render it "The Lord is *good*," the *Book of Common Prayer* renders it "The Lord is *loving*."

[90] Wesley, "Divine Providence," in Outler, *Works*, 2:543.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid., 2:546.

[93] I am again borrowing Peckham's terminology, with "fore-conditional" meaning that "God's love is freely bestowed prior to any conditions but not exclusive of conditions" (*Love of God*, 191). As such, God's love is universal in that it is given to all, but it is also particular in that only those who lovingly respond share a special intimacy with him.

[94] In the concept of pure aseity, God is completely independent of anything outside himself. Even his attributes are completely self-sufficient and cannot be influenced by

Central to Wesley's understanding of God is the notion that God is personal.[95] Yang frames this personalness within God's eternality, omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence.[96] Divine attributes are best understood in light of divine love. It is significant that in Wesley's depictions of God's personalness, there is no mention of his immutability or impassibility. In contrast, God's relational and social nature, as seen within the Trinity, is also evident in the creation of humankind. As Yang puts it, "From the inner life of love, the love which is gracious to others, the triune God enjoyed sharing his love and happiness with others. Thus, he created intelligent beings."[97]

The above statements indicate a dynamic view of the love between God and human beings. Wesley does not make a clear statement in the sermon about reciprocity—that is, whether God receives love—but his descriptions of divine love do not require a great logical leap to conclude that the divine-human relationship shares reciprocal love, thereby indicating a departure from strict classical theism.

Synthesis

It is important to note that Wesley did not write systematically.[98] His approach was homiletical, focused on exhorting his audience to holy living. As William Ragsdale Cannon observes, "It seems as if Wesley shies away from metaphysical questions in regard to the nature of God and contents himself with an affirmation of the most obvious facts which come to him through the channel

anything external. Contrary to pure aseity, fore-conditional love means that God would be dependent upon reciprocated human love as the basis for a special relationship.

[95] Yang, "Doctrine of God," 176. "There are times when [Wesley] speaks of God in terms which show that he is, at the moment, thinking in the traditional way of a God outside his creation, as the God of the Deists was outside. But it is evident that Wesley's belief in God's closer, more intimate relation with nature … was his real answer to the mechanistic, deistic theories of his time. God is both transcendent *and* immanent …. Wesley's theology demanded a closer correlation of God with His world than contemporary thought allowed" (Umphrey Lee, *John Wesley and Modern Religion* [Nashville, TN: Cokesbury, 1936], 115–116).

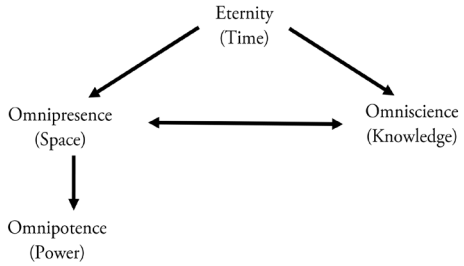
[96] Yang, "Doctrine of God," 182. Yang cautions against overemphasizing God's love at the expense of His power and sovereignty. He notes that Wesley was more involved with the Calvinists than with those who rejected God's omnipotence, and consequently, his writings reflect more emphasis on God's loving and personal nature than his power or sovereignty.

[97] Yang, "Doctrine of God," 177.

[98] Although many since Wesley's lifetime have downplayed his contributions to theology, Randy L. Maddox emphasizes Wesley's relevance as a "theological mentor" for Christianity as a whole ("Reclaiming an Inheritance: Wesley as Theologian in the History of Methodist Theology," in *Rethinking Wesley's Theology for Contemporary Methodism*, ed. Randy L. Maddox [Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1998], 213–226).

of religions needs."[99] Wesley's pastoral approach meant "his theologizing was related more to the soteriological doctrines."[100] One must, therefore, admit an element of speculation in these inferences, but the ambiguity in Wesley's sermons does allow for some conjecture. Others may certainly interpret Wesley's writings differently than I do.

Wesley drew on the influence of classical theism within the Anglican Church, evident in his terminology in describing God's essential attributes. Kenneth Collins diagrams Wesley's understanding of the divine attributes this way:[101]



Collins indicates that divine eternity is the primary attribute upon which all others are built, which is a key concept in Neoplatonic dualism. Wesley's sermons, *prima facie*, indicate that he adhered to the classical understanding of omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. However, I concur with Schubert Ogden that "while much of Wesley's talk about God clearly presupposes the validity of classical metaphysics, not everything he says on this head … can be made to cohere with that metaphysical outlook."[102] As argued above, Wesley may have adhered to some form of divine temporality. If true, then God's omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence are to be understood within the context of God relating to human beings within sequential time. If God can enter human time, then it follows that he can

[99] Cannon, *Theology of John Wesley*, 160.

[100] Howard Alexander Slaatte, *Fire in the Brand: An Introduction to the Creative Work and Theology of John Wesley* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 116.

[101] Collins, *A Faithful Witness*, 19. God exists in all space (omnipresence), thereby knowing everything there is to know in that space (omniscience), and exercises his power wherever he exists (omnipotence). All of these attributes stem from Wesley's view of God's eternal existence. Wesley himself does not go into detail about which attribute is the cause of the others. Instead, he highlights the interrelatedness of each attribute with the other.

[102] Ogden, "Love Unbounded," 15.

also enter human space. He can be present in the world and in time, at least in an analogous sense. Wesley could thus be said to have departed, to some extent, from classical theism in the sense of divine temporality, omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence.

Additionally, God's attributes are best understood within the dynamics of general and specific providence/love, which would indicate a God who is more involved in human affairs than is allowed by the strict classical view. Wesley does not say so explicitly but, following his descriptions of divine love to their logical consequences, an argument could be made that Wesley's view of divine love is reciprocal in nature, thereby undermining the concept of strict aseity. I agree with Ogden's conclusion that "a [classical] metaphysics never has allowed, and, in principle, never could allow, an appropriate theological explication of the central theme of Wesley's evangelical witness, that God is love."[103]

As a response to recent objections against classical theism, Ogden proposes a Wesleyan "neoclassical theism," connected to the concept of love:

> The whole idea of moral goodness as we ordinarily make use of it clearly seems to depend for its meaning on such other basic ideas as real relation to others and capacity for change. Consequently, if we are to conceive of the truly perfect One, it can hardly be otherwise than as the supreme exemplification of these very ideas. So far from being the wholly absolute and immutable Being of the classical philosophers, God must really be conceived as the eminently relative One, whose openness to change contingently on the actions of others is literally boundless.[104]

Also mentioned above is Wesley's view of God's providential actions toward human beings, where God seems to work within human history, generally for all humankind and specifically for genuine followers. Ogden points out that this notion of a God involved with the world is inconsistent with the classical concept that "while ordinary beings are indeed related to God, he himself is in no way related to them and that the present world of nature and history is neither fully real nor ultimately significant."[105]

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[103] Ibid., 16.

[104] Ibid., 13. I do not agree with all of Ogden's premises, specifically (1) his claim that some elements of classical theism—creation, eschatology, and miracles—have been proven unscientific and should be understood as mythology, and (2) his claim that religious language is primarily existential-metaphysical, not scientific-historical. Neither do I agree with his proclivity toward process theism. However, I agree with his description of a more personal God and that one does not need to presuppose (strict) classical theism to arrive at theistic conclusions.

[105] Ogden, "Love Unbounded," 13.

Though he remained loyal to the Church of England, Wesley departed from its theology and practice when he deemed it necessary.[106] This may be the case with his theism, such that "one often finds him pressing against these limits [of classical theism] and, in some places, actually breaking through them."[107] Wesley may have been unaware of the theological implications of some of his claims, but when examined as a whole, his sermons indicate a modified classical theism, in contrast to the strict classical theism of the Church of England.

Conclusion

When John Wesley's theism is compared with that of the Church of England, it is evident that, while Wesley affirmed the statements of the Church and used much of its terminology, there are elements in his sermons that show considerable deviation. At times, he uses language that Burnet and Beveridge would likely disagree with. Wesley's classical descriptions of God's omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience align with the position of the Church, but his views of God's temporal eternity and reciprocal love toward humans are a departure from it.

When viewed from a perspective of tension between his Anglican loyalties and his evangelical leanings, Wesley's theism observably moves slightly away from strict classical theism, depicting God as personally involved in human time and affairs (although above them) and exercising special providence/love for those who genuinely love him in return. This article argues that whether Wesley was conscious of it or not, his doctrine of God may best be classified as modified classical theism.

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[106] "Frequently [Wesley] had claimed that in his relations with the Church of England he followed two principles: to stay as close as possible to her doctrines and discipline and worship, but to make variations in these whenever and wherever this was demanded by the peculiar work of God to which he was called" (Baker, *Wesley and the Church*, 324).

[107] Ogden, "Love Unbounded," 16.

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ACCEPTANCE TO EXPEDIENCE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ELLEN G. WHITE'S[1] AND ARTHUR G. DANIELLS'S COUNSEL FOR RACE RELATIONS

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Abstract

This article offers a comparative analysis of Ellen G. White's and Arthur G. Daniells's positions concerning race relations. Through a careful survey of White's writings—especially *Testimonies to the Church,* vol. 9, pp. 199–226 and *The Southern Work*—I argue that she never supported separationism. I hypothesize that Adventist separationism gained precedence through Daniells's selective compilation of White's counsels in his 1906 response to the People's Church. My findings unpack White's beliefs in spiritual leadership and ministry. She called for workers able to simultaneously accommodate culture and undermine prejudice internally through the gospel. Her vision necessitated the adjustment of methods on a local level, and thus she opposed official race-based policies. Daniells's eagerness to settle racial tensions led to a push for racial separation. He would interpret White's "no policy" stance as justification for instituting a separationist policy in DC and ultimately wherever racial tensions existed. Effectively, Daniells created a hermeneutical method for aligning administrative initiatives with the writings of White and was critical in solidifying segregation within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Keywords: Ellen G. White, Arthur G. Daniells, Interpretation, Racism, Integration

Introduction

The dominant question after the Civil War considered the role the newly freed slave would have within the society of the United States. In the North, a myriad of voices emerged: some promoting full equality and others seeking

[1] From the editors: All the references to the works of Ellen G. White are abbreviated, some of them in the text between parenthesis, following the standard abbreviations found in the website of the Ellen G. White Estate – www.whiteestate.org/books/abbrlist/.

more expedient solutions to jump-start the Southern economy. In the South, the temporary occupation of Union soldiers, the seizure of lands, and the removal of local leadership left many longing for the past. Efforts to reconcile the North and the South became the primary focus after Lincoln's assassination. By 1877, the Southern elites had successfully gotten back their power and land. More importantly, they had established new ways to control the freedman with a combination of Lost Cause propaganda and legislative Black Codes.[2] By the end of the nineteenth century, the United States had reorganized in a way that ensured white dominance and Black disenfranchisement.[3] Any abolitionist hope for full equality among Black and white people failed to capture the social consciousness of the United States.

For the Seventh-day Adventist Church, a combined impetus for religious freedom and temperance came naturally out of a strong political alignment with abolitionism.[4] The fight for religious liberty emphasized constitutionally protected freedoms. And the Adventist lobby in support of temperance more

[2] The Lost Cause is a Southern historical narrative about the Civil War. For this reconstruction, the war over slavery got reduced to a battle for state rights and the perpetrators of the Confederate rebellion were recast as heroes. From this milieu, Southerners sought to maintain their slave economy through legislative action known as Black Codes. These laws restricted the free movement and voting rights of Black people. Breaking these laws could lead to imprisonment, forced labor, and in extreme instances death.

[3] My choice of capitalization between "white" and "Black" is intentional. The use of the word "white" seeks to homogenize a diversity of Western cultures primarily for legal purposes; it is not an ethnic distinction. On the other hand, the use of the word "Black" represents the African diaspora in the United States, a people group once enslaved and now free. The lack of clear lineage or heritage justifies the use of "Black" as a denotation of ethnicity (and estrangement). I use African American and Black interchangeably throughout this paper.

[4] Kevin M. Burton, "The Seventh-day Adventist Pioneers and Their Protest Against Systemic Racism," NAD Ministerial Association, 18 June 2020, https://www.nadministerial.com/stories/2020/6/18/the–seventh–day–adventist–pioneers–and–their–protest–against–systemic–racism; Richard W. Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf, *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2000), 20, 95; Calvin B. Rock, *Protest and Progress: Black Seventh-day Adventist Leadership and the Push for Parity* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2018), 1–10; Jonathan A. Thompson, ed., *The Enduring Legacy of Ellen G. White and Social Justice* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2017); Louis B. Reynolds, *We Have Tomorrow: The Story of American Seventh-day Adventists with an African Heritage* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1984), 29–84; Delbert W. Baker, "The Dynamics of Communication and African-American Progress in the Seventh-day Adventist Organization: A Historical Descriptive Analysis" (PhD diss., Howard University, 1992), 33–43.

forcefully challenged the norms of society.[5] Eventually—when the dual crises of the Civil War and the failed First Reconstruction resulted in unresolved racial tensions—the conception of acceptable activism narrowed and began to contradict their abolitionist ideals.[6] This contradiction produced two fundamentally different positions: a historic yet dwindling call for integration and a preference for racial separation.

Throughout the church's history, there has been strong support for equality between racial groups. For co-founder, Ellen G. White (EGW), racial separation contradicted Scripture and her own prophetic experiences. Her advocacy for African American outreach became central to her ministry from 1891 until her passing in 1915. For many, her counsels set forth a doctrine of acceptance and a strategy for inclusion and integration between groups. But there also emerged a group of Seventh-day Adventist members and leaders who saw racial separation as a societal necessity. To bring in new members from the South, an abolitionist message of social equality would never work. And they found within EGW's own words support for their belief that the gospel work should proceed separately along racial lines. To accommodate a white constituency, administrators and pastors would begin to filter EGW's writings to justify their preference for racial separation. In short, the ability to coordinate authoritative counsels with social norms allowed the Seventh-day Adventist Church to transition from abolitionism to segregation.

Methodology and Problem

To understand this transition from abolitionism to segregation, it is important to first distinguish separation from segregation. Separation refers to the ways that groups—racial or cultural—tend toward their own group.[7]

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[5] Douglas Morgan, *Adventism and the American Republic: The Public Involvement of a Major Apocalyptic Movement* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2001).

[6] Baker demonstrates the range of perspectives within the church ("Dynamics of Communication," 40–43); cf. Rock, *Protest and Progress*, 3, 5.

[7] Cf. Rock, who reflects on the fact that national integration policies have been mostly unsuccessful in promoting the blending of different cultural groups (*Protest and Progress*, 167–169). "Desegregation functions as a superior strategy for Black social progress, because it envisions the right of participation without suggesting the inevitability of physical, cultural, or personal merger" (168). Rock sees the failure of integration due to forced assimilation or homogenization (such as bussing) and argues that desegregation is a more effective means for achieving a willingly integrated society. To this conversation, I would add the critical proposals of Michael O. Emerson and George Yancey, *Transcending Racial Barriers: Toward a Mutual Obligation Approach* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011). Their research offers a more comprehensive understanding of integration models and offers a productive way for institutions to think about racial unity. But these observations do not take into consideration the 2020 Census, which notes that "the Multiracial population

Segregation deals with explicit or implicit exclusionary policies that penalize interracial socialization. To this end, we do find varying levels of separationist stances in the writings of EGW,[8] but as this paper will clarify, not once in her writings do we find the notion that racial separation was a normative state. That is, she believed that our ability to love and tolerate one another was an earthly representation of heaven.[9] Also, the practice of segregation was in a nascent phase during EGW's life. In this sense, the transition from abolitionism to segregation—as this paper will argue—was not a product of her writing. Rather, separationist and eventually segregationist ideals reflected the church's lived experiences and practices, which informed their readings of EGW.

The ideological shift for Adventism began around the 1890s, when growing support for separationist policy came up against EGW and those in favor of racial equality. In March of 1891, EGW spoke before the General Conference, the highest administrative body in the hierarchy of the Seventh-day Adventist church organization. Her speech, "Our Duty to the Colored People," laid out a path toward complete integration of the church (*SWk*, 9–17). Unfortunately, her later counsels seem to pull back from such calls as racial prejudice grew more violent.[10] This shift is significant because both sides relied on the writings of EGW to promote or resist racial separation. That both sides actively cited her counsel suggests a level of ambiguity from

was measured at 9 million people in 2010 and is now 33.8 million people in 2020, a 276% increase." See United States Census Bureau, "2020 Census Statistics Highlight Local Population Changes and Nation's Racial and Ethnic Diversity,", 12 August 2021, https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2021/population-changes-nations-diversity.html. These findings may support Rock's claim of the success of desegregation, but this data may also represent a growing mutual acceptance between once disparate racial groups.

[8] For instance, EGW saw interracial marriage as an extreme view for her time (*SWk*, 15).

[9] "Men may have both hereditary and cultivated prejudices, but when the love of Jesus fills the heart, and they become one with Christ, they will have the same spirit that He had. If a colored brother sits by their side, they will not be offended or despise him. They are journeying to the same heaven, and will be seated at the same table to eat bread in the kingdom of God. If Jesus is abiding in our hearts we cannot despise the colored man who has the same Saviour abiding in his heart. When these unchristian prejudices are broken down, more earnest effort will be put forth to do missionary work among the colored race" (*SWk*, 14).

[10] For a more comprehensive survey of her views, see Benjamin Baker, ed., "Counsels on Blacks: A Comprehensive Compilation of Ellen G. White's Statements on Black People," February 2021, 118–471, https://d34387f8-b80b-4319-a5ee-4b34617a2bab.filesusr.com/ugd/dc5cd6_712e6e418cac412a9c6e48cb5a32946d.pdf.

the church's co-founder and prophet.[11] Currently, the dominant historical position sees her separationist counsels as a temporary stopgap until "a better way" emerged.[12] But the historian Douglas Morgan emphasizes "Among the Colored People," written by EGW in 1909, as a major contributor to the confusion concerning her position on race relations.[13] Morgan rightly notes how her contemporaries viewed this text as a direct contradiction to her prior calls for integrated worship spaces.

I am convinced that Morgan's assessment is correct concerning how Adventists have understood EGW's counsels concerning race. This means it is insufficient to simply point to EGW's hope for "a better way" when *the way* may consist of further separationist policy. What I seek to do in this paper is to counter the historical assumption that EGW supported racial separation or created the justifications for segregation. To do this, I will compare EGW's writings with a response letter to the People's Church, an all-Black fellowship,[14] in Washington, DC, by General Conference President Arthur

[11] E. A. Sutherland—who served as President of Emmanuel Missionary College (now Andrews University) before accepting the call to educate in the South—recorded a rumor that highlights how many in the South were interpreting EGW's words: "I have been informed several times that some recent testimonies have come to different ones considering the importance of the colored work. One statement has been quoted something like this: – That the proper way to work for the colored people is to go first to the white folks and get them interested to help the colored people around them. I do not remember any such testimony in my possession" (Letter from E. A. Sutherland to EGW, [Berrien Springs, MI: Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, 18 December 1908].). Cf. Douglas Morgan on the treatment of a DC pastor pushing for separating the churches based on race (*Lewis C. Sheafe: Apostle to Black America* [Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2010], 251–252, 261–264).

[12] Ronald D. Graybill's work represents a position that would become the normative argument for Adventist historians. He writes, it was "Ellen White's conviction that extreme caution must be exercised in order to prevent the closing of the Negro work entirely in the South. She hoped that it would be only a matter of time until the Lord 'shows us a better way'" (*E. G. White and Church Race Relations* [Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1970], 117). However, Calvin Rock observes that "unfortunately the church for decades reacted to this statement given as common-sense caution against actions that would jeopardize gospel proclamation, as if it were perpetual principle. The 'better way' became synonymous with the Second Advent" (*Protest and Progress*, 24).

[13] Morgan, *Lewis C. Sheafe*, 385–391; *9T*, 199–226.

[14] The issue of racism and segregation became an increasing problem in the early years of the century. Daniells saw that the answer to prejudice among white church members would necessitate the creation of white and Black churches. The People's Church was formed in 1903 to serve this end, and the powerful preacher/evangelist Lewis C. Sheafe was installed there. From all extant records, Daniells and Sheafe were of one accord concerning the separation of these churches. Understandably, Sheafe

G. Daniells and his Executive Committee in 1906.[15] This work represents a necessary piece of the puzzle required to undo a historical misunderstanding of EGW that has contributed toward separationist and segregationist policies within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In the first part of this paper, I address perceived contradictions between EGW's 1909 counsels and statements written in the 1890s. Analysis of these passages suggests her counsels remained principally consistent, with some pragmatic adjustments due to Jim Crow. I will first read her 1909 counsels alongside an 1895 meeting she cites directly (*SWk*, 72–78). Through this analysis, I will provide a more thorough refutation of any claim that her writings intentionally guided separationist policies in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

If my proposed hermeneutical adjustment holds against scrutiny, then Daniells's letter to the People's Church represents a direct contradiction to the intent behind EGW's counsels.[16] The second section analyzes Daniells's response to the People's Church in 1906. His letter, written with the approval of the General Conference Executive Committee, establishes the unofficial separation policy for the church. In his response, Daniells provided a selective reading of EGW's writings—some of which the People's Church would not have ready access to. And it is this compilation that illuminates a growing consensus for racial separation in the church as well as the church's interpretive lens for justifying this shift.

If EGW did not prefer separationism, the onus for perpetuating racial separation during this period fell solely on Adventist leadership. This is not to suggest that the general constituency did not favor racial separation as well. But it should be recognized that the church relied on the leadership to publish EGW's writings. Thus, any authorial justification in favor of cultural norms came from the top. Also, given the growing tendency to view EGW as verbally inspired, a separationist reading would be received as an infallible affirmation for separation and ultimately segregation.[17] Let us now look closely at some selected readings from EGW.

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and the People's Church would see the lack of financial, educational, or health-care aid as inconsistent with the original intent of their agreement.

[15] Benjamin McArthur, *A. G. Daniells: Shaper of Twentieth-Century Adventism* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2015), 80–214. As the longest standing president in the history of the General Conference, Daniells gained prominence through his administrative prowess along with his strong relationship with the Whites. Because of his close associations with the prophet and her family, he (in effect) would take on the spiritual mantle after EGW's passing.

[16] Morgan, *Lewis C. Sheafe*, 389. Not enough has been done to fully analyze the impact of editorial contributions in the writing process. This paper is limited in scope, but hopefully future studies will perform a deeper textual study of White's controversial documents such as "Among the Color People" (*9T*, 199–226).

[17] Historically, compilations have been how interest groups within the church could convey their hermeneutical lens on the writings of EGW. This practice of compiling and even explaining her writings has provided several unique and often

Ellen G. White

Ellen G. White stood before church leaders at the General Conference Session in 1891 to urge the church to send missionaries to the South (*SWk*, 9–18). Prior to this, little time and few resources went to the deep South or to growing an African American membership.[18] Even worse, after the end of the Civil War, racism began to take a firmer hold in the church, which EGW personally witnessed among Adventist members in St. Louis in 1887 (*SWk*, 11).[19] Such experiences went against the message she spent her life promoting. In her 1891 speech, she made it clear that racism and separationist beliefs did not belong in the church. With her call for greater efforts in the South, she emphasized the need for unity between Blacks and whites.

Ellen G. White began to apply the principles espoused in 1891 to promote mission in the South. But as time progressed, her vision for integration met the stark reality of violent racism. The rise of Jim Crow necessitated nuanced approaches to doing work in the South. Below I have selected statements from her pen that attempt to deal with these problems.[20]

To Integrate or Not to Integrate

> You have no license from God to exclude the colored people from your places of worship. — *SWk*, 15 (1891)
>
> In regard to white and colored people worshiping in the same building, this

contradictory positions. However, the administrative use of compilations has been the most effective, partly due to familial connections to EGW, and also because they have historically been the gatekeepers to her archived writings. Slowly, with some editorial curation, her correspondence and unpublished writings have been published, along with several helpful online databases and archives (e.g., https://egwwritings.org; https://www.adventistarchives.org), making it possible for the public to look at her writings comprehensively. What emerges are clear discrepancies between administrative and lay use of her writings; more importantly, we can begin to map out the fundamental differences between EGW's position and that of the administration and laity.

[18] Baker, "Dynamics of Communication," 278. But of considerable note, see Trevor O'Reggio, "The Father of Black Adventism: Charles M. Kinney," *JATS* 25 (2014): 116–131.

[19] O'Reggio, "Father of Black Adventism," 121–123.

[20] The term "color line" would eventually be replaced with the more familiar term "segregation." During this time though, it is important to remember that both white and Black people thought that separate but equal accommodations would succeed—a position likely influenced by the *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling of 1896, although the zeitgeist around *Plessy* was primarily negative. Adam Fairclough, *Better Day Coming: Blacks and Equality, 1890–2000* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2001), 14; Michael J. Klarman, *From Jim Crow to Civil Rights: The Supreme Court and the Struggle for Racial Equality* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004), 16–28.

> cannot be followed as a general custom with profit to either party. — *9T*, 206 (1909)

The way I have cited EGW represents a typical reading within Adventism. It also represents a historical and present challenge for Black Seventh-day Adventists. The very person who advocated so eloquently on our behalf, by 1909, seemed to stand against the fight for equality. But EGW did not see a contradiction with her past statements and does not offer any clarifications that indicate a change in her thinking.[21] Did EGW simply choose to ignore her changing views about race? Or did she truly believe that her views are in harmony? She offered a framework for answering these questions. In *Testimonies to the Church,* volume 9, page 206, she referred to some of her counsels written from Australia in 1895, found in *The Southern Work*, pages 66–78.[22] I will use these passages to form my interpretative lens for understanding her nuanced positions around race relations.

In 1891, EGW spoke exclusively to an all-white Northern leadership with almost no active presence in the South. Local perspective permitting, statements like "God makes no distinction between the North and the South" and "they [African Americans] will not by any means be excluded from the gathering of the white people" clearly express universal standards for the entire church to follow (*SWk,* 13, 16). This universality is maintained in an 1895 leadership meeting in Australia (*SWk*, 66–78). In this meeting, EGW laid out strategies to counter Southern attempts to perpetuate Black servitude. For her, prejudice fell into the realm of divine warfare (*SWk*, 67–68, 76), and therefore, laborers needed to be subtle and innovative (*SWk*, 77). For this reason, she denounced any effort by fallible humans to construct lines of separation, hasty proclamations of Adventist doctrine (*SWk*, 70), or the speedy implementation of integration between groups (*SWk,* 20, 22). A greater harmony between Blacks and whites would come but only by "cautiously, presenting the truth by degrees, as the hearers can bear it" (*SWk*, 71).

EGW saw the need for different missional tactics in the South. "Among the colored people they will have to labor in different lines from those followed in the North" (*SWk*, 67). The tendency for Black and white Southern ministers to oppose Seventh-day Adventist teachings—especially regarding Sabbath observance—made Adventist outreach challenging (*SWk*, 67).[23]

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[21] E.g., "Whatever may be the nationality or color, whatever may be the social condition, the missionary of God will look upon all men as the purchase of the blood of Christ and will understand that there is no caste with God" (*SWk*, 31).

[22] To date, I have not seen a complete comparative analysis of these texts.

[23] Observing the Sabbath in the South would mean the loss of one day of work and in an agrarian economy that could prove disastrous. For this reason, missionaries had begun to encourage converts to catch up their work on Sundays, which led to arrests and harassment. See Ronald D. Graybill, *Mission to Black America: The True*

To prevent unnecessary confrontations, she urged missionaries to use extreme caution when introducing the Seventh-day Adventist doctrines. Instead of focusing on the particulars of Adventism, she promoted education through Bible readings (*SWk*, 68) along with medical work (*SWk*, 70, 73).[24] Through literacy and health care, Adventists could better negate Southern disenfranchisement and racism, as well as prejudice against Adventism.

Ellen G. White understood that Southern whites feared the loss of Black labor in the fields and opposed—oftentimes violently—most forms of education or social uplift (*SWk*, 67). She also recognized the attempt to rewrite history by whites who "are determined to make it appear that the blacks were better off in slavery than since they were set free" (*SWk*, 83). EGW offered two solutions to these problems: the training of Black leaders, educators, and medical workers (*SWk*, 75), and the promotion of industrial education (*SWk*, 84, 92). For EGW, the Oakwood School became a critical component for realizing her vision.[25] Not only did she advocate for its founding in 1896, but she also actively promoted the school the rest of her life through the donation of book proceeds as well as through fundraising.

Despite a concrete model for education and social uplift, when it came to integration, EGW considered it a "difficult problem to solve" (Ms 77, 2 August 1903, paragraph 1). While trumpeting God's ideal for completely integrated worship spaces, perhaps she underestimated how pervasive racism would become within the church. As the twentieth century dawned, the Seventh-day Adventist Church experienced impressive African American growth.[26] But with

Story of Edson White and the Riverboat Morning Star (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1971), 74–78; Reynolds, *We Have Tomorrow*, 85–107; Josh Dobson, "Adventists Arrested for Sabbath–Breaking?" Gainesville Seventh–day Adventist Church, https://gainesvillega.adventistchurch.org/media/revival/arrested-for-sabbath-breaking.

[24] "As the truth is brought to bear upon the minds of both colored and white people, as souls are thoroughly converted, they will become new men and women in Christ Jesus" (*SWk*, 22). Cf. Baker, "Dynamics of Communication," 177–261.

[25] Ibid., 85; Graybill, *White and Church Race*, 44–52. One way EGW modeled Black support was through personal donations, along with constant solicitations for the Oakwood Industrial School. Benjamin J. Baker (ed.), *A Place Called Oakwood, Inspired Counsel: A Comprehensive Compilation of Ellen G. White Statements on the Oakwood Educational Institution* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood College, 2007), 7–9, 25.

[26] By 1885, the Seventh-day Adventist Church had a membership of about 50 African Americans. In 1892, R. M. Kilgore reported no change (See Arthur Whitefield Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 4 vols. [Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1962], 2:185, 343, in Baker, "Dynamics of Communication," 77n82, 278)—although membership in North America had increased from 18,702 to 33,778 (see Baker [ed.], "Timeline of Black Adventist History: 1865–1899," in https://www.blacksdahistory.org/black-adventist-timeline-1865-1899). See also *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, 1885, 38; *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, 1904, 10,

Jim Crow in full swing and increased Southern pressures to sustain separation, EGW recognized the waning support for integration. In a private letter, she admitted that publicly promoting integration would lead to greater barriers in the work.[27] She blamed a lackluster approach by Adventists to reach the South along with a growing consensus among members to create a "color line" policy.[28] EGW's opposition to both positions represented a nuanced and careful approach to race relations, as it can be seen in the following,

> But who will press the question of entire exclusion? Both white and colored people have the same Creator, and are saved by the redeeming grace of the same Saviour. . .The Lord has not made two heavens, one for white people and one for the colored people. There is but one heaven for the saved (*4MR*, 33).

For her, the problem was not a lack of policy but rather a lack of commitment to Jesus. Ellen G. White, while acknowledging the elusiveness of complete inclusion, rejected any policy in favor of complete separation.[29]

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available at https://www.adventistyearbook.org. By 1909, Black membership was around 900 (Baker, "Timeline of Black Adventist History: 1900–1945," in https://www.blacksdahistory.org/black-adventist-timeline-1900-1944), with a total North American membership of 60,807 (*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, 1910, 10). It is quite likely that the official membership tally is inaccurate. It is also possible that the fallout with Sheafe in 1906 led to a reduction in the Black membership for 1910. Nevertheless, the numbers show a strong growth, which is all the more impressive considering the limited support and access afforded them.

[27] "There is too much at stake for human judgment to be followed in this matter. If the Conference should say that no difference is to be recognized and no separation is to be made in church relationship between the white people and the colored people, our work with both races would be greatly hindered. If it should be recommended and generally practiced in all our Washington churches, that white and black believers assemble in the same house of worship, and be seated promiscuously in the building, many evils would be the result. Many would say that this should not be, and must not be" (Lt 304 from EGW to Churches in Washington, D.C., 19 October 1908, in *4MR*, 32).

[28] E.g., "One of the difficulties attending the work is that many of the white people living where the colored people are numerous are not willing that special efforts should be put forth to uplift them" (*9T*, 204).

[29] "Men have thought it necessary to plan in such a way as to meet the prejudice of the white people; and a wall of separation in religious worship has been built up between the colored people and the white people. The white people have declared themselves willing that the colored people should be converted. They have no objection to this… yet they were not willing to sit side by the side of their colored brethren and sing and pray and bear witness to the truth which they had in common…. The image of Christ might be stamped upon the soul, but it still would be necessary to have a separate church and a separate service…. Is not this prejudice against the colored people on the part of

The threat of violence against African Americans and their sympathizers made it next to impossible to safely integrate worship spaces in the South without serious reprisals from surrounding communities. To continue Black education, health care, and bringing people to the knowledge of Jesus's love, she would ultimately accept the need for separate worship spaces. Temporary separation meant nothing compared to the spreading of a gospel that would undermine racism altogether.

The Breaking Down of Prejudice

> If Jesus is abiding in our hearts we cannot despise the colored man who has the same Saviour abiding in his heart. — *SWk*, 14 (1891)

> He who is closely connected with Christ is lifted above the prejudice of color or caste. — *9T*, 209 (1909)

Central to EGW's ministry came the conviction that when a person came to Jesus, they became a new creation (*SWk*, 22). The snare of racism and prejudice could be destroyed by a correct presentation of the gospel: all hatred and malice would cease.[30] EGW's 1895 counsels outlined the necessity for sending workers who saw every person as their equal. This internal focus was to guide workers amid a culture of hate and neglect. Only missionaries with a "self-sacrificing spirit" were to enter the South if they were to navigate the difficulties there (*SWk*, 17). By setting up industrial schools, and by providing health care and training for local communities, the inevitable result of any faithful adherent would be to forego their prejudice and hate. "Those who claim to be Christians have a work to do in teaching them [African Americans] to read and to follow various trades and engage in different business enterprises…. If they had an opportunity to develop, they would stand upon an equality with the whites" (*SWk*, 44).[31]

When EGW advised, in 1909, that issues of equality should not be urged on white people, she asserted this with a conviction that implementation of racial policy should be avoided: "If we move quietly and judiciously, laboring in the way that God has marked out both white and colored people will

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the white people similar to that which was cherished by the Jews against the Gentiles?... Christ worked throughout His life to break down this prejudice" (*SWk*, 19–20).

[30] "The Walls of sectarianism and caste and race will fall down when the true missionary spirit enters the hearts of men" (*SWk*, 55).

[31] She also wrote, "Let them visit the sick and the poor, ministering to their wants, and they will find favorable opportunities to open the Scriptures to individuals and to families" (*SWk,* 70). "As a means of overcoming prejudice and gaining access to minds, medical missionary work must be done, not in one or two places only, but in many places where the truth has not yet been proclaimed" (*9T*, 211).

be benefited by our labors" (*9T,* 214–215).[32] True success could only come with workers able to operate within oppressive structures without becoming changed by them.[33] Within this lens, converts to the Seventh-day Adventist Church would stay separate, but internally white and Black converts would have no prejudice or hatred that would hinder full integration. Participating in political discussions could shut the door to the only pathway for complete integration. Therefore, she urged for faithful and quiet work that attracted all parties to Jesus. At a certain time, a tipping point would appear—where people would be guided by God to turn away from prejudice—and the Seventh-day Adventist Church would then be able to express publicly the unity it practiced privately.[34]

Spirit Guided Leadership

> The Lord will give wisdom to all who ask Him, but let those who are to work difficult and peculiar fields study Christ's methods. —*SWk*, 76 (1895)
>
> Receive the Holy Spirit before you submit your plans for dealing with the color line. — Ms 77, 2 August (1903)

This brief historical analysis of EGW's perspective showcases her belief that a true understanding of Jesus could negate the evil invention of racism and prejudice. Because of this pressing need, she encouraged culturally accommodating forms of education and health care to introduce Southern Blacks and whites to Scripture and, ultimately, Jesus. Seeing great risk in adopting any of the ideas articulated in her time, she also urged that no official policies be constructed to either separate or integrate any congregation until direct spiritual guidance illuminated the process (Ms 77, 2 August 1903; *SWk*, 11, 13, 68; *9T*, 209, 213, 216). In the meantime, the church would operate within the prevailing culture, quietly subverting it, until a better way opened up before them. The church was to operate internally on an equal basis but externally along the lines of culture until the time came when their racial harmony

[32] See also Graybill, *White and Church Race*, 70–87.

[33] White, after quoting 1 Cor 9:20–23, stated, "We know that the apostle did not sacrifice one jot or principle. He did not allow himself to be led away by the sophistry and maxims of men…. This was the manner of his working—adapting his methods to win souls. Had he been abrupt and unskillful in handling the Word, he would not have reached either Jew or Gentile" (*SWk*, 76–77). That there was to be an internal perspective different from external practices is further indicated at the end of this letter, where EGW requested, "I would not advise that this be published in our papers, but let the workers have it in leaflets, and let them keep their own counsels" (*SWk*, 78).

[34] White predicted, "When the Holy Spirit is poured out, there will be a triumph of humanity over prejudice in seeking the salvation of the souls of human beings. God will control minds. Human hearts will love as Christ loved. And the color line will be regarded by many very differently from the way in which it is now regarded" (*9T*, 209).

could be expressed publicly. With this expectation of an inevitable divine intervention for the country, she saw separation as a short-term problem, not a long-term solution.

For Southern leadership, her position was seen as an opening for administrators to adopt stricter separationist policies. The rationale behind their actions did not align with the spirit of EGW's counsel—especially when we understand that her rejection of official policy based on race was meant to promote the infiltration of Adventist workers into the South. But despite EGW's opposition to exclusionary policies, her pragmatic calls for separate worship spaces gave administrators what they needed to support separationism. In a bureaucratic flourish, leaders like Daniells used her "no policy" stance to justify unequal distribution of funds and access to facilities.[35] When Daniells was elected General Conference President in 1901, pressured by his mentor R. M. Kilgore, pastors, and fellow administrators, he became convinced that separation was the best and quickest solution to address the problem of the color line.[36]

Arthur G. Daniells and the People's Church

Entering the twentieth century, the Seventh-day Adventist Church went through a process of reorganization—a process necessitated by growth both in the United States and around the world. With this growth came urgent needs for infrastructure and resources, but the General Conference found itself unable to meet every financial need. The guidance of Daniells brought the church back into solvency, resulting in exponential growth worldwide for both the health and education sectors of the church.[37] Unfortunately, in the United States—despite continued growth in Black membership—most infrastructure and subsequent funding was off-limits for African Americans. These disparities came to the forefront in 1906 with the People's Church, an all-Black fellowship, in Washington, DC.[38] After seeing multiple white-

[35] Lt 314 from EGW to Arthur G. Daniells, 23 September 1907, quoted in Baker, *Place Called Oakwood*, 49–50. In this letter, EGW implored Daniells to be mindful of efforts to divert funds from the Southern field. She often spoke up about the continued disparate support between white and Black institutions (see *SWk*, 88–89).

[36] Morgan, *Lewis C. Sheafe*, 187–189.

[37] McArthur, *A. G. Daniells*, 255–286.

[38] By 1902, the General Conference of Seventh–day Adventists moved their administrative offices from Battle Creek (MI) to Takoma Park (MD), just north of the District of Columbia. The issue of racism and segregation became an apparent problem, and Daniells saw that the answer to prejudice among white church members would necessitate the creation of white and Black churches (see Morgan, *Lewis C. Sheafe*, 188–192, who references a private letter that articulates Daniells's plan for separating Black and white people with the hope of also providing adequate resources

only structures being erected around them while at the same time receiving zero support from the District of Columbia Committee or the General Conference, the People's Church reached out to the General Conference to ascertain when and where they too would have access to Adventist resources.[39] Daniells's 1906 response to their petition served as the official General Conference answer.

An Unofficial "Official" Policy

> We have desired to confer with you in a brotherly spirit relative to this vexed question, and set before you principles which should govern us in dealing with this matter. This we have done the best way we have known how, and we trust you will receive our efforts in the spirit in which they are made. —Arthur G. Daniells (1906)[40]

The 1906 General Conference response to the People's Church consisted of eleven pages, including the submission of the two-page People's Church petition into the committee record. The People's Church petition submitted on February 26 requested a response by March 15, but as the deadline approached—with no immediate response from Daniells or his office—Lewis C. Sheafe, the church's pastor, pressed the issue.[41] Two meetings occurred

for both). The People's Church was formed in 1903 to serve this end, and the powerful preacher/evangelist Lewis C. Sheafe was installed there. From all extant records, Daniells and Sheafe were of one accord concerning the separation of these churches. Understandably, Sheafe and the People's Church would see the lack of financial, educational, or health-care aid as inconsistent with the original intent of their agreement.

[39] I have found that at least $300,000 was raised between the sanitariums, schools, and two white churches. Theofield G. Weis documents the monies raised by the Review and Herald in 1904 and in 1906–1907 ("Hail Washington: The Story of a College," manuscript draft [Takoma Park, MD: Washington Adventist University, 1946], Appendix A, C) although it should be noted that after 1907, a $500,000 fundraiser began for missions, to which the Southern field (a term synonymous with but not limited to African American outreach) would have received a small portion (E.g., Arthur G. Daniells, and G. B. Thompson, "Eighty-Second Meeting of the General Conference Committee," in *Minutes of the General Conference Committee* 137 [Washington, DC: General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, 14 April 1906], https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/GCC/GCC1906.pdf which shows 5 percent of October donations going "to the development of the work among the colored people of Washington, D.C."). Cf. Morgan, who highlights the explosive growth of Sheafe's People's Church compared to the all-white church that received maximum financial support from the General Conference (*Lewis C. Sheafe*, 280–288).

[40] In: *Minutes of Meetings of the General Conference Committee*, (Washington, DC: General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, 28 May 1906), 11.

[41] In my exploration of the presidential letters at the General Conference Archives, I discovered that Daniells actively responded to letters, and his correspondence

between Daniells and the People's Church on April 1 and 22 but without any firm commitments from leadership.[42] After these meetings—and more administrative delays—Daniells eventually offered a formal response on May 28, 1906. For the People's Church, the central issue in their petition revolved around equal access to facilities.[43] But Daniells perceived this letter as a direct attack on his preference for racial separation, and he shifted the focus of the request to defend his views, thus minimizing the request for equal access.[44]

Daniells understood EGW's 1891 warning against creating color line policies as justification for church administrators and pastors to freely deal with this issue as they saw fit (*SWk*, 15).[45] Referencing the mission of the

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is voluminous compared to his predecessors. Typically, Daniells would send a wire notifying the reception of correspondence and a rough timeline of when a response would be issued. Extant records show that even though Daniells traveled extensively, he also maintained constant communications. The lack of a timely response in this regard demonstrates either the hesitancy to tackle the People's Church/Sheafe issue or a lack of urgency in addressing this matter.

[42] Morgan, *Lewis C. Sheafe*, 296–297.

[43] "First, that the time in which we live, and the message we have to give, demand that we shall not waste our time in squabbles over the color question; but that we devote our energies to the salvation of both races. Second, that no effort be made to bring about an equality of the races, nor join the popular cry of elevating the colored man. Third, that we advise separate meetings of the races in those parts of the country where it causes offense for them to mix. Fourth, that in separating the races for meeting purposes, we shall not leave the colored people to themselves, nor neglect friendly counsel and cooperation in church management" (Letter from Arthur.G. Daniells to Hampton W. Cottrell, [21 January 1902, Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research] cited in Morgan, *Lewis C. Sheafe*, 190). It is important to recognize that while this agreement declares an inherent equality between racial groups, and even a willingness to allow for some representation by African Americans, there are no definitive declarations concerning the use and/or funding of separate institutions.

[44] "While your letter makes inquiry regarding educational and medical missionary training advantages, we understand that the race question is the real question at issue" (In: *Minutes of Meetings of the General Conference Committee*, [28 May 1906], 3–4).

[45] Quoted in ibid., 4. Her reflections deal with an 1889 question concerning those who sought to institute for the church a color line policy—namely, the institution of Southern separation policies nationwide. In her private letters, EGW voiced some concerns, referring to the report of R. M. Kilgore, supervisor of District 2 (i.e., the Southern region), who promoted the setting of a color line policy for the church. To read the Southern response and extracts from Kilgore's letter, see Baker, "Dynamics of Communication," 78n46, 277. EGW responded negatively to allowing the Southern culture to circumvent a consistent Adventist message. In response she wrote, "It has become habit to pass laws that do not always bear the signature of heaven. The question of the color line should not have been made a business for the [General] Conference to settle" (Ms 6, 4 November 1889, paragraph 9).

church to "every nation, kindred, tongue, and people," he asserted that it would be "inconsistent and foolish" to create a policy that would benefit one group over the other.[46] He perceived policies in favor of equal access as offering favoritism to Black Adventists over other minority groups. For Daniells and the committee, the request for access equated to attempts to "frighten us and press us to their terms."[47]

The committee argued that the presence of "error and superstition" among the people meant that access to new facilities could not be delivered equally alongside the gospel. Doing so would risk jeopardizing the work of salvation.[48] Central to their justification was the uniqueness of the mission of the church—in which, for them, the question of "equality of the races" did not qualify. Instead, they categorized equality pejoratively alongside "socialism, civic reform, and modern humanitarianism."[49] Having minimized the request for access to focus on the larger issue of racial equality, Daniells proceeded to offer three arguments to justify why local Black Adventists could not access infrastructure and training. First, he emphasized the primacy of proclaiming the Third Angel's message. Second, he compared the authority of the People's Church with that of Jesus, Moses, and Paul. And third, Daniells presented a compilation of EGW's writings to codify his position on the color line. I have chosen to summarize some initial problems that emerge out of his first two arguments. Indeed, there is much work to be done in analyzing Daniells's use of logic and Scripture. But—for our purposes here—more space is devoted to analyzing his EGW compilation. Highlighting Daniells's hermeneutics alongside those of EGW will solidify the subtle but significant differences between the two.

Daniells's First Two Arguments

> How utterly inconsistent and foolish it would be for us to take a position toward any class of people for whom we are making such efforts, that would deprive them of any of the advantages and blessings of the gospel. —Arthur G. Daniells (1906)[50]

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[46] In: *Minutes of Meetings of the General Conference Committee*, (28 May 1906), 5.

[47] Letter from Arthur G. Daniells to Willie White, 30 May 1906, quoted in Morgan, *Lewis C. Sheafe*, 299. Daniells's argument ignored the fact that the problem of disparate conditions between the white and Black constituency went beyond issues of general equality between Blacks and other minority groups.

[48] In: *Minutes of Meetings of the General Conference Committee*, (28 May 1906), 5.

[49] Ibid., 5–6. It stands as strange that Daniells would have included in this list "modern humanitarianism," especially regarding the Seventh-day Adventist Church's strong position concerning health. This is a topic worth deeper analysis that I cannot offer here.

[50] Ibid., 5.

Daniells's overarching concern for reaching as many people as possible prompted him to minimize the call for access. In his estimation, the promotion of Black welfare undermined the overall mission to spread the gospel. In his first argument, Daniells insisted that the Third Angel's message held within it everything needed and that every other "consideration should be subordinated," including requests for equal access.[51] "We may well esteem it a privilege to set all such questions aside, if by so doing we can the more effectively impart the message to men."[52] The perceived and real risks of destabilizing Adventism were significant during this period.[53] Separation, therefore, served as an expedient solution, but without "separate but equal" alternatives, this decision effectively removed opportunities for local Black constituents. Daniells could not offer a definitive solution to remedy this problem. Instead, he could only recognize "they have come far short" of providing resources to minorities and that "we have done the best we can"[54]—a hard pill to swallow amid substantial contributions to white-only structures around DC.[55]

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[51] Ibid., 6.

[52] Ibid., 6.

[53] See McArthur, *A. G. Daniells*, 169–214. Of significant note for Adventists is the controversy between John Harvey Kellogg and church leadership (Schwarz and Greenleaf, *Light Bearers*, 259–272). Suspicions were increased due to communications between Sheafe and Kellogg (Morgan, *Lewis C. Sheafe*, 304–307). In short, the Kellogg crisis is a typical lens through which this period is discussed, both historically and theologically. The intersection of crises, for me, offers one of the clearest pictures of administrative authority. Daniells simply did not understand Black equity as coordinate to the political rift between the evangelistic and health institutions of the church.

[54] In: *Minutes of Meetings of the General Conference Committee*, (28 May 1906), 9.

[55] It is important to recognize that, in Washington DC, there were institutions that offered education and health care to white and Black citizens. L. E. Froom documents willing support from George Washington University, but also notes that Howard University "is for both sexes, and admits both races. This school is considered very good indeed by some white students with whom we have conversed, one of whom attends this school" ("Advantages of Medical Colleges in Washington D.C., and Baltimore MD," [misc. folder, Washington Adventist University Weiss Library], 2). It is clear that Adventist training schools would train both men and women, but there is no indication that they would train African Americans, since there is no Black students or missionaries mentioned in their published roster. See "Washington Foreign Mission Seminary: Announcement for 1910–1911," (misc. folder, Washington Adventist University Weiss Library), 45–47. Although there seems to have been some promotion of other ethnicities such as "Cuban," as mention in a letter from M. A. Kern to E. R. Palmer on May 11th, 1914 (Folder W 149, Washington Missionary College, General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research) and "Jew" in another letter from M. A. Kern to E. R. Palmer on July 16th, 1913 (ibid.), I found nothing

In the second argument, Daniells asserted that keeping silent on issues of access coordinated with the humility of Jesus, Moses, and Paul. These biblical figures willingly subordinated their lofty positions for the sake of the ministry: a model the People's Church would do best to follow. They all willingly denied themselves for the sake of proclaiming the message of salvation. For instance, Jesus became flesh, Moses refused the position of Pharaoh to lead the Hebrew slaves to freedom, and Paul became all things to all people.[56] By making these analogies, Daniells inflated the functional equality that came from being a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Instead of considering the People's Church's request for access as a petition for equity, Daniells used the priesthood of all believers paradigm to argue that Sheafe and associates wanted to place themselves over Daniells and other Adventist members.[57] It is also important to note that Daniells's allusions to Scripture directly contradicted the typical reading within Black communities of faith who more readily associated themselves with the Hebrew people freed by the mighty hand of God.[58] From this perspective, the leaders of the church are the more logical analogs to Jesus, Moses, and Paul. It would therefore fall upon the leadership to provide for the people of God, not the other way around. Ultimately, when Daniells asserted equal standing before God, the People's Church could not help but recognize the unequal status they had within the Church.

Daniells's two arguments present an idyllic picture of mutual submission while ignoring the obvious disparities between the members and the administration. Daniells's inability to equate biblical leadership with that of his office makes his logic difficult to grasp, but it was nevertheless the reasoning he used to divert the conversation from access to issues of race. Daniells's third argument relied on the counsel of EGW and served as an attempt to align his reasoning with that of her authority.

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indicating their admission. Adventists had an awareness of institutions that accommodated Black and white people, which means that the General Conference and the District had the option to build around these models. Their choice to accommodate white-only spaces, therefore, serves as an expedient that in practice undermined the General Conference's claim that equal access was not an option.

[56] In: *Minutes of Meetings of the General Conference Committee*, (28 May 1906), 6.

[57] "We accept what the Bible and the Testimonies teach regarding the brotherhood of men and the Fatherhood of God" (ibid.).

[58] E.g., Cheryl J. Sanders, "Introduction: 'In the World, but Not of It,'" in *Readings in African American Church Music and Worship*, ed. James Abbington (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2001): 1:99–114.

The Segregation Compilation

> We believe that the following cautions given by the Spirit of prophecy are of great value in the consideration of the question with which we are dealing, and that they should be carefully heeded. —Arthur G. Daniells (1906)[59]

To give maximum authority to a doctrine of separation, Daniells offered a compilation of EGW statements. He compiled eight quotations placed in no chronological order and with no consideration for the original context. Every new citation is indented, but some inverted commas are missing and without any references to the location of these quotes, the collection reads as one continuous thought.[60] Most of these citations come from a small pamphlet titled *The Southern Work*, which did not receive wide distribution. Other citations came from personal correspondence not available to the general membership at the time.[61] Given the relationships between the leadership and EGW, the People's Church had every reason to assume that Daniells presented a consistent view of her counsels. It is therefore likely they saw this compilation as authoritative and in agreement with the position of Daniells and the General Conference.

Space does not permit a complete analysis between Daniells's selection and the original letters from EGW. Nevertheless, the divergent interpretations between Daniells and EGW can be illustrated from his use of her 1895 counsels. Daniells excerpted two passages, and they appear one after the other in the People's Church response:

> Not a word should be spoken to create prejudice, for if by any careless or impulsive speech to the colored people in regard to the whites any prejudice is created in their minds against the whites, or in the minds of the whites against them, the spirit of the enemy will work in the children of disobedience. Thus an opposition will be aroused which will hinder the work of the message, and will endanger the lives of the workers and of believers.
>
> We have no right to do anything that will obstruct the light which is shining from heaven; yet by a wrong course of action we may imperil the work, and

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[59] In: *Minutes of Meetings of the General Conference Committee*, (28 May 1906), 6–7.

[60] Ibid., 7. The end of the second paragraph and the beginning of the third paragraph are without quotation marks. This could have been read as either a brand new quote or a continuation of the second quote.

[61] Here is the order of EGW's citations in Daniells's compilation with a brief description: *SWk*, 84 (5 June 1899 – on the southerners intolerance to the Seventh-day Adventist's doctrines); *1MR*, 77 (1903, paragraph 2 – on the Holy Spirit power needed to deal with Black Americans); Ms 77, 2 August 1903, paragraph 3 – on moving rapidly with the gospel work/submit to Holy Spirit for guidance on color line); *SWk*, 68, 71 (20 November 1895 – Caution in promoting the Sabbath); *SWk*, 92 (21 June 1899 – Against Northern colonization in the Southern field); *SWk*, 96, 95 (27 April 1899 – Warnings of dangerous mission work in deep South).

> close this door which God has opened for the entrance of the truth (from White, Ms 22a, 1895, 7–8, quoted in *SWk*, 68, 71).

As I have highlighted above, EGW consistently called for caution and care in Southern missions to better infiltrate and indoctrinate. A careful work meant external accommodations to culture with an internal initiative to spread the knowledge of Jesus and break the chains of racism. Daniells excluded this context from his compilation. These two quotations leave out many important details and context and thus flatten EGW's concerns for inclusive gospel outreach to fears of white reprisal.

The two passages above are taken from *The Southern Work*, pages 68 and 71. What comes before and between these two citations is significant. First, Daniells began quoting *The Southern Work*, page 68, mid-paragraph, and omitted the first few sentences:

> From the light that I have received, I see that if we would get the truth before the Southern people, we must not encourage the colored people to work on Sunday. There must be a clear understanding regarding this, but it need not be published. You must teach these people as you would teach children.

In context, prejudice emerged not because of calls for access but from Northern missionaries teaching Southerners to work on Sunday. Likewise, Daniells omitted the next sentence from *The Southern Work* which helpfully summarizes EGW's primary concern: "The final issue on the Sabbath question has not yet come, and by imprudent actions we may bring on a crisis before the time" (71). Daniells used these passages to support his arguments around race relations, but contextually, they had very little to do with race and more to do with missional methods. The Black and white Southerners did not appreciate the teachings of Adventism—especially the Sabbath—and her counsels were meant to be a corrective for careless workers who were putting Black—but also white—converts in danger. Fundamentally, EGW understood the intention of Southern whites to perpetuate the exploitation of Black labor. Thus, any perceived attack on production would be met with extreme resistance and violence. But nothing is said concerning the need to limit Black access to infrastructure, especially in the border states, where local prejudices did not always lead to violence.

The space between the two citations also removes EGW's clear counsel that explicitly called on discerning leadership to create productive strategies for inclusion.

> There are many ways of reaching all classes, both white and black. We are to interest them in the life of Christ from His childhood up to manhood, and through His life of ministry to the cross. We cannot work in all localities in the same way. We must let the Holy Spirit guide, for men and women cannot convince others of the wrong traits of character. While laboring to introduce the truth, we must accommodate ourselves

> as much as possible to the field and the circumstances of those for whom we labor (*SWk*, 68).

EGW recognized the need for nuance and diversity in approaches, and therefore, she did not want official policies around issues of race. Furthermore, in the above passage, she clearly expressed the need for divine guidance. For EGW, given that one solution did not fit all situations, divine guidance and humility were required for spiritual workers. In DC, there were already institutions, both public and private, that accommodated both white and Black people. To say then that complete exclusion was the only option for Adventists here is simply not true. For Daniells, what worked in the Deep South, could work anywhere racism existed: a position that would lead to a church-wide global practice of separation and segregation. Daniells's approach stands wholly insufficient for accomplishing EGW's nuanced vision for gospel outreach in difficult territories, nor does it take advantage of the precedent for multiracial services in DC during that time.[62]

Daniells's decision to apply a geographically limited and missionally contextualized counsel in a universal sense is consistent in every instance he cites EGW in his response to the People's Church. EGW's call for diverse responses and nuance is omitted by Daniells in favor of creating a flattened perspective around white fear. This white fear, in Daniells's compilation, when removed from the Southern concern of production, conveyed the notion that the mere presence of Black people could promote persecution. Thus, strict policies against interracial socialization were necessary to promote stability and the gospel—a strange interpretation that would guide church policy for decades. By missing the central focus of her position—to protect Southern Blacks from overzealous missionaries from the North—Daniells narrowed his view to explicit mentions of the color line, thus ignoring her larger vision of a fully inclusive Spirit-led movement.

It is possible that the People's Church had copies of *The Southern Work* and were thus familiar with the context that Daniells avoided. But they would not have been aware of the direct counsel from EGW to the leadership which stated, "Receive the Holy Spirit before you submit your plans for dealing with the color line" (Ms 77, 2 August 1903, paragraph 3)[63] This counsel was received by Daniells in 1903 and yet did not prevent him from eventually

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[62] This was especially true in the public sector where opportunities for Black people began to dwindle significantly under President Wilson, who implement segregated federal buildings in 1913. But it is important to note the presence of several colleges and hospitals that educated and cared for Black and white people around DC. See Constance McLaughlin Green, *The Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), 155–183.

[63] It is important to know that although administration and laity alike pointed to EGW's writings to justify their actions, Daniells never received a commendation from her pen concerning any separation policy.

pursuing his separationist agenda first envisioned during a 1902 conference in Nashville.[64] The pressures to assuage a prejudiced constituency, combined with growing suspicions around the formidable Lewis C. Sheafe, made it easier for Daniells to take the expedient path of systemic separation. Such a path would ultimately lead to the People's Church and Sheafe leaving the Seventh-day Adventist Church.[65]

Spiritless Separation

In Daniells's response to the People's Church, he called on them to exhibit a level of humility that he and his white constituents were unwilling to match. The attempt to address inequities was interpreted as an attempt to engage in the politics of the day. For the sake of expedience, Daniells endeavored to silence his Black constituency, but this decision came at a great cost. Not only did his decision lead to the exit of many Black members from the church; in addition, to justify the choice to deny access, he had to make EGW align with his position concerning the color line. For decades to come, the Seventh-day Adventist Church would adopt Daniells's interpretation as if it came from EGW herself. The path toward a segregated Seventh-day Adventist Church had been paved.

A Subtle Hermeneutical Shift

Comparing EGW's counsels alongside Daniells's "segregation compilation" of her writings highlights a subtle but important shift from institutional inclusion to institutional separation. By shifting the emphasis of EGW's writings from acceptance to separation, the church effectively neutered the significance of her counsels on race. What makes this reading even more dangerous is its subtlety. Indeed, she did shift her views concerning public integration as Jim Crow proceeded, and she consistently emphasized the need to move quietly and not politically in issues of contention. But in every written counsel for reaching African Americans amid prejudice and persecution stood the conviction that all of it could be undermined through patient biblical guidance by Spirit-filled workers. For EGW, a relationship with Jesus always trumped racism. Within such a model, the need to publicly agitate issues of equality did not matter because a true follower of Jesus would already see every person as equal. Daniells understood EGW differently.[66]

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[64] Morgan, *Lewis C. Sheafe*, 185–192.

[65] Ibid., 304–311.

[66] I think Daniells also began his own shift in thinking after Sheafe and the People's Church left the denomination. The creation of the Negro department at the General Conference in 1909 was Daniells's attempt to give African Americans a representative voice in the denomination (Rock, *Protest and Progress*, 13–27; Morgan, *Lewis C. Sheafe*, 401–440).

With Daniells's 1906 response to the People's Church, he made explicit an unofficial separationist policy for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As a result, Daniells effectively aligned EGW's writings with his administrative agenda. Eventually, the expedient policies of separation would spur segregation within the denomination. Under the guise of a universal "brotherhood," Adventists could invoke EGW to justify and perpetuate bigoted practices within the church—a practice persisting well into the twentieth century and arguably to this day.[67] Instead of a church internally integrated and prepared to light the way when the Spirit would begin destroying the walls of Jim Crow segregation during the Civil Rights era, the Seventh-day Adventist Church would only shed segregationist policies at the pace of the federal government. Consequently, the Seventh-day Adventist Church failed to recognize EGW's predictions of God's work against systems of racism in the United States. Instead of an Adventism established to destroy the bonds of racism through a radically Christocentric institutional model, it would capitulate to society's push for segregation.

Conclusion

Without a doubt, A. G. Daniells's leadership is a demonstration of administrative clarity of action and purpose worthy of aspiration and replication. And yet, as my research has shown, his willingness to accommodate the views of separationism set the church on a path of division and racism that we wrestle with to this very day. The comparative analysis offered in this article is representative of a greater work to be done in mapping out the role of racism in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. If racism and segregation could appear to be justified theologically and through the writings of EGW, what other teachings based upon such interpretive traditions are we perpetuating in our current polity? To strengthen my analysis above, I would call upon scholars and administrators alike to explore how EGW's counsels on race were applied in various sectors. If my hypothesis remains sound, then it is more than likely that the application of Daniells's "segregation compilation" impacted not just the United States but the entire global field. And if this is the case, how do these implicit biases impact institutions and initiatives today? I believe that such questions have a direct impact on issues ranging from women's role in leadership to culturally appropriate missions and outreach.

The direction of my research also extends into questions relevant to those interested in the history of religion in the United States, especially around studies that engage the impact of social bias within religious, social,

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[67] E.g., Alisa Williams, "Racist Language Overshadows Black Christian Union Event at Southern Adventist University," *Spectrum*, 6 February 2018, https://spectrummagazine.org/article/2018/02/06/racist-language-overshadows-black-christian-union-event-southern-adventist-univer.

and political policy. My analysis brings to the fore a history of capitulation and accommodation of social norms and customs within Adventism. But I hope that by clarifying our contributions to racism and bias, that those outside Adventism may find useful corollaries to their own lived experiences and traumas. It should be no surprise that administrators contend with complex and nuanced problems on multiple fronts. While it is impossible to foresee the future impacts of a decision with any meaningful clarity, we should perhaps bear in mind that expedient solutions may produce a cascade of negative outcomes. So perhaps we should ask ourselves: What mechanisms can we create that will expose our cultural blind spots—to hopefully prevent oppressive cycles invisible to our own lived experience—and foster productive leadership and growth within our faith communities?

BOOK REVIEWS

Barr, Beth Allison. *The Making of Biblical Womanhood: How the Subjugation of Women Became Gospel Truth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2021. 218 pp. + 26 pp. notes. Softcover. USD 19.99.

This is an important work synthesizing the scholarship about the role of women in the history of Christianity. The author, Beth Allison Barr, is a professor at Baylor University, specializing in medieval history. She invites the reader to journey with her through Scripture and the Christian past to discover the vital contributions of women. In doing so she shares her experience in confronting Christian patriarchy (complementarianism): "The tradition of male church leaders and the authority of male household heads function within cultures that generally promote male authority and female submission" (14).

At one point, she was barred from teaching 13-year-old boys in her Sunday school class (she comes from the Baptist tradition) because she was a woman. Her support of women teaching Sunday school ultimately led to her husband's dismissal as pastor. As one reads the book, the very real and pragmatic aspects of complementarian ideas become apparent. Ideas matter" since concepts about women have very real consequences.

Chapter one (11–31) overviews the beginnings of patriarchy. Barr notes how most proponents of patriarchy select specific proof texts (1 Tim 2:9–15, 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9). Chapter two (39–70) asks the question, What if so called biblical womanhood doesn't come from Paul? What if "we have been reading Paul wrong?" (41). What if this is the result of "cultural peer pressure"? (41). "Christians in the past may have used Paul to exclude women from leadership, but this doesn't mean that the subjugation of women is biblical" (41). Instead, evangelicals have utilized Paul as a weapon for their culture wars and have forgotten Paul's invitation to be one in Christ (42).

Barr highlights several biblical arguments pertinent to Paul. First, utilizing evidence from church history, she notes that because Adam sinned, husbands made poor leaders for their wives. In fact, Peter Abelard argued that because a woman first anointed Jesus with oil, Jesus overturned male headship.

Male patriarchy was the norm in the world of the NT. Today the emphasis is on *wives* obeying their husbands, but in the world of the early NT, listeners would have been startled by the call for *husbands* to "love your wives and never treat them harshly." "Christianity was deviant and immoral because it was perceived as undermining ideals of Roman masculinity" (54). Barr argues that Paul uplifts the female body, something denigrated in ancient Roman

thinking. Seven times Paul uses maternal imagery to describe his relationship to the churches.

Roman household codes were directed to men only; Paul addresses everyone. When Paul's writings are compared with these household codes, Paul's writings freed not only women but all household members. "Paul was using a Jesus remix to tell Christians how the gospel set them free" (47). Even non-Christians, like Pliny, criticized early Christians because women were in leadership roles and everyone met together on an equal footing—men, women, children, and slaves—in their homes (53). This was truly revolutionary, Barr concludes, and suggests that in all probability, many have misinterpreted Paul.

Perhaps the most egregious example of getting Paul backward, in her opinion, is the admonition of 1 Cor 14:33–36 about women remaining silent in church (57–63). The author argues that if this code were drawn from his Roman context, and if Paul were more concerned about cultural restrictions placed upon them, it seems that Paul's purpose was to distinguish what the Corinthians were doing from what they should be doing (set off by the apposition, "What!"). Utilizing the work of Marg Mowczko, she affirms that Paul's "meaning is the exact opposite of what evangelical women have been taught" (62). Since Paul allows women to speak throughout his letters (1 Cor 11:1–6 is the best example), it would not make sense that in another passage Paul would limit women's leadership. By interpreting Paul's statement in this narrow way, many "have ditched the freedom in Christ that Paul was trying so hard to give us" (63). This position seems to be aligned with the views of some Adventist pioneers who recognized the cultural limitations of 1 Cor 14 and debated whether this text should limit the prophetic voice of Ellen G. White in early Adventism.

One final point on Paul: in Rom 16, ten women are mentioned as active leaders (64–65). Seven of these women are recognized by their ministry, and Phoebe is specifically identified as a deacon. More women than men are identified by their ministry in this passage (65). This text thereby showcases how the biblical data might contradict modern notions of biblical womanhood (67). As support for this, Barr refers (68) to the 107 inscriptions about women deacons from the early Christian church cataloged by Kevin Madigan and Carolyn Osiek (*Ordained Women in the Early Church* [Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005]).

Chapters three (71–99) and four (101–127) discuss views of women during the medieval and early modern periods respectively. Barr, a medievalist, is in her element, showing how women had greater access to roles of religious authority during the medieval church. Of special note are the stories of Margery Kempe, who stood up to her bishop based on Scripture, an action that shatters stereotypes about medieval women (72–74). Barr argues that "women's stories throughout history have been covered up, neglected, or

retold to recast women as less significant than they were" (84). I see evidence of this in the Protestant Reformation, where clergy were allowed to marry; but this came at a cost since opportunities for women outside of marriage declined. A woman's primary identity in the wake of the Reformation was as wife and mother, effectively a historical construct.

Chapter five (129–150) is about how women have been written off in the English Bible. Barr describes the role of biblical translations in the cultural war. While on one side, translations like the TNIV prefer a gender-neutral text, a male headship translation is the choice of the editors of the ESV (e.g., Wayne Grudem, encouraged by James Dobson), who argued that recent gender-neutral translations are unfaithful to the Bible by adding the "slippery slope of feminism" to the text, destroying biblical truth (131). Barr notes that Christians have for many centuries translated the Bible in gender-inclusive ways. "While it is certainly true that second-wave feminism in the 1960s contributed to greater concern for gender-inclusive language in American culture, it is also true that concern for gender-inclusive language in the biblical text existed long before modern feminism" (133). The ESV is at least as equally influenced by its non-Christian culture (i.e., patriarchy) as any other translation. One of the best examples of this, she argues, is the KJV of 1 Tim 3:1–13—a text that is widely assumed to reference men in leadership roles. The Greek text uses the words *whoever* and *anyone*, whereas many translators of modern English Bibles insert between eight to ten male pronouns. She cites Peppiatt (*Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women* [IVP Academic, 2019], 39), who concludes that the real problem with female leadership is not the biblical text but the "relentless and dominant narrative of male bias" in translations (148).

Chapter six (151–172), titled "Sanctifying Subordination," showcases how perceptions of sexuality have flipped. During medieval times, women were perceived as being sexually lascivious, and the modern notion that women had to be protected from male sexual desire is a comparatively recent phenomenon. In doing so, "patriarchy shapeshifted" (153). Modesty and domesticity became idealized. This contributed and sanctified the Victorian "cult of domesticity" (165). Barr cites the well-known work of Catherine Brekus (*Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740–1845* [University of North Carolina Press, 1998]), who identified 123 women who preached and exhorted in American churches in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (169). This shows how women learned to adapt to the ever-changing rules of patriarchy, leading to what Brekus terms a "new ideology of female virtue" (169). A key argument for Barr is that the nineteenth century set women back.

Chapter seven (173–200) explores more recent history about how Christian patriarchy became gospel truth. In recent decades, a series of evangelical personalities, especially Russell Moore and John Piper, have

popularized a complementarian ideology. "Many evangelicals believe that supporting women in ministry is a slippery slope leading to liberalism and agnosticism" (177). Yet church history shows that such a narrow perspective is ignorant of Christian tradition. "It is also impossible to maintain consistent arguments for women's subordination because, rather than stemming from God's commands, these arguments stem from the changing circumstances of history. New reasons have to be found to justify keeping women out of leadership" (186). Her idea that patriarchy resembles racism in that it doesn't ever go away, it simply adapts, is surely thought-provoking. Many of the roots for this debate have far more to do with the fundamentalist-modernist controversy of the early twentieth century. The idea of inerrancy was connected to biblical truth and the authority of male preachers at the expense of women. To put it another way, it was Fundamentalism that contributed in large part to the exclusion of women from the Christian church (189). "The concept of inerrancy made it increasingly difficult to argue against a 'plain and literal' interpretation of 'women be silent' and 'women shall not teach'" (190). Such proof texting has obscured biblical truth.

The final chapter (201–218) is a call for women to be free. The notion that women are "weak," while men are "strong" sets the stage for all kinds of abuse. The notion that women should remain "submissive" and "silent" reinforces and perpetuates such practices. Not to be overlooked is the connection between sexism and racism. "Patriarchy walks hand in hand with racism," notes Barr, "and it always has. The same biblical passages used to declare Black people unequal are used to declare women unfit for leadership. Patriarchy and racism are 'interlocking structures of oppression'" (208).

This book resonates with the debates going on within the Seventh-day Adventist Church about the role of women, especially since the 2015 General Conference session that turned down the request to allow individual parts of the worldwide Adventist church to decide on the matter of women's ordination. Since that time, I have traveled extensively around the world, partly while teaching for the Adventist International Institute for Advanced Studies in the Philippines, with students in my classes from over eighty different countries. In one anonymous country that I visited, I sat as a guest with the president of that territory. He asked me what I thought of the recent decision by the General Conference, noting that he had been reelected as president and director of the women's ministry too. When I queried why, he responded that it was because of the same recent church decision that "men are supposed to tell women what to do." He probed me, asking me how I as a foreigner made my wife obey me. When I returned the question, he stated that he had to beat his wife regularly. What was clear to me was how people view women ultimately stems from a combination of cultural practices, along with misuse or misunderstanding of biblical texts. In some views, women are treated as property to be subjugated by men.

Conversely, as I was teaching for an intensive in another country, this time in a place where most of the students were female pastors, one pastor shared her testimony with tears in her eyes. She had given up a prestigious position to make only a small fraction of what she had been making because she felt called by God to do ministry. She said she never asked to be ordained but that some church leaders had visited, telling her and other women that they were only "temporary" until God could raise enough men to replace them. Accusations that women only wanted ordination so they could make more money seemed incredibly petty because she had given up a much higher paying job, and as she said, "I count it the highest privilege in the world to share Jesus every day." As I taught her and others about the "great cloud of witnesses" that included women across church history and our Adventist past, they shared how this knowledge empowered them to continue proclaiming the "everlasting gospel."

Barr's book is well written and carefully researched. As I have engaged some of my complementarian friends, most have simply dismissed this book as written by a liberal, seeking to undermine Scripture—Barr couldn't possibly have a "high view" of Scripture (the idea that Scripture is divinely inspired and remains authoritative and truthful for our lives today). To my pleasant surprise, the author makes it very clear that indeed she does have a "high view" of Scripture, which ironically is part of what makes this book so compelling. In other words, it is precisely because she takes the Bible seriously that she feels compelled to share the message of Scripture that "all are one in Christ" and to tell the stories of women across time and space who have proclaimed the message of Jesus Christ.

As a teacher, I plan to use this book in the future as a supplemental textbook when I teach church history. Pastors may want to utilize this book as a study book for a small group or a midweek series. While this book will no doubt not be the last word on issues related to gender, it makes it clear that Christians who wish to support and empower women are being both faithful to Scripture and consistent with a great heritage, from the time of the early Christians up to the present, who have used everything within their means to share Jesus with others. One final quibble: Adventist readers will no doubt notice an understandable but significant historical error. Barr mentions that Ellen G. White founded Adventism in 1844. While it is true that she had her first vision in December 1844, most people know that Adventism was a broader movement that preceded Ellen G. White's ministry, and that the denomination called Seventh-day Adventist wasn't organized until 1863.

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Blackwell, Ben C., and R. L. Hatchett. *Engaging Theology: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2019. 304 pp. Hardcover. USD 34.99.

Engaging Theology is an introductory textbook that grounds the treatment of standard systematic topics in the wider context of life. The book aims to provide a relevant introduction to Christian theology, presenting ecumenical views of Christian thought and practice (15). Each chapter begins with a brief historical situation in which a doctrine arose or played an essential role, discusses key elements of the doctrine, identifies current theological challenges to the doctrine, and suggests a proper understanding and integration of orthodox theology in the face of these challenges (20).

How do we do theology? Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth spoke of their work as encountering God. Aquinas championed the argument that theology integrates with what one may learn elsewhere and does not contradict it. If our study in theology and study in physics come to different conclusions, our theology is wrong or our physics is wrong, or maybe both. One of Barth's famous arguments is that "God is the subject of theology" and as humans, we encounter God "through faith and not [as] an object of study" (30–31). Scholars commonly consider these views to be opposite. Aquinas built upon the foundation provided by reason, whereas Barth saw such effort as dangerous and insisted upon relying on God's revelation. The authors try to nuance this tension suggesting that reason and faith were designed not to conquer the truths of God but to protect God's mystery. God is both finite and mysterious. He is neither bound by nature nor absent from it (47).

Chapter three is about the doctrine of the Trinity: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. A dispute over the nature of Jesus began when Arius contested Alexander, who presented Jesus in exalted terms. At the first Council in Nicaea (325 CE), Arius argued that the Father alone was eternal, beyond suffering, changeless, and unoriginated, not the Son. The council responded with a knockout term: *homoousion*, a Greek word meaning "of the same nature, out of the same stuff." The council corrected Arius at every turn and eventually argued that the Son is one hundred percent God (54). The controversy continued for more than four decades. In time, a compromise term—*homoiousion,* "of a similar nature"—was proposed. Athanasius the Bishop was not willing to approve the term; instead, he sought to protect the status of the Son and the unity of God (55). At the first Council of Constantinople (381 CE), the Cappadocians clarified the terms *ousia* as referring to God's substance and *hypostasis* as referring to the identity of the Father. This shed light on the interpretation of the Trinity (61). After the seventeenth-century Enlightenment, Deism became a real problem. Deists view God as a creator who is distant from his creation after setting it in motion, which dismantles the Trinitarian aspect of God. Frederick Schleiermacher and Karl

Barth pioneered the Trinitarian revival (66). Not all Christian traditions accept the Trinitarian view.

Chapter four is about the doctrine of the revelation of God. Revelation is a doctrine that considers how God unveiled the truth about himself through general acts of creation, special saving acts, and writing (77). Irenaeus, a great apologist in the early church, countered the Gnostic argument that a sophisticated elite would ignore the doctrine of a good creation. Irenaeus explained that the Son and the Spirit were God's hands at work in creation; and that though the original creation was corrupted by sin, its goodness could still be seen, and its corruption would be made right (79). Ancient interpreters held the Bible as God's inspired book. This view was accepted by the Protestant Reformation. However, those thoroughly committed to the Enlightenment denied the Bible as an inspired book. Using the historical-critical method, they associated the Bible with human authors's intentions.

Chapter five analyzes God and the world. The basic story of the Bible is summarized as creation, fall, and new creation. God cares for this world and works toward restoring his creation (103). Gnostics denied that God created the world as good in the first place, upholding the premise that the spirit is good and the material body is bad (104). Both spirit and matter come from God, who is both holy and loving. The problem of evil and theodicy are traditionally considered in light of the biblical narrative rather than as philosophical quandaries. Fundamental to the narrative is the idea that Satan and his demonic minions actively perpetuate evil (111). Augustine and Irenaeus showed great wisdom in demonstrating God's victory over evil as unfolding in history and centered on the Son.

Chapter six deals with Jesus Christ as the incarnate Messiah. Cyril contended against the subordinationist Gnostic view that the Son was created a lesser god. He became concerned about careless explanations of Jesus's identity from the teachers in Antioch, who taught that the divine and human natures of Jesus were distinct (122). Cyril condemned Nestorius's divided person of Jesus at the Council of Ephesus (431 CE). Contemporary people tend to consider Jesus more human than divine. Arius and his followers promoted subordinationism, while Docetism, associated with Gnosticism, argued that Christ only seemed to be human (130). Apollinarianism affirmed that Jesus was fully divine and had a human body but not a human soul. Though the focus can easily shift toward philosophy with all the talk about the natures and persons of Christ, the primary focus of the biblical narrative shows that Jesus is the Spirit-anointed Messiah who shares the nature of the Father and became fully human (136).

Chapter seven discusses the Holy Spirit. The biblical terms for Spirit, *ruach* (Hebrew) and *pneuma* (Greek), have flexibility and can refer to the divine Spirit, human spirit, wind, or breath. The Hebrew Bible presented the Holy Spirit as God's action rather than as a person distinct from the Father.

However, there are hints of personal distinction in certain passages (Isa 48:16; 63:10–14) in which the Spirit is sent and can be grieved (148). The presence of the Holy Spirit is eschatological, bringing creation toward new creation. The Holy Spirit played a significant role in the development of churches in the NT period (150). Irenaeus incorporated the Spirit deeply in his theology, with Christ the Son and the Spirit as the two hands of God. According to the authors, a challenge to orthodox pneumatology were the ideas of the Montanists who emphasized the present work of the Spirit with the gift of prophecy and refused the Spirit's past work in the Bible. Later, Gregory of Nazianzus specified the Spirit's solidarity with the Father, which was reworked by the Council of Constantinople (381 CE). Augustine in particular focused on love and described the Trinity as a tripersonal relationship (152). The Reformers Luther and Calvin noted the Spirit's role in sanctification and regeneration. Although much Christian theology tends to focus on the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is just as integral to the identity of God and the narrative of Scripture.

The next chapter is on humanity and sin, and it focuses on theological anthropology. The most vital affirmation about human identity is that humans were made in the image of God. Pelagius emphasized individual free will and independent human agency. "We sin because of our own choices as we follow bad models, not because of innate corruption." This position was rejected because it makes grace for salvation helpful but unnecessary. Augustine affirmed that all humans, due to our family connection to Adam, are corrupted by sin and personally liable for this sin. He emphasized a form of determinism where external agency is at work (175–177). The Greek patristic theologians held a binary opposition between Pelagius and Augustine. They viewed that what our parents do is not our fault, but it is our problem. This view accords easily with the modernist impulse toward individual freedom. Likewise, the Enlightenment rejected the idea of inherited sin and held to a generic naturalism (179). The biblical solution to this tension, according to the authors, is that humans need to accept Jesus as their Savior, thus becoming new creatures. Complete submission and obedience to God's word will overcome the natural propensity to sin (e.g., 2 Cor 5:17).

Chapter nine is on salvation and focuses on individual salvation and the eschatological holistic restoration. The authors direct their attention on the Pelagian versus Augustinian views on soteriology. While the first viewed faith as something individuals could develop by simply breaking away from bad examples and making tough decisions to reform their lives, the latter understood faith as direct divine intervention in the minds of those who would recover from sinful habits (190–191). The authors agree with Augustine's solution.

Chapter ten is about the church. The holistic framework of God building his church, as some Christians often articulated, began with the calling of

Abram and continued in the rest of the Bible with Abraham's family. With the coming of Jesus, the focus for the people of God shifted to other surrounding nations. Then the outpouring of the Holy Spirit set the basis for the NT churches. As the church began to flourish, ethnic boundaries became a fundamental concern (222–223). The early Christian believers were continually challenged to respond to new circumstances and events. One such event was the great schism between Eastern and Western Christianity due to the linguistic division between the Greek churches in the East and the Latin churches in the West (225). The Reformation then divided the Western churches. Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin were noted Reformers. Their efforts to reform the church were seen as socially dangerous and were met with brutal persecution from Catholics and other Protestants. The church was broken into three confessions: Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant. Though the church's history is mostly one of division, there have been shifts toward unity. One such was the "Joint Declaration" in 1999, aided by Vatican II (226–227).

Chapter eleven is about eschatology. The whole scope of the Bible is eschatological because salvation is a process that will culminate in a final resolution in the future (243). The holistic framework integrates with the creation-fall-new creation progression of biblical theology. The renewal of creation began with the Mosaic covenant, which primarily focused on conditions: obey and be saved, disobey and perish (246). Many of the eschatological texts in the HB arise from social, economic, military, and religious oppression that had human and demonic origins. God showing up to restore justice is seen as a blessing for the righteous and judgment for the unrighteous (251). The timing of eschatology is described as "already and not yet." The "already" means that God shows up for the first time through Christ and the Spirit. And the "not yet" expresses that Christians still face oppression, struggle, and death (254–255).

In conclusion, *Engaging Theology* incorporates discussion of significant historical events, doctrinal exposition, theological relevance, and spiritual bearings. It is complex yet comprehensive. Though the topics do not proceed in sequential order, the main doctrinal issues and their relevance are set out clearly. The authors also point out various views and practices of world religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and so forth related to the doctrines discussed in each chapter. Why would the authors do this? The reason is that theology today is faced with increasing amounts of religious and theological pluralism. Thus, by referring to other religions, the authors differentiate their beliefs from Christian theology and show why these ideas or doctrines matter. *Engaging Theology* is an excellent summary of Christian doctrines that engages with other worldviews and their essential approaches on spiritual formation.

Berrien Springs, Michigan Sussie Stanley

Carpenedo, Manoela. *Becoming Jewish, Believing in Jesus: Judaizing Evangelicals in Brazil*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2021. xiv + 283 pp. Hardcover. USD 99.00.

This is a book on the sociology of religion, not theology. It is about the religious experience of living subjects, not a history of Judaism that deals primarily with texts of the dead. A revised dissertation from the University of Cambridge, *Becoming Jewish* engages contemporary believers in their environments. Manoela Carpenedo narrates the experiences of ex-Evangelicals (in contrast to Catholic Christians) from Brazil who now self-identify as Jews. By living with them, she had the opportunity of seeing and listening to how they practice their religion in their houses, in their meeting places, and even in Israel on a group trip she took with them. Carpenedo's account is engaging, full of testimonies, and at times, I felt as if I were there in the room with her, especially because she mixed Portuguese and English in the text, which I appreciate as a Brazilian myself. The detailed accounts focus on the women members, for good reason. Feminists studies of religion are still very popular, women religious subjects are historically understudied, the author is a female, and most importantly, as she explains, the topic itself leads to this focus since the practical identity of this community revolves around the female body because of the importance of the Torah's purity laws (*niddah*) in their lives.

Carpenedo went to find out why these Brazilian ex-Evangelical Christian women "subjugated" themselves to what most feminists would consider patriarchal customs of modern Judaism when their experiences, mainly as Pentecostal, were more "liberating." Her answer is a complex one but focuses on the role of the female body. The practices of *tzniut*, or modesty (dressing in a way that covers the body), and *niddah*, or sexual purity (not sleeping with husbands during the period of menstrual impurity), are highlighted. The female's role in the identity of the community is also perceptible in their *Shabbat* observance, the preparation of food (*kashrut*, dietary laws), the raising of children, and the continuation of genealogical status (ethnicity). Carpenedo avoids imposing a definition of subjugation and liberation on the women she engaged with. And by talking to them and transcribing their conversations, she allowed her subjects to express their self-understanding. For Tziporah (pseudonym, 36 years old) and Dinah (41 years old), subjugation is something desirable because it is the will of God, not of males. In their perspective, through obedience to the traditions of modern Judaism, Jewish women have more control of their bodies and the lives of their family members than those *do mundo* (of the world), who still live in a *machista* (male-dominated) worldview. This might sound like a surprise to many, but this is how they understand their reality.

As the author contextualizes, this conformity to more strict forms of religiosity is a reaction to a perceived laxity practiced by most Brazilians and

the increased cultural influence of modern Judaism in Brazil. Carpenedo argues that these women's religious behavior is still influenced by their evangelical upbringing in their aversion to Catholicism (as paganism) and their view of a reciprocal relationship with God (prosperity gospel and healings; obedience to the commandments, *mitzvot*). On the cultural importance of Jewish ethnicity, Carpenedo demonstrates how the past is reimagined in the construction of this group's identity. While some members have a purported ethnic connection to European Jews (*Bnei annusim* or crypto-Jews), as described in chapter four, the members of this community see Jesus as the first reformer of Judaism (*hassidism*) and a role model (129–135). As the title might suggest, *Becoming Jewish, Believing in Jesus* is the hybrid (bricolage) process of somewhat disassociating themselves from "Christianity" in some aspects and becoming "Jews" in others. This makes any definition of their experience complicated.

Reflecting on the sequence of the book, I would just change one thing. In the current format, chapters one (the rise of Philo-Semitic discourse in Christianity) and four (Jewish ethnicity in Brazil) provide a historical context to the formation and experiences of this Brazilian community, while chapters two, three, and five describe their beliefs and practices. I would read chapters one and four together. At first, I thought that Carpenedo misunderstood the process of *Becoming Jewish* when she described this group, but after chapter four, I was convinced that the problematic category was *Believing in Jesus*.

I agree with her observation but would nuance the terminology. I do recognize that she tried to use the expressions her subject adopted and the ones easily identified by most people. However, as she mentioned in her account of the *Bnei Anussim* (ethnic Jews who changed their identity because of Catholic persecution) in Brazil, scholars with their narratives about Judaism in Brazil are responsible for cultural invention (149). And depending on how one defines Judaism and Christianity in this story, the analysis of such a complex religious group might be very different. I suggest that Carpenedo's way of describing (defining) Judaism is historically deficient but does not diminish her description of this religious community in Brazil. Actually, it highlights the complicated notion of religious identity discourse. Her complex understanding of the terminologies is perceptible in the title of chapter three, *Becoming Jewish, Believing in Jesus?*, which she ends with a question mark. But I do not know if she realizes the categorical complexities entailed in this interrogation.

Terms like *Jews* or *Judaism* and *Evangelicals* (notice that in the title of the book, the word is not Christianity) are often used in popular discourses but are rarely or poorly defined. In scholarship, the meanings of these terms are contentious, even when well defined. Who is a Jew? Is it one who has a certain DNA, or who lives in a certain manner, or both? In Carpenedo's account, Judaizing or becoming Jewish is about behavior. She defines "Judaizing" (becoming Jewish) as the tendency of gentile believers in Jesus to practice

Jewish customs to be saved (17). Throughout her account, Carpenedo describes Judaism as a lifestyle, a behavior, not an ethnicity. So what actions distinguish a Jew from a Christian? Following her account, Jewish practices are the purity laws of diet (*kashrut*), sexuality (*niddah*), modesty (*tzniut*), and the sacredness of the seventh-day Sabbath. I am a member of a community (Seventh-day Adventism) that claims to follow the same principles from the Torah, albeit in a very different manner, but we do not consider ourselves Judaizers (although some Christians do call us that). Interestingly, when I lived in Jerusalem, Jews would not call me a Jew because I believed in Jesus as the Messiah and did not follow the principles of the Talmud. But Muslim neighbors would think I was a Jew because I was dressed up, carrying a book, and going to the Jewish district on *Shabbat*. Yet, I identified myself as neither, but as a Christian. It is clear from Carpenedo's narrative that this group of Brazilians see themselves as Jews, not Christians, which is telling.

The issue that informed the different definitions of the term *Judaism* should not be about the validity of the Torah as a guide for behavior (for even Christians, Muslims, and atheists adhere to some of its precepts and not others) but about how the laws of the Torah are systematized and applied by modern believers. In Carpenedo's account of the Brazilian community under study, it seems that their interpretation of the Torah is mainly informed by the rabbinic discourse of the Talmud. This is certainly not the Torah but an interpretation of it. Historically, one should not equate the Judaism of the Talmud with Judaism or the *only* interpretation of the HB. The term *Judaism* should not be equated with the HB—one is a collection of texts, and the other is what people do with the texts. I found it interesting that Jesus, according to the Gospels, was in many instances against the oral tradition of the Pharisees, which seems to be the main source of rabbinic tradition. Yet the Brazilian Jewish believers in Jesus give more credit to the Talmud (that is not so friendly to Jesus) than to Paul (who is not mentioned once in Carpenedo's account). Besides, many Jews did not or do not adhere to the oral law of rabbinic tradition. To say that the members of the group Carpenedo observed are Jewish Christians is a simplification of a more complex reality.

Now, my reflection on the term *Evangelicals* in her account: Carpenedo defines it as the form of Christianity that believes that Jesus heals, baptizes with the Holy Spirit, offers salvation, and is coming again (viii). But most importantly, protestant evangelicals try to renew Christianity (17) in the face of a prevalent disregard of the Bible. Of these qualifiers, the point that is of question and is more characteristic of this group she observed, based on the testimonies of these Brazilian "Jewish believers," is the role of Jesus in salvation. In some of the accounts, the members do state that they believe in Jesus as the Messiah (215), but what sort of Messiah? He seems to be a role model, not a Savior. In the words of one participant, "It does not matter if you believe or do not believe in *Yeshua*, Manoela…. *Yeshua* is not this figure

that saves you. It is your moral conduct that matters; whether you righteously observe the scriptural laws" (131). Jesus seems to be one of many pious Jews (*hassid*) like Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer (*baal shem tov*), who is mentioned in Carpenedo's account as an important spiritual guide to the community. So very similar to *Chabad*, where a rabbi (Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe) was venerated by some as the Messiah, this community in Brazil seems to venerate Jesus as an ethical Messiah but not as the divine son of God who redeems humanity from sin, as in orthodox Christianity (130–135). This understanding is coherent with what Carpenedo observed in their celebration of the ritual of *Pessach* (Passover). In their version of the ritual, narrated by Carpenedo, which does not conform to either rabbinic or most Christian standards, Jesus's role is mainly connected to the ritual of foot washing (which is not prescribed in the Torah, but in the Gospels). His role as the paschal lamb, which is central in Christianity, is not there. After celebrating *Pessach* (Passover) with them, Carpenedo concludes that "the symbol of Jesus has lost its centrality within the cultural hierarchies of the Judaizing Evangelicals" (130). Therefore, are they still Christians? I wonder what Rabbi Shaul of the first century (aka Paul of Tarsus) would say to this community were he alive today. Maybe the same thing he did to the Galatians: that this is "another gospel"?! I will let the reader decide this matter.

As a historian, I see similarities between the group described by Carpenedo and those described by ancient Christian writers like Epiphanius. These are groups labeled as practicing "Judaism" because of their view of Jesus as a role model and the emphasis on ritual purity for salvation. A comparative analysis of both groups would certainly illuminate how Judaism and Christianity have evolved. And this is only possible because of detailed accounts such as the one produced by Manoela Carpenedo. To her, historians are now in debt.

Regardless of one's interpretation of the religious experiences of those described by Carpenedo, to those interested in Christian mission, Christian history, Jewish history, or religious history, *Becoming Jewish, Believing in Jesus* is a fascinating account of the religious landscape of my home country (Brazil), specifically about a group that I think most are unfamiliar with. The book shows the enduring influence of the Bible (mainly the HB) in society through the varied application in the life of believers, who, influenced by their context, apply the text in different ways. The book also has the potential of raising many questions about Jewish and Christian identity(ies). I congratulate Carpenedo for her work and look forward to engaging with her in our lovely tongue, Portuguese.

Berrien Springs, Michigan Rodrigo Galiza

Cassidy, Richard J. *A Roman Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians*. New York, NY: Crossroad, 2019. viii + 219 pp. Hardcover. USD 89.95.

Richard J. Cassidy is a professor of sacred Scriptures at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, Michigan. He is also an ordained priest of the Detroit Archdiocese of the Catholic Church. In 2002, he wrote a book on the five letters that the apostle Paul wrote while he was "in chains," entitled *Paul in Chains: The Impact of Roman Imprisonment upon the Letters of Paul*. During his writing, Cassidy realized that the Letter to the Philippians needed more attention and analysis, so he decided to compose a full commentary on it. This was how this book came about. This new commentary by Cassidy is very helpful in explaining the Roman historical background information relevant to the interpretation of Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, especially regarding slavery, the military, the emperor cult, and so on (vii). Cassidy's demonstration of the sharp contrast between the Roman emperor and the Lord Jesus Christ in the Letter to the Philippians is impressive and intriguing. He clearly shows that Paul is arguing that Jesus Christ, rather than the Roman emperor, is the only true and glorious Lord of the universe.

There are three main sections to this book: the introduction, the body of commentary, and the appendixes. One characteristic that makes this book special is its very long and comprehensive introduction. It is forty-three pages long, and that is one-fourth of the contents of the book. It is comprehensive, having nineteen subsections in total, covering many aspects of the Roman context, which include "Titles of Exaltation in the Eastern Provinces," "*Maiestas*," "The Military History of Philippi," "The Roman Character of Philippi," Roman citizenship, the emperor cult, slavery, Paul's ministry at Philippi, the Christian community of Philippi, and others (vii). This comprehensive and valuable introduction lays a firm foundation for the second section, the main body of the commentary.

Having divided the Letter to the Philippians into sixteen parts, Cassidy delves into each using two subtitles, "Introductory Comments" and "Tracing the Train of Thought" (46), to provide an overview and a coherent verse-by-verse commentary of the text. Just as the title of this book suggests, in his comments, Cassidy puts a major emphasis on the Roman background of the text, by which he makes Paul's words come to life again. At the beginning of the commentary, Cassidy points out that by calling himself a servant of Jesus Christ (1:1), Paul probably had three meanings in mind: first, he belonged to Jesus Christ like a slave belongs to his master; second, he was a slave because he was physically chained; and third, Christ came to the world as a slave (48). Then Cassidy argues that the way "Jesus came to be with the Father in glory" is one of the central themes in Paul's letter to the Philippians (54). Cassidy devotes nineteen pages of the analysis to Phil 2:6–11, which is called the "'peak' section of the letter" (99), undoubtedly indicating its importance. He argues that this

pericope is composed by Paul "as a 'Christ drama' while in Roman chains" (81). He claims that there are "two *acts*" in this drama, 2:6–8 and 2:9–11, and in each act, there are "four *scenes*" (81). He also notes that the first act deals with Jesus's descent, where Jesus is "the leading actor," and the second act deals with Jesus's ascent, where the Father leads the scene (81).

Moving to Philippians 3, Cassidy argues that "the enemies of the cross of Christ" (v.18) refers to "the Roman authorities," especially the Roman emperor Nero (121–122). Following this argument, Cassidy suggests that the phrase ἡ κοιλία in v. 19 means "the male sex organ" rather than the "visceral appetite," as some commentators suggest (123). Discussing Philippians 4:4–9, Cassidy points out that Jesus Christ's advent will be considerably more glorious and significant than the arrival of the Roman emperors (135). If the "imperial arrival" inaugurated a new year in the Roman Empire (135), imagine the advent of Jesus Christ, the Lord of the whole universe! Addressing Paul's response to the gift sent by the Philippians (4:10–20), Cassidy interestingly says that because Paul learned that there were "imperial images" on the coins that Epaphroditus brought to him, so believing that those coins were "contaminated by the Julio-Claudian propaganda," Paul rejected them (142). At the end of this commentary, Cassidy reaffirms that the predominant theme of the Letter to the Philippians is "lordship" (145), that "Jesus Christ and the Father," rather than the Roman emperors, are the true source of "all power, all benevolence, all majesty, all glory" (147).

Five appendixes follow the main body of the commentary and include pictures and information on cartography, Roman coins, slaves, and Paul as a prisoner, as well as Cassidy's acknowledgment of those who helped him in the production of this book (148–172).

This commentary offers many positive contributions. First, the comprehensive introduction lays a firm foundation for the main body of the text. As one reads through it, they becomes more familiar with the Roman world, making it easier for the person to understand the later contents. Secondly, it is essential knowledge to the interpretation of this epistle, Cassidy points out, that the city of Philippi was used by the emperor Augustus "as a settlement location for military veterans," and after Rome, it was the second "most 'Roman' city" that Paul visited (8). This description indicates that in the study of the Letter to the Philippians, the Roman background information is exceedingly significant. Also, Cassidy's description of "slavery in the Roman empire" provides useful insight into Christ's death. He mentions that "the ultimate punishment" for a slave was crucifixion according to the master's will (18). This makes the willing death of Jesus Christ on the cross even more striking.

Cassidy also mentions that when Josephus was about to be released, Titus and Domitian ordered his chains to be "severed by an axe" instead being unlocked so that the shame of Josephus's chains could be removed (66). I

appreciate this example because it vividly shows the shame that Paul's chain would have produced during that time.

Cassidy does not let any chance of presenting the Roman background slip away. He even analyzes Paul's name within the Roman context. He notes that Roman citizens usually had three names, "*praenomen*, *nomen*, and *cognomen*," and "Paulus" would have been Paul's cognomen (47). Furthermore, Cassidy suggests that the name "Saul" was probably Paul's fourth name, a "*supernomen*" (47). This information is very interesting, and it can easily draw readers' minds back to the Roman world.

Cassidy has made another big contribution by arguing that Phil 2:6–11 is a "Christ drama" rather than "a preexisting 'hymn,'" as many commentators suggest (81). The structure of "two *acts*" and "four *scenes*," as suggested by him, is beautiful. I was also fascinated by his recognition of Jesus being the "leading actor" of the first act and the Father being the "leading actor" of the second act (81). I found that his analysis of the text has greatly manifested the beauty of the Scriptures. While Cassidy recognizes the traditional view that the purpose of this passage is "kerygmatic and ethical," he also creatively asserts that this passage functions "to counter the propaganda of the Julio-Claudian emperors" (82). According to him, this "Christ drama" is a critique of the Roman authorities:

Similarly, once it is comprehended that Paul envisions the same Roman authorities who perpetrate Jesus' unjust crucifixion (scene 3) subsequently prostrating themselves before the exalted Jesus (scene 5), it becomes clear that a radical critique of these authorities is being presented. The same authorities are also implicitly critiqued when Paul portrays the oppressed slaves of their empire now participating with full dignity in confessing that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father (scene 8) (39).

Based on Cassidy's clear analysis, I can see that Paul's critique is powerful. Paul is emphasizing once again that Jesus Christ is the true Lord of the universe.

Though I found this commentary very helpful and insightful, some aspects of it can be improved. First, an improvement in the graphic design of the book would be helpful, for while the long introduction, in the beginning, is very valuable, when people start to read the main body of the commentary, they may have forgotten some key and relevant information introduced in the beginning. I think that it would have been very useful if in the textual commentary section of the book, there were references (hyperlinks) to the information presented in the introduction that was relevant to the particular section of the epistle under discussion. This should be considered by the publishers in a newer edition, and it would especially useful in the electronic version, which is already available on their website.

On textual matters, I have a few quibbles. In the commentary on Phil 2:8, Cassidy explains "to whom" and "when" Jesus became obedient

(91), but he does not explain why Paul says that Jesus became obedient. Was Jesus not obedient before? It seems that Cassidy focuses more on the aspects of the Roman background, and he does not emphasize the exegetical analysis very much. This may leave some questions inadequately answered. For his commentary on 2:6–11 as a drama of Christ, which I found fascinating, a chart or diagram of the rich parallel analysis he makes would be helpful. Additionally, Cassidy distinctively asserts that "the enemies of the cross of Christ" in 3:18 refer to "Nero and his confederates at *Rome*" (121). While this insightful interpretation is surely a contribution to the understanding of this passage, Cassidy does not present a detailed explanation of his argument. It seems to me that "the enemies of the cross of Christ" can also refer to other adversaries of the gospel. Still referring to 3:18, Cassidy says that Paul's tears are "tears of frustration" because he learned that "Nero's behavior knows no human boundaries" (122). I humbly do not agree with this idea, and this opinion also seems to contradict Cassidy's overall argument. He suggests many times that Paul is arguing that Jesus Christ, rather than the Roman emperor, is the true Lord of the universe. So with such a strong faith in Jesus, how could Paul weep in frustration? It seems to me that Paul's tears might be tears of concern about the Philippian believers, appealing and urging them to hold fast to their faith in Jesus Christ and not follow the evil ways of the enemies. Lastly, regarding the gift sent by the Philippians, Cassidy believes that Paul rejected the gift because he was "hypersensitive to the imperial propaganda" promoted by the "contaminated" coins, and he did not want to have anything to do with them (142). This argument seems to be a little radical because the text does not indicate clearly that Paul rejected the gift. Besides, Jews used Roman coins for secular activities. Here also, Cassidy should have provided more convincing evidence.

Although some aspects might need a little improvement, Cassidy's new commentary on the Letter to the Philippians is an excellent work. It is an insightful, helpful, and intriguing read. It provides a considerable amount of Roman background information as it relates to Paul's Letter to the Philippians. Some of the information is eye-opening to me. Cassidy has contributed many new and valuable insights for the interpretation of the Letter to the Philippians, and his book is a significant addition to the study of Paul's letters. I highly recommend this book to every person who is interested in the general Roman context of the NT and/or Paul's letter to the Philippians.

Berrien Springs, Michigan Michael Zhang

Dever, William G. *Has Archaeology Buried the Bible?* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020. 168 pp. Hardcover. USD 25.99.

How historical are the Hebrew writings? In biblical scholarship, the answer to this question depends on one's ideological commitments. On one side, there are scholars of the so-called minimalistic school who see no historical or factual value in the biblical text (e.g., Thomas W. Davis, *Shifting Sands: The Rise and Fall of Biblical Archaeology* [Oxford University Press, 2004]). On the other hand, generally speaking, maximalists defend the historicity of the Hebrew text (e.g., Iain Provan, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman III, *A Biblical History of Israel* [Westminster John Knox Press, 2015]). These extreme positions have battled ideologically against each other. William G. Dever's new book proposes an alternative approach to doing archaeology and biblical studies, arguing mainly from what is found on/in the ground. According to him, a rereading of the biblical text through the lenses of archaeological data must guide this dialogue.

Dever suggests that interpreters of the Bible need to realize that there are two viewpoints of history, one from the texts that eventually became the HB, and one from archaeology. The first is a less literal and more idealistic version of the past presented by "the elites who wrote and edited the Hebrew Bible—right-wing, orthodox, nationalist parties and the literati in Jerusalem" (125). This version of history is not so much about how it was but how the prevalent orthodoxy of YAWHISM thought it should have been within ancient Israel. This history is viewed as mainly composed and edited during the seventh century BCE by religious reformers who realized after the exile Israel's painful mistakes. The second historiography, more realistic in Dever's view, comes from the data collected through various excavations from multiple sites dating to the same time period the authors of the HB attempted to describe given their agenda. This approach is more realistic because the evidence comes from the masses/people who inhabited the land and left evidence of their lives. Dever thinks that reconstructing the past in this way is less biased. In his words, "We can make the Bible more credible by seeing beyond its few elite authors to the lives of the masses of people who were also part of the Biblical world. These are those, to turn a phrase from the book of Daniel, 'who sleep in the dust'" (142). Using an allegorical method of interpretation, Dever suggests there is a possible way to discern between fiction, historical truth, and practical application. In my opinion, he challenges the minimalist's complete distrust of the biblical text and avoids the extreme literalism of the maximalists.

To accomplish this discriminatory task of distinguishing facts from embellishments in the biblical narrative, Dever first scrutinizes the text, then he presents the archaeology related to a given story, and finally, he tries to synthesize both. He follows a chronological sequence as presented in Scripture, starting from the patriarchs (Abraham, Moses, Joshua, etc.), and continuing

through the period of the monarchy (Books of Kings and Chronicles). In each section, he challenges both notions—the absolute historical and nonhistorical validity of the text—giving credence to both possibilities if informed by archaeological evidence. In the end, the litmus test is the interpretation of the once buried artifacts from the biblical lands. So for Dever, the book of Judges presents a more accurate portrayal of the actual situation within Israel during the Early Iron Age (from 1200 to 1000 BCE). However, the books of Exodus, Numbers, and Joshua are primarily composed of "stupendous [historically unreliable] miracles and…[equally fictitious stories] of genocide" (66). This is not to say that all the textual references are historically inaccurate. But instead, using archaeology, he thinks he can distinguish between what is factual and what is not in his understanding of the text.

One of Dever's main arguments is the danger of absolute claims when dealing with ancient texts like the HB. This absolutism can come from either side of the argument. For example, minimalists have prematurely "killed" David and Solomon (e.g., Philip R. Davies, "'House of David' Built on Sand," *BAR* 20.4 [1994]: 54–55) only to later encounter the problem generated by the appearance of the Tel Dan Stela. Similarly, some argued that the author of Daniel did not know who was governing Babylon during its fall in 539 BCE because he wrote ex post facto (since all records pointed to Nabonidus and not Belshazzar). Yet, thanks to further textual evidence, we know the author knew more than his later critics (see Clyde E. Fant and Mitchell G. Reddish. *Lost Treasures of the Bible: Understanding the Bible through Archaeological Artifacts in World Museums* [Eerdmans, 2008], 234). On the other side of the spectrum also, absolute claims are not scarce. Some have gone to great lengths to suggest that they can identify the Egyptian princess who took Moses under her care based upon their interpretation of archaeological and chronological data (e.g., James Feather, "The Princess Who Rescued Moses: Who Was She?" *ExpTim* 43.2 [1932]: 423–425). Dever correctly points in the direction of being careful about absolute claims without strong evidence. We would certainly do well to remember that the "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence" or that the way one interprets the evidence does not necessarily support the evidence verifying one's interpretation. Caution and openness to criticism are a warranty in good scholarship.

Dever's second strong argument is about the necessity of the interaction between the text and the artifact. Regarding the prophetic writings, Dever correctly asserts that "archaeology has supplied a real-life context for many prophetic utterances that were long thought to be vague and therefore lacking real thrust" (122). The amount of archaeological data collected in recent decades has much enhanced the understanding of the biblical text. However, and in partial contrast with Dever's main argument of rereading the text solely through the lenses of archaeology, equally important is our use of the text to interpret archaeological data. A prime example is the conundrum of associat-

ing excavation sites with biblical places. There are many examples of how recent archaeological discoveries have illuminated the biblical text, like the mention of the Levites in the book of Judges alongside the current excavations at Shiloh and the recent discovery of the *Yeruba'al* (Gideon) inscription from Khirbet al-Ra'I, (e.g., Rollston, Christopher, Yosef Garfinkel, Kyle H. Keimer, Gillan Davis, and Saar Ganor, "The *Jerubba'al* Inscription from *Khirbet al-Ra'i*: A Proto-Canaanite (Early Alphabetic) Inscription," *Jerusalem Journal of Archaeology* 2 [2021]:1–15). Archaeology adds context to the text, and the text adds context to the archaeological finds. Thus, the reading and interpretation of texts and artifacts are not one-way. Archaeological finds should also be interpreted in light of the textual evidence in a legitimate dialogue.

Though I do not agree with all the synthesis Dever suggests in his book, I consider his proposal for an open dialogue between biblical archaeology and textual studies as a balanced way forward. Here I would just highlight the problematic method of reading the text allegorically to fit with one's interpretation of the current archaeological data. Of course, literalism and idealism are not the best method either. While one may disagree with Dever on his presuppositions on the text's authority, historical reliability, and origin of composition, a critical and open-minded reader will find this survey of archaeology valuable. He again succeeds in bringing together biblical text and its archaeological context. He also succeeds at highlighting the timeless and universal nature of the principles found in the text, indicating to the reader why the biblical message is still relevant. While neither the traditionalist nor the nihilist will be satisfied with his proposal, those willing to momentarily place their preconceptions aside will find Dever's attempt to understand the relationship between the artifact and the text beneficial. That does not mean they will agree with the specific applicability of his method, but it does provide a positive way to start or continue the conversation between these two disciplines.

Raymore, Missouri Abelardo Rivas

Doak, Brian R. *Ancient Israel's Neighbors*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020. 211 pp. Paperback. USD 24.95.

Brian Doak, author of *Ancient Israel's Neighbors*, has been a pastor, holds a PhD from Harvard University in Near Eastern languages and civilizations, and has worked on an archaeological excavation in Israel. He is currently vice president of George Fox Digital and a professor of biblical studies at George Fox University, where he teaches courses on ancient language, the HB and literature, history of interpretation, comparative religion in the ancient world, iconography, archaeology, and history of the ancient Near East. This book is

part of "Essentials of Biblical Studies," a series published by Oxford University Press. The whole set of eight small books provides a general introduction to the Bible. It is designed as a supplementary resource for students who have an interest in the ancient Near East and biblical history and provides an introduction to the historical, archaeological, and sociocontextual aspects of ancient Israel, interpretive and comparative methods, understandings in early Christianity, and the Jewish and Greco-Roman contextual worlds of the NT writings.

The book comprises eight chapters, with one for each of the following groups: the Canaanites, Arameans, Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, Philistines, and Phoenicians. This is a general study of these particular nations that bordered ancient Israel. The author follows the same pattern in each chapter. He gives a brief general introduction of the mentioned nation, then emphasizes its historical and archaeological background, followed by an analysis of how that particular nation is related to Israel and other nations mentioned in the HB. Every chapter ends with a section in which he explains "what happened" to each one of the nations. The book tries to clarify some geography issues, discusses vital terms such as *nation*, *state*, and *tribe*, and addresses other problems describing national borders and neighbors in the ancient and modern world. The Bible presents these neighbors in different and conflicting ways: sometimes, they are friends or relatives of Israel; at other times, they are enemies. The author takes us on a journey through history so that the biblical narrative may be better understood as we imagine how the biblical characters saw themselves in the face of others.

In the opening chapter, "Israel's Neighbors and the Problem of the Past," the author deals with the boundaries of ancient civilizations and neighborhoods "because nations surrounding Israel appear very frequently throughout the Bible and play a crucial role in Israel's story" (2). Throughout the entire Bible, there are many references to borders between nations. God himself divided peoples into nations and established borders (e.g., Deut 32:8; Hebrew *gbl*). Moreover, it is noteworthy that the Hebrew word for "wall" (*homah*) appears over one hundred times in the HB and always refers to walls built to protect a nation. In discussing Israel's neighbors, Doak differentiates between a nation and a state (6). He believes that *nation* implies more complex social groups, not just places or people. He insistently tries to emphasize the difference between these two terms. But even though his attempts can be noticed in every chapter, he does not provide a satisfactory answer in this volume regarding the status of these ancient people.

Chapter two deals with the Canaanites, the early inhabitants of the Syrian-Palestinian coast, including southern Phoenicia, who were the descendants of Canaan (Gen 10:15–18; 15:18–21; Exod 13:11). Informed by archaeology and historical records, Doak's main point is to identify who the Canaanites were and what happened to them. The broad term *Canaanites*

included Jebusites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites, and Girgashites. They were a mixed group of people who had dispersed from Sidon in the north to Gaza in the south, and from the Mediterranean coast in the west to the Dead Sea in the east. They were closely linked to the Amorites of the mountain region, called *Martu* by the Sumerians. In this chapter, Doak also points out the urbanization of Canaan that began in the early Bronze Age II (2900–2700 BCE). When the Israelites arrived at the end of the Bronze Age (1550–1200 BCE), Canaan was made up of a diverse population, made up of several tribes of the Canaanites and the Amorites. In this period, many settlements in Canaan (e.g., Jericho and Hazor) were veritable city-states ruled by local kings. He also stresses the influence Egypt had on Canaan during this time (23). Likewise, he emphasizes that the Canaanites influenced the religion of ancient Israel. For instance, the structural pattern of the Jerusalemite temple has the same basic Canaanite structure, with pillars and towers.

Informed by archaeology and extrabiblical sources, Doak illuminates the culture of ancient Israel. A good example is the artifacts from Ugarit, which give us a glimpse of the religious culture of ancient Canaan, where the Israelites developed as a nation. This is the central point from the archaeological section of this chapter. Doak also identifies the Canaanite language (Proto-Sinaitic, also referred to as Sinaitic or Proto-Canaanite) as one of the main branches of the Northwest Semitic language family. Furthermore, the Ebla tablets, discovered in 1976 in Syria, indicated that the Eblaite language was ancient Canaanite and shed light on the language and culture of biblical Israel. Likewise, the discovery of some artifacts, such as the tablets at Ras Shamra (formerly Ugarit) in Syria in 1929, revealed many details about the language, literature, and religion of Canaan, including "practices such as animal sacrifice, rituals involving priests, and various other things people said and did with relation to their deities" (29). This helps us understand why the Canaanite religion was so attractive and easy to follow and why the Israelites were told to avoid all contact with the Canaanites (e.g., Deut 7:1–6). Doak emphasizes that analyzing the relationship of the Ugaritic texts with the HB can help us more clearly understand the religion of ancient Israel.

The following chapter is dedicated to the Arameans. The HB mentions the Arameans as a people from Mesopotamia (the Aram-Naharaim, or "Aram of the two rivers") and the surrounding regions such as Syria, Persia, Jordan, and the mountains of Lebanon. At the outset, Doak emphasizes that "the Arameans were never … a single nation or group," but a region "with local centers of power spread throughout contemporary Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon, at major cities such as Damascus and Hamath" (51). He explains that the Arameans were closely related to the Israelites. Abraham appears among the eastern Arameans in Mesopotamia, in Ur of the Chaldeans (Gen 11:27–31). Furthermore, the patriarchs are portrayed as originating from these relatives, who are always called the Arameans in the book of Genesis.

In this chapter, Doak deals emphasizes language and religion as the main points of Aramean influence in the history of Israel. The Arameans had their own language, Aramaic, very similar to the Hebrew and Phoenician languages. It was as important as the people who spoke it and even became the lingua franca of the biblical lands in the first half of the first millennium BCE. It was widely used in the courts and administration of the Babylonian and Persian empires, but often with the Phoenician alphabet. The sources that allow us to reconstruct the history and language of the Arameans are of three types: (1) archaic inscriptions found in northern Syria and dating back to the eleventh and tenth centuries BCE mention that chronicles exist in Assyrian at the same time; (2) references found in the HB, such as in Daniel and Ezra; and (3) imperial Aramaic (under the Persian Empire, 539–323 BCE), which was the official language from Egypt to India. Aramaic also played a role in the area during the Roman period and was spoken by Jesus and his early followers in the NT.

I think that the most important point in this chapter is the religious influence of Aram in Israel's history. The author points out, for instance, that the book of Joshua indicates that the Aramean religious context exposed Terah's family to idolatry while they lived in Mesopotamia (Josh 24:2). This idol worship, however, was not exclusively Aramaic; it was a custom carried on by the Israelites, as seen in the biblical period of the judges (Judg 17:5; 18:14–20), the monarchy (1 Sam 19:13, 16), and even the postexilic prophets (Zach 10:1–2).

In chapter four, Doak addresses the Ammonites. The first mention of this people group in the Bible is in Gen 19:37–38. The Ammonites were the descendants of Ben-Ammi, the son of Lot, and his own youngest daughter (Gen 19:38). Thus, the Ammonites were related to the Israelites since Lot was the nephew of Abraham, the patriarch of the Israelites. Despite this relationship, in Scripture they are more often counted as enemies than friends. Even though this is one of the shortest chapters, I think it is one of the most important of the book because of its discussion on archaeology. On pages 52–62, Doak shows how the material remains indicate that Ammon flourished during the Neo-Babylonian Empire. If he is right, this contradicts the view, dominant for decades, that Transjordan was either destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar II or suffered a rapid decline after he conquered Judah. More recent evidence seems to suggest that Ammon enjoyed continuity from the Neo-Babylonian period to the Persian. Also, the author points out that little mention is made of the Ammonites during the Persian and Early Hellenistic periods.

The fifth chapter is on the Moabites, the descendants of Lot and his eldest daughter (Gen 19:37). The Moabites prospered for a long time, managed to spread across the plateau, and conquered several peoples, expanding their territory to the north. The Moabites also appear in close association with

the Ammonites, their closest relatives. In this chapter, Doak spends more pages discussing the biblical text. He emphasizes the relationship between the Israelites and the Moabites as recorded in several Scriptures. According to the Bible, there were periods of friendly coexistence and economic and cultural exchange between the two peoples. For instance, on one occasion God prevented Moses from attacking the Moabites, who at that time enjoyed God's protection (Deut 2:9). But the Moabites, as well as the Ammonites, were severely rebuked by God for rising against Israel (Deut 23:3–6). They were not hospitable to the Israelites when they left Egypt. Furthermore, Balak, the Moabite king, even hired the false prophet Balaam to curse the people of Israel (Num 22–24).

As expected, in the archaeological section, Doak presents an analysis of the so-called Mesha Stele or Moabite Stone (c. 840 BCE). It is "the only such royal dedicatory inscription from a native king of its length" in the land of Canaan (102) and is an unparalleled resource for understanding the Moabite language, script style, and literature. I think Doak could have explained a little more about the contributions of the Moabite Stone to the study of the HB and the Hebrew language. I would point out three points in this regard: (1) because of this inscription, we now know that Moabite, and maybe also Edomite and Ammonite, were languages close to Biblical Hebrew (especially to the dialects of the northern Israelite tribes); (2) the stele is a record from the ninth century BCE, and it fits into the storyline of the book of Kings, providing invaluable additional data; and finally, (3) its style, language, and syntax resemble those of the text of Kings.

In chapter six, Doak gives a long analysis of the Edomites, who were probably the closest neighboring nation to Israel, according to the HB. The descendants of Edom, or Esau (Gen 36:1–43), with others who joined them, formed the Edomites and settled in the territory south of Transjordan. As the book of Genesis indicates, Edom was a prosperous land long before any Israelite king reigned. The kingdom of Edom bordered the Judean Desert and the Dead Sea, the Sinai Peninsula, the Syrian Desert, and the Gulf of Aqaba. This same region was also called Mount Seir. The Edomites organized themselves very early into tribal units. As a nation, they had kings long before the Israelites (Gen 36:15–40; 1 Chr 1:43–54). In the Bible, the Edomites are portrayed primarily as opponents of the Israelites, despite their ethnic relation as ancient brothers. Notwithstanding this hostility, the Mosaic law granted brotherhood rights to the Edomites until the third generation (Deut 23:7–8) and to the Moabites, the Ammonites, and their descendants until the tenth generation (Deut 23:3–6).

In this section of *Ancient Israel's Neighbors*, Doak highlights two main points. The first one is the Edomite writing system—a northwest Semitic Canaanite language very similar to Hebrew and Phoenician, spoken in southwestern Jordan during the second and first millennia BCE. The Edomites

are also mentioned in extrabiblical sources. The author points out some inscriptions found in the Gulf of Elath (Aqaba) dating back to the seventh/sixth century BCE, where the reminiscence of the Edomite language may be known only from a small corpus such as impressions on seals and ostraca, text that "seems to concern a type of food used in a religious ritual for the Edomite deity Qos" (127). The second point regards geographic data on Edom. The author shows how the biblical data indicates that the land of the Edomites was not invaded until the rise of Assyria in the geopolitical scene, when the Edomites had to pay tribute to the Assyrians as a vassal state. I found Doak's discussion of the Edomites to be lacking a description of the Edomite economy since it is believed that the Edomites extracted copper in their territory and their main economic activity was trade. Copper was a precious material used in ancient times to create weapons, defensive shields, agricultural tools, and much more. Recent archaeological studies confirm not only that Edom existed during the twelfth or eleventh century BCE, when the Bible describes it, but also that it was a powerful and technologically advanced kingdom. In addition, the Edomites charged fees to ensure the safety of commercial caravans crossing the region.

In the seventh chapter, Doak focuses on the Philistines, especially their origin and relation with Israel in political and military matters, art, and polytheistic religion. It is noteworthy that the term Philistine appears more than 280 times in the HB, indicating their important role in Israel's history and society. Philistine, from the Hebrew pelishti, which most often appears in its plural form pelishtim, is probably a type of ethnic adjective derived from the territorial designation of this people. However, Doak is right when he states that "we do not possess any native story from any of these groups explaining their homeland, identity, or motives" (149–150). It is not possible to accurately determine the meaning of pelishti/pelishtim, since its etymological origin remains unknown. The Egyptian word prst may be the first known designation for the ancient Philistines and may indicate that the Philistines were one of the Sea Peoples who attempted to invade Egypt during the reign of Ramesses III in approximately 1200 BCE (150–151). Archaeological ventures confirm that the Philistines were among the peoples who tried to invade Egypt in the late second millennium BCE. It is also true that these peoples are called "peoples of the sea" in Egyptian inscriptions and devastated several territories in Egypt. There is little doubt that the Philistines were the most notable of these peoples. It was during this period that the Philistines settled south of Canaan.

In this chapter, Doak does not mention the language spoken by the Philistines, maybe because very little is known about it. It was probably a Canaanite dialect. Later, the dialect used in that region was replaced by Aramaic. On the other hand, Doak does explore the rich Philistine artistic and religious traditions. The Philistines worshipped Semitic deities such as

Dagon, with temples in Gaza and Ashdoth (Judg 16:21–30; 1 Sam 5:1–5); Ashtoreth, with the sanctuary at Ashkelon; and Baal-Zebub, with a shrine at Ekron (2 Kgs 1:2–6). All these gods were worshipped in the ancient Near East. This may mean that the Philistines adopted the religion that already existed in Canaan. Some of these ancient temples could still be seen during the Hellenistic period. The Philistines are mentioned one last time in the Bible by the prophet Zechariah after the Babylonian captivity (Zech 9:5–6). Already during the Hellenistic period, the main cities of Philistia were inhabited by a mixed population.

Chapter eight is on the Phoenicians. It is common knowledge that the Phoenician civilization stood out for its skill in maritime navigation and production of a sophisticated alphabet. The Phoenicians developed in the northwestern coastal region of the land of Canaan, in modern-day Lebanon. Some scholars have suggested that the Phoenicians migrated to this area, while others say that their culture evolved from Canaanite peoples in the same area during the Bronze Age. Doak, on the other hand, calls the "northern coastal residents 'Canaanites'" (173). There is no scholarly consensus on their origin. Interestingly, the HB does not mention the name "Phoenicians." They appear in ancient Egyptian inscriptions as Keft, which may be derived from *fenkhu* (natives of Canaan), and also in ancient Greek writings as *phoinix*, which means "a palm tree" or "the land of palm trees." Phoenicia was a strip of land along the shores of the Mediterranean, from the Eleutherus River (also known as Nahr El Kabir) in the north to the highest part of Carmel in the south. They are also mentioned in the NT (Acts 11:19; 15:3; 21:2). One of the reasons why so little is known about the Phoenicians is that there are almost no written records from them, only inscriptions and temple dedications. Furthermore, although archaeologists have found thousands of inscriptions on shrines, they are of little value for reconstructing history because they are nearly all the same. What is known is that their culture showed a particular type of dedication to the gods.

Doak points out that Phoenicia was made up of more than twenty cities, like Ugarit, Byblos (also called Gebal), Sidon, and Tyre. These cities were independent of each other, and their political regimes varied. Byblos was under Egyptian control for a long time; Ugarit became a cosmopolitan area; Sidon was also dominated by the Egyptians, Persians, and Greeks. The city of Tyre had good relations with Israel, and later the Tyrians ended up subordinating themselves to the Babylonians and Persians. Alexander of Macedonia then razed the city after a seven-month siege.

In the archaeological section of this chapter, Doak highlights the Phoenician writing system, as expected. He even emphasizes that their innovation with the Canaanite alphabet system "paved the way not only for many other writing systems in the Levant (including Israel's) that borrowed the basic Phoenician script, but also west-ward into the Mediterranean Sea, as the

Greeks adapted the writing system for their alphabet" (179). The Phoenicians spread their unique alphabet throughout the Levant region yet left almost no historical record.

In the conclusion of *Ancient Israel's Neighbors*, Doak reflects on how the history of these peoples can help us understand the modern world. He points out that throughout history, humans have developed different cultures, customs, convictions, and social and political systems. Part of this development was the creation of political boundaries and social hierarchy, the main characteristics of civilization.

For those seeking a brief overview of these peoples mentioned in the Scriptures in relation to Israel, *Ancient Israel's Neighbors* is a good resource. For a deeper engagement with the ancient sources, one needs to look elsewhere, in books such as the *Peoples of the Old Testament World*, edited by Alfred J. Hoerth, Gerald L. Mattingly, and Edwin M. Yamauchi (Baker, 1998). I highly recommend Doak's book to students looking for an outline of ancient Israel from ancient Near Eastern texts and archaeology that takes into consideration its neighbors.

Berrien Springs, Michigan Ronaldo da Silva

Du Mez, Kristin Kobes. *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation*. New York, NY: LiveRight, 2020. 344 pp. + index. Hardcover. USD 24.95.

One of the most shocking moments of my career took place when, during a pastoral visit, I discovered that one of my church members was stockpiling weapons and ammunition. Barack Obama had recently been elected president, and this church member had a heavily fortified basement replete with dozens of high-powered weapons and enough ammunition for a small army—he was, as he told me, ready to shoot his way through the time of trouble. This form of militant Adventism, from a devout Adventist who served as a church leader and who claimed an Adventist pedigree stemming back generations, is more of a reflection of the militant masculinity associated with a segment of white evangelical culture, as described by author Kristin Du Mez.

The author traces the origins of this book to a Donald Trump campaign stop at her small, midwestern Bible college. Ultimately 68 percent of the white Evangelical Protestant vote went for Trump. This same demographic is reflected in the opposition to immigration reform. They shared a more negative view of immigrants than any other religious demographic. Two-thirds supported Trump's border wall. "White evangelicals are significantly more authoritarian than other religious groups, and they express confidence in their religious leaders at much higher rates than do members of other faiths" (4).

Du Mez explains this thesis further:

> But evangelical support for Trump was no aberration, nor was it merely a pragmatic choice. It was, rather, the culmination of evangelicals' embrace of militant masculinity, an ideology that enshrines patriarchal authority and condones the callous display of power, at home and abroad. By the time Trump arrived proclaiming himself their savior, conservative white evangelicals had already traded a faith that privileges humility and elevates 'the least of these' for one that derides gentleness as the province of wusses. Rather than turning the other cheek, they'd resolved to defend their faith and their nation, secure in the knowledge that the ends justify the means. Having replaced the Jesus of the Gospels with a vengeful warrior Christ, it's no wonder many came to think of Trump in the same way. In 2016, many observers were stunned at evangelicals' apparent betrayal of their own values. In reality, evangelicals did not cast their vote despite their beliefs, but because of them. (3)

At the heart of this is the penchant of many evangelicals for proof-texting. With 31,000 Bible verses, which ones are essential and which can be "readily ignored or explained away?" (5). Instead, a much more compelling ideology has captured a part of the evangelical imagination: Christian nationalism, which Du Mez defines as "the belief that America is God's chosen nation and must be defended as such." This belief serves more than anything else as a predictor of intolerance toward immigrants, racial minorities, and non-Christians (4).

This form of evangelicalism does not include black Christians, who see it as more of "a white religious brand" (6). Instead, for conservative white evangelicals, "the Christian gospel has become inextricably linked to a staunch commitment to patriarchal authority, gender difference, and Christian nationalism, and all of these are intertwined with white racial identity" (6–7). It is important that this "God-and-country faith" includes people who both attend and do not attend church. "It creates affinities across denominational, regional, and socioeconomic differences, even as it divides Americans—and American Christians—into those who embrace these values, and those who do not" (7).

The onscreen embodiment of the heroic cowboy and idealized American soldier is personified by John Wayne, the icon of rugged American manliness. Although not religious, interestingly, he would in time become an icon of Christian masculinity. "Wayne would come to symbolize a different set of virtues—a nostalgic yearning for a mythical 'Christian America,' a return to 'traditional' gender roles, and the reassertion of (white) patriarchal authority" (10). Early chapters in Du Mez's book trace the origins of this militant masculinity (15–59).

Contemporary evangelical partisanship was part of a broader alignment that transformed partisan politics from the 1950s to the 1980s, something evangelicals helped make happen. "For conservatives," Du Mez argues, "a

defense of white patriarchy would move to the center of their coalescing cultural and political identity" (33). The civil rights movement, Vietnam, and feminism challenged these reigning dogmas, especially the civil rights movement, which from this perspective "seemed unpatriotic." She adds, "Having embraced the idea of America as a 'Christian nation,' it was hard to accept a critique of the nation as fundamental as that advanced by the civil rights movement" (38). Another example was the 1968 election of Richard Nixon, in which evangelicals held the key to his victory. A lapsed Quaker, Nixon was not very religious. Yet he knew that Billy Graham could help him win over evangelical votes (ultimately, white evangelicals were a significant part of his majority, capturing 69 percent of the votes for Nixon). "Nixon knew how to speak the language of Evangelicals and how to appeal to their values through symbol and spectacle" (45). Nixon and Graham fused religion and politics through "Honor America Day" and the symbolism of flags. If only they had more faith, they could win the Vietnam War and live with less fear. By the time Nixon was reelected in 1972, he had captured 84 percent of the evangelical vote. "The alliance between the Republican Party and Evangelical Christians seemed secure" (48).

Conservative evangelicals also upheld the military in uncritical esteem. Fundamentalists were some of the most enthusiastic supporters of the Vietnam War—a war that intended to get rid of "godless communism" (49). This war, for Du Mez, more than anything else "was pivotal to the formation of an emerging evangelical identity" (50). The failed war was perceived as an affront to American manhood, especially for American evangelicals. Boys must be taught how to fight and that such violence was sanctified. "This conflation of religious and secular can be seen in the cultlike status John Wayne enjoyed among American conservatives in the 1960s and 1970s" (54). Even Wayne's crassness was part of his appeal, setting a pattern for evangelical heroes, both religious and secular. "Wayne might come up short in terms of traditional virtue, but he excelled at embodying a different set of virtues" (59). These virtues included masculine strength, aggression, and redemptive violence—themes Du Mez explores in subsequent chapters. Of special note is the rise of "male headship" ideology. This became particularly pronounced through the ministries of Jerry Falwell and James Dobson.

Chapter six discusses this same fusion of conservative Christianity with politics during the presidency of Ronald Reagan (103–117). A strong military and aggressive foreign policy aligned with an evangelical view of masculine power (113). Chapter seven examines how Jerry Fallwell led the way in canonizing Oliver North in the Iran-Contra controversy (118–133). What he did was justifiable given the fusion between faith and politics that lionized assertive militarism. This paved the way for the Religious Right, who thrived on a sense of embattlement (140). After the threat of communism disappeared, evangelical men began to look to new models for their masculinity. Ministries

like Promise Keepers arose to help encourage "Godly male bonding" and to facilitate "stealth political cells" (151). Fallwell and others knew how to mix religion with sports. Thus, sports and the military "reinforced a dualistic view of the world" that separated winners from losers (156). A whole cadre of books resulted, crafting and championing the prosperity gospel, neo-Calvinism, and Christian masculinity. During the 1980s and 1990s, a new complementarian theology, rooted in male authority and the submission of women, became the litmus test of a true evangelical (169). Also, a "purity culture" developed that depended upon female modesty. Since men had nearly irresistible sex drives, it was up to wives to satisfy their husbands' every sexual need in order to remove temptation. Books like John Eldredge's *Wild at Heart* (Thomas Nelson, 2001) generated a contemporary tone of evangelical militancy. His "warrior God" was all about male aggression. By the early 2000s, the rise of New Calvinism coincided neatly with patriarchal ideals (203).

A major hub of this militant Christianity was Colorado Springs, the center of the United States Air Force Academy and the North American Air Defense Command, and also the center of a series of evangelical, charismatic, and fundamentalist churches. In 1991, James Dobson relocated his ministry to a 47-acre complex overlooking the air force academy. Dobson was a master of fusing politics and religion.

After September 11, Islam replaced communism as the chief enemy of America (219–232). Since race had always been central to the formation of some white evangelicals' politics and cultural identity, the election of Barak Obama contributed to a sense of embattlement and emboldened more militant voices (238). By the time of the 2016 election, gender also remained a key reason that many evangelicals supported Donald J. Trump over Hillary Clinton (250–251). The support for Trump was not instantaneous. At first, most evangelicals preferred more traditional candidates. Adventist readers will note the appearance of Ben Carson's candidacy as a case in point (252). He knew how to play politics to white Protestant American Evangelicals, showing just how much some segments of Adventism had fused with this political trend. As an African American conservative, he believed that a Muslim should be disqualified from serving as president, supported the right to fly the Confederate flag, compared political correctness to the practices of Nazi Germany, and suggested that the Holocaust would not have happened had Jews been armed.

Ultimately, with Trump as their "high priest," by the 2010s, many high-profile cases showed a willingness by many evangelicals to turn a blind eye to abuses of power in the interest of maintaining patriarchal authority (272). Such ideological extremes reflected the mainstream culture.

In the end, Doug Wilson, John Piper, Mark Driscoll, James Dobson, Doug Phillips, and John Eldredge all preached a mutually reinforcing vision of Christian masculinity—of patriarchy and submission, sex and power. It

was a vision that promised protection for women but left women without defense, one that worshipped power and turned a blind eye to justice, and one that transformed the Jesus of the Gospels into an image of their own making (294).

Du Mez makes a compelling case that white American Evangelicalism is, at its core, a cultural and political movement within American culture, a force that supersedes even its theology (298). By 2016, Wayne Grudem and Bruce Ware had begun to advance a theology of the Trinity that made Jesus "eternally subordinate" to God the Father to justify the eternal, God-ordained subordination of women to men (298). "For critics," says the author, "this raised an important question: were men defending patriarchy because they believed it to be biblical, or were they twisting the Scriptures in order to defend patriarchy?" (298). This fusion of religion and politics has made it difficult to discern between the sacred and the secular.

What this book makes clear is the challenge of Christian nationalism for Seventh-day Adventists in the United States today. This book should be a wake-up call for every thoughtful Adventist to think carefully about their religious and political outlooks—are we allowing our politics to mold our faith, rather than the other way around? For a church with a heritage of religious liberty, how has it become normalized in some Adventist circles to stockpile weapons and ammunition for the time of trouble? While some can argue that these are exceptions, at least in the midwestern United States (where I have largely taught and pastored), most Adventists firmly supported Trump for many of the reasons outlined by the author of this book. This raises questions about just how extensive this fusion between religion and politics is and just how much this larger cultural milieu has shaped and even transformed Adventist identity for many Adventists. Similarly, compared to the wider evangelical world, how do these political alignments differ along racial and socioeconomic lines in Adventism?

Gerry Chudleigh's 2014 paper "A Short History of the Headship Doctrine in the Seventh-day Adventist Church" traces this Adventist embrace of complementarian theology that occurred from the 1970s onward (https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/433232). Many Adventists behind the periodical *Adventists Affirm* and similar groups who strongly oppose women's ordination do not realize that they parallel conservative evangelical ideology and politics. Chudleigh chronicles how many of these same evangelical conservatives described by Du Mez became popularized within Adventism, particularly through the writings of Samuele Bacchiochi. It should therefore also come as no surprise that as neo-Calvinist ideas have become popularized in some Adventist circles, to a surprising degree, a parallel resurgence of anti-Trinitarianism has emerged. What is significant is that much of the anti-Trinitarian rhetoric within Adventism of recent vintage utilizes, to a large degree, this same complementarian ideology.

In conclusion, this book raises the issue of Christian nationalism as a far-reaching topic that needs careful analysis and study. A similar work within Adventism is overdue. It was the reading of this book more than anything else that prompted me to spearhead an online conference about this topic under the auspices of the Adventist Society for Religious Studies (ASRS), cosponsored by the North American Division (NAD) Ministerial Department, and cosponsored by several other denominational entities on Sabbath afternoon, April 24, 2021. This is a first attempt to explore the challenges posed by Christian nationalism by Adventist thought leaders (for those readers interested, the full conference can be viewed at https://www.nadministerial.com/stories/christian-nationalism-adventism-and-prophecy). According to NAD leaders, this was up until then one of the best attended virtual events they had ever hosted, with thousands of comments and views. If such online participation is any indication, this is an extremely relevant topic that deserves further exploration in the future.

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Estes, Douglas, ed. *The Tree of Life*. TBN 27. Leiden: Brill, 2020. xxii + 467 pp. Hardcover. USD 298.00.

The Tree of Life is volume 27 of Brill's Themes in Biblical Narrative (TBN) series, which "publishes studies dealing with early interpretations and receptions of Biblical materials" (https://brill.com/view/serial/TBN). Modern scholarship has offered relatively little engagement with the tree of life motif (1). The new addition to the TBN series attempts to "fill this lacuna with a constructive investigation of the tree of life from its origin in human history up to various modern theological perspectives" (1). *The Tree of Life* contains fourteen contributions by seventeen scholars, led by editor Douglas Estes, then associate professor of NT and practical theology at South University, Columbia, SC, now associate professor of biblical studies and practical theology at Tabor College, Hillsboro, KS.

After a foreword by James H. Charlesworth and an introduction by Douglas Estes, the remaining articles examine the tree of life motif focusing on six main perspectives: ANE material (chs. 1–2), biblical texts (chs. 3–4, 8), early extrabiblical literature (chs. 5–7, 9–11), the medieval period (ch. 12), Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian traditions (ch. 13), and the modern period (ch. 14). The book closes with a conclusion written by the editor. In this review, I interact in a little more depth with the articles dealing directly with biblical material since it is the area of research *AUSS* readers are most attentive to.

In chapter one, "The Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Literature," Charles L. Echols surveys the ancient Near Eastern texts for the phrase "the

tree of life." He finds the expression extremely rare outside the Bible. An exact match is available only in three Egyptian texts (The Hymn to Ptah, The Great Cairo Hymn of Praise to Amun-Re, and The Great Hymn to Osiris). But "the concept of a sacred tree appeared as early as the fourth millennium in the ancient Near East and was ubiquitous by the second millennium" (5). Thus, Echols seeks parallels to "the tree of life in Gen 2–3 … based not on nomenclature, but on taxonomy and function" (9). In three regions (Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Levant), Echols finds texts describing sacred trees that, in varying degrees, promote life, prosperity, and suggest hope of immortality. To a tree that prevents death such as the one in Genesis 2–3, however, Echols does not find any "unequivocal parallel" in the literature of the ancient Near East (27). Chapter two, "The Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Iconography," was written by Amy L. Balogh. She notes that even though "the phrase [tree of life] does not appear on any extant images at all" (32), sacred trees are prominent in the ancient Near East iconography. They are either "symbolic of a nurturing goddess in charge of life-cycles or … symbolic of kingship" (32). The latter is especially notable in Mesopotamian iconography (51).

Chapter 3, "The Tree of Life in Genesis," is written by Christopher Heard. He offers a synchronic reading of Gen 2–3, zooming in on the tree of life motif. Heard attempts to show that such a perspective "can yield a coherent" and more satisfactory reading than diachronic approaches (75). In the first segment, Heard contextualizes his reading by explaining the three main reconstructive approaches to the trees in the middle of the garden of Eden: (1) the tree of life was inserted into an original story that contained only the tree of knowledge; (2) two parallel stories were later joined; or (3) the tree of life was part of the original story (77–80). Heard favors the third approach and presents his arguments for it in the second part of his article. The first issue Heard deals with is the absence of an explicit reference to "the tree of knowledge of good and evil" in 3:3 (the woman simply mentions "the tree which is in the midst of the garden," NKJV). After exploring some options in dialogue with other scholars, Heard concludes that "it is *not* necessary to amend 2:9b or 2:17 in light of 3:3 for the canonical version of 2:4–3:24 to read as a coherent narrative" (86). His rationale is that 2:9b implies that the two special trees "stood relatively near one another" in the garden, that God differentiated the tree of knowledge of good and evil from the tree of life in 2:17, that the man communicated such information to the woman (her knowledge is secondhand), and that in 3:3 she uses an expression ("the tree that is in the midst of the garden") "that was meaningful to her" to point to the forbidden tree (83–85). The second issue Heard addresses is the tree of life in 3:22–24. He deals with modern critical issues such as the use of doublets, apparent conflicting reasons for the eviction of humans from the garden, plurality in the divine address in 3:22, and "the correspondence between announced and actual penalty" (88). Heard takes the scene as "the

implementation of the death threat of 2:17" (90), which he does not interpret as "absolute immediacy" but as a reference to "the *certainty* of death" (94). He concludes that "the garden story suffers without the tree of life, or some substitute for it, in 3:22, 24," as attempted in some reconstructions (95). Specifically, the "excision of the tree of life leaves an important plot point, the death threat of Gen 2:17, without resolution, while the canonical text allows the very interdiction of that tree to serve as the mechanism by which the humans' death moves from potential to certainty" (96).

Chapter four, "The Tree of Life in Proverbs and Psalms," was written by William R. Osborne. Since the book of Proverbs does not refer directly to "the tree of life" but rather to "a tree of life," Osborne explores the four occurrences of the expression in Proverbs (3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4) through the lenses of metaphor. He expands on the definition of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (*Metaphors We Live By* [University of Chicago Press, 2003]) to include communication. As Osborne explains in previous work, "metaphor is understanding, experiencing, *and communicating* one thing in terms of another" (*Trees and Kings: A Comparative Analysis of Tree Imagery in Israel's Prophetic Tradition and the Ancient Near East*, *BBRSup* 18 [Eisenbrauns, 2018], 21). Osborne also observes, based on the advances provided by Conceptual Metaphor Theory, "the importance of worldview in accessing the significance of linguistic figurations." In this regard, Osborne points out, "If metaphors arise out of conceptual frameworks of how one sees the world, in order to make sense of such frameworks, the interpreter must maintain a level of shared knowledge for the comparison to work. Without shared knowledge, figurative language simply does not work" (102). Considering the work of Job Y. Jindo (*Biblical Metaphor Reconsidered: A Cognitive Approach to Poetic Prophecy in Jeremiah 1–24*, HSM 64 [Eisenbrauns, 2010]), which "bring[s] together a broader understanding of an ancient Near Eastern worldview with the developments of cognitive linguistics," Osborne comes to "three major conceptual metaphors" (103). Specifically, he points out that the tree imagery in biblical and the ancient Near Eastern contexts may be symbolic of "prosperity, deity, [and] kingship" (105). He concludes noting that while there are"similarities with other ancient Near Eastern material, the biblical authors of … [Proverbs and Psalms] were knowledgeable of broader conceptions of tree imagery as it related to cultic and wisdom contexts, yet for these writers, such traditions were always to be understood solely in a Yahwistic worldview" (119).

The following three articles interact with the tree of life motif in mostly early extrabiblical texts. Chapter five is entitled "The Tree of Life in Jewish-Christian Legendary Texts." In it, Peter T. Lanfer assesses the motif in Pseudo-Philo, 4 Baruch, 4 Maccabees, and the Life of Adam and Eve from the perspective of shared themes, such as a sign of "eschatological renewal," "God's presence," or "a source of life/immortality" (122). In chapter six, Beth M. Stovell discusses

"The Tree of Life in Ancient Apocalypse" through Gilles Fauconnier's and Mark Turner's conceptual metaphor theories. She analyzes the tree of life symbolism in apocalyptic texts spanning from the first to the eleventh century CE. Chapter seven, by Ken M. Penner, deals with "The Tree of Life in Enochic Literature," including first, second, and third Enoch. In all of these, the tree of life is related to the divine presence. Penner suggests these sources provide "the background that John's Revelation assumes when using the tree of life to symbolize the eschatological reward for the righteous" (180).

Chapter eight, written by Douglas Estes, is entitled "The Tree of Life in the Apocalypse of John." By Looking at the four references to the tree of life in Revelation (2:7; 22:2, 14, 19), Estes points out that three of these occurrences are "tangential to the larger narrative…. Only in Rev 22:2 does the writer bring the tree of life into the world of the narrative" (185). Locating the tree of life within the biblical context, Estes notes that "Genesis is the primary referent, and Ezekiel is the secondary" (186n10). In addition, he observes that "both Genesis [2:9] and Revelation [22:2] share one, and only one, statement where the tree of life is mentioned as an existent of the narrative world, outside of descriptive speech or theological reference. These two direct statements serve as the two poles" (186). Thus, the author, while dealing somewhat with the tangential texts, for the most part seeks to establish the meaning of the tree of life in Rev 22:2. He interprets it as multistable and polyvalent. His final assessment is heavily dependent on Artemidorus's parameters and the reader's imagination (207, 210).

There is, however, much to commend in Estes's article. He investigates the tree of life in Rev 22:2 in light of both Genesis and Ezekiel (186, 191, 197), which from a canonical perspective is necessary, and attempts to offer an interpretation that does justice to all of these passages. Readers are enriched by his discussion on the art of describing visual images (186–190). Estes well locates John's reliance on a Hebrew worldview to create Revelation's visual texture (191). And finally, in a very stimulating presentation, Estes offers informed attempts to interpret the challenging image of the tree of life in Rev 22:2 (192–208).

The next three articles, once again, interact with early extrabiblical views of the tree of life motif. In chapter nine, "The Tree of Life in Early Christian Literature," Mark Edwards explores the motif in the works of several church fathers. While the motif was interpreted in many ways through literal, moral, and spiritual readings, the most prevalent view was that which thought of the tree as a metaphor for wisdom. Jutta Leonhardt-Balzer addresses "The Tree of Life in Philo" in chapter ten. She assesses several texts and relates Philo's allegorical interpretation of the tree of life motif as a metaphor for virtue in life to the influence of "Greek philosophy" (247). In chapter eleven, "The Tree of Life in Gnostic Literature," Carl B. Smith II studies the tree of life in the Nag Hammadi literature. He finds the motif is "not a prominent

symbol" in most of these texts (275). In gnostic texts, he explains, the tree of knowledge takes center stage.

Beyond the biblical period, Pippa Salonius writes on "The Tree of Life in Medieval Iconography" (ch. 12). Her visually rich presentation on the tree of life in medieval art documents the several ways in which the image was used in the period. The motif is found as part of texts, bowls, paintings, pavements, windows, walls, ceilings, monuments, and religious objects. A variety of meanings are expressed in these artistic designs, such as "a path towards God," "terrestrial community, lineage, and power," "longevity," and "salvation," among others (330–331). The tree of life was also used as "a meditative tool," "a didactic instrument," and "a way to propagandize" religious orders (332). In chapter thirteen, "The Tree of Life in the North," G. Ronald Murphy discusses the tree of life motif in Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian traditions, where the motif is reflected in ecclesial architecture. In chapter fourteen, Daniel J. Treier, Dustyn Elizabeth Keepers, and Ty Kieser discuss "The Tree of Life in Modern Theological Thought" in historical-critical, literal, theological, and symbolic readings.

As a whole, *The Tree of Life* presents readers with a wealth of information on the topic—from biblical and extrabiblical material to description of the ancient Near Eastern context, from early reception history to modern thought. It provides Bible students and researchers with access to much of the literature in a single volume. The book is an important resource for research on the tree of life motif.

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Furlong, Dean. *The John Also Called Mark: Reception and Transformation in Christian Tradition.* WUNT 2/518. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020. 251 pp. Paperback. USD 79.00.

Dean Furlong's study explores Christian traditions relating to "the John also called Mark" (Acts 15:37) and his portrayal as a Markan figure (i.e., a figure sometimes identified with Mark the Evangelist) and as a Johannine figure (i.e., a figure sometimes identified with the beloved disciple John the Evangelist). Furlong refers to John Mark as John/Mark in recognition that the figure in question was not called "John Mark" but rather "John" *or* "Mark." Furlong suggests that the same individual is referred to as "John" in Acts 13:5, 13, as "Mark" in 15:39, and as "John, who was also called Mark" in 12:12, 25, and 15:37 (3). A shorter version of this study focusing on the reception of John the Evangelist in early Christian writings was submitted in 2017 as part of Furlong's doctoral dissertation written at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, under the supervision of Professors Peter-Ben Smit and Aza Goudriaan.

Furlong's thesis is that while many assume a relationship between John/Mark and Mark the Evangelist, in early Christian sources, the two Marks were differentiated. Further, he builds on the work of J. Edgar Bruns, who drew attention to an apparent "confusion" in some early Christian sources between John and Mark ("John Mark: A Riddle within the Johannine Enigma," Scripture 15 [1963]: 88–92; "The Confusion between John and John Mark in Antiquity," *Scripture* 17 [1965]: 23–26). Furlong presents evidence additional to that presented by Bruns indicating that in some early sources John/Mark was sometimes identified with John the Evangelist. The "confusion" between John/Mark and John the Evangelist is deemed by Furlong to have originated in the second century, pointing to the possibility that John/Mark was identified with either John the Evangelist or the beloved disciple of John's Gospel in earlier Christian sources.

In part one (chs. 1–5), Furlong considers traditions associating John/Mark with other Markan figures. Chapter one surveys three depictions of a figure called Mark–John/Mark, Mark the Evangelist, and the Mark who founded churches in Egypt. The traditional view of scholarship is that John/Mark is Mark the Evangelist and/or Alexandrian Mark. Furlong surveys early Christian traditions relating to each of the three Marks and concludes that they are presented as three distinct figures.

Chapter two explores the reception of Mark the Evangelist and his conflation with John/Mark in Syrian, Greek, and Western sources. Furlong argues for a conflation that occurred "no earlier than the turn of the fourth century" between the John/Mark of the NT and the Mark of Papias, who is presented as a follower of Peter and who wrote the Gospel in Rome (23). Furlong rejects any historically valid basis for such conflation, arguing that the Jerusalem-based John/Mark is likely to have heard the living Jesus, whereas Papias describes the author of the Gospel as having "neither heard the Lord nor followed him" (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.15). Appealing to Papias does not, of course, invalidate those traditions that equate John/Mark with the Evangelist without presuming that John/Mark was an early disciple of Jesus (e.g., Ephrem the Syrian, 306–373), whether it be one of the seventy-two of Luke 10:1 or a later honorary member of the seventy (e.g., *Liber Apis* 49.31).

Chapter three addresses the presentation of Mark of Alexandria in various Coptic sources and possible associations with Mark the Evangelist and/or John/Mark. The dominant trend in these sources is to identify all three Marks together. It is interesting to note that Egyptian interpreters were aware of a possible conflict between John/Mark's origin in Jerusalem and the Papian tradition that Mark neither heard nor followed Jesus, evidence of the wide circulation of traditions. Severus, bishop of the city of Nastrawa in Egypt in the ninth century, describes John/Mark as being three years old at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus, an explanation that both accounts for John/Mark's

Jerusalem origin and his lack of experience as a disciple of Jesus (45). It may also account for why John/Mark deserted Paul in Acts 13:13, out of youthful fear or inexperience, although aging him in this manner results in him being martyred in his 30s around the year sixty two (50).

Chapter four covers three Cypriot sources—the *Acts of Barnabas* (late fifth century), the *Encomium of Barnabas* (sixth century), and the *Life of Auxibius* (early seventh century)—that expand on the visit of Barnabas and John/Mark to Cyprus in Acts 15:39 and conclude with the martyrdom of Barnabas in Salamis, at which point Mark left the island. The first two of these sources rework Mark's martyrdom in the Egyptian *Martyrdom of Mark* (second to the fourth century) as a template for the martyrdom of Barnabas. All three works identify John/Mark with the Papian and Alexandrian narratives although the order of events varies between accounts.

Finally, chapter five addresses a little-known thirty-five chapter account of Mark in the *Acts, Miracles, and Passion of Mark*, the earliest extant version being a thirteenth-century codex. The account weaves together the narratives of the Lukan John/Mark (chs. 1–8), the Papian Mark (ch. 9), and the account of the Alexandrian Mark as found in the *Martyrdom of Mark* and other independent sources (chs. 10–35). Throughout this first part of the study, Furlong seeks to show that John/Mark, Mark the Evangelist, and the Alexandrian Mark were originally three distinct figures and that they were only conflated from the fourth century on.

In part two (chs. 6–12), Furlong turns to those traditions depicting John/Mark as a Johannine figure. Chapter six covers traditions that Furlong believes present John/Mark, his house, or his mother in narratives drawn from the Gospel of John, sometimes alluding to him as the beloved disciple (e.g., *Witness of Holy John the Precursor and Baptist*, possibly fifth century; *Acts of Mark,* thirteenth-century codex). In addition, Furlong discusses possible Johannine depictions of Mark in later traditions (e.g., the Monarchian prologue to Mark, late fourth century) that identify the source of John the Evangelist's Logos theology and doctrine of Christ's divinity in the Gospel of Mark. Underlying Furlong's argument is the assumption that certain theological motifs are specifically Johannine and outside the parameters of normal Markan thinking.

In chapter seven, Furlong addresses traditions that portray John/Mark and John the Evangelist in similar terms, as Levitical aristocratic Jerusalemites, both with a father called Aristobulus, and as the young man who fled naked at the arrest of Jesus (Mark 14:51–52). Furlong finishes the chapter by raising the possibility that these traditions relate to the same figure, later obscured by the conflation of John/Mark with Mark the Evangelist and John the Evangelist with John the son of Zebedee (121). Chapter eight addresses other early Christian traditions that portray John and Mark in similar terms. Around the year 190, the bishop of Ephesus, Polycrates,

describes John the Evangelist as a priest who wore the sacerdotal plate (*apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.24.2). A fragment from a lost Latin work of unknown date and provenance describes Mark likewise as a priest who wore the sacerdotal plate. James the Just is described in like manner by Epiphanius in the late fourth century. Furlong proposes that Hegesippus's *Memoirs* lies behind these three depictions.

Chapter nine expands on chapter eight with a discussion of the thesis of Rendel Harris and Alphonse Mingana that Polycrates's portrayal of John the Evangelist as a priest wearing the high-priestly plate derives from the depiction in the *Odes of Solomon*, dated between 100 and 125, of the odist as a prominent Christian leader, portrayed as a priest wearing a wreath or crown. Furlong modifies this thesis to suggest that Polycrates derived his imagery from Hegesippus, who used Johannine odist imagery to cast the episcopal office in terms of the Israelite high priesthood and rejects the possibility that the common imagery might simply be a shared literary stereotype. Furlong's goal is to establish an early Johannine source to later traditions associated with John/Mark and John the Evangelist.

In chapter ten, Furlong discusses early and medieval Johannine sources on the life and movement of John the Evangelist and then correlates these traditions in chapter eleven with the John/Mark narrative. He proposes that these correlations, which include "an Antioch mission shortly after Stephen's death, a short stay in Seleucia, a journey to Cyprus, a final departure from Judea in the 40s and a residence in Ephesus and Asia Minor" (175), are not the results of chance but rather that they arose from the identification of John/Mark with John the Evangelist. Furlong argues in chapter twelve that (1) the earliest traditions associate John/Mark with the beloved disciple and/or John the Evangelist and assume that John/Mark, Mark the Evangelist, and the Alexandrian Mark were three separate figures and (2) later sources conflate John/Mark with Mark the Evangelist and the Alexandrian Mark. While he recognizes that some scholars have identified John/Mark with the beloved disciple, Furlong does not seek to assess the historicity of such traditions or to posit a thesis concerning the identity of the latter.

In terms of his overall thesis, Furlong is most likely correct in asserting, considering the very late dating of many of his sources, a degree of conflation in many of the traditions he presents, whether Markan or Johannine. However, I would have liked to have seen more discussion on the nature of and motives for conflation and possible alternative explanations for the development of shared literary motifs. If we assume conflation, what social locations and literary conventions permitted authors to conflate traditions relating to well-known individuals of high reputational status that earlier generations and even contemporaries understood to relate to three separate figures? In many of the sources Furlong presents, there are traditions that may either be explained as expansions of earlier traditions or conflations of origi-

nally disparate traditions. How are we to tell the difference between the two when any reconstruction of the transmission of traditions is tentative at best?

In chapter one, I would have liked to have seen greater critical engagement with those scholars who hold that when Papias was describing the author of the Gospel of Mark, he was likely referring to John/Mark and/or the Alexandrian Mark (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.15, in Furlong, 14). This would have strengthened Furlong's thesis. Also, some of the traditions he discusses need not require three separate Markan figures. For example, while the *Martyrdom of Mark* does not explicitly refer to Mark of Alexandria as the author of the Gospel of Mark, it does refer to a time "when the apostles were being dispersed throughout the inhabited world," during which it was the "the lot of the most holy Mark to go into the environs of Egypt by the will of God" (*Mart. Marc.* 1; in Furlong, 19). The identification of Alexandrian Mark as an apostle of equivalent status and origin to the other apostles and as "most holy" indicates a figure of preeminent standing appropriate to one of the four Evangelists.

I struggled somewhat with the argument in chapter six because many of the proposed allusions to John/Mark as the beloved disciple seem tenuous at best, even if we allow that such allusions are vestiges of earlier traditions obscured by a later conflation of Markan figures. For example, Furlong appeals to Mahwub (*Hist. Patr. Eccl. Alex.* 1.1), the *Encomium of Barnabas* (229–230), and the *Acts of Mark* (6), which seem to portray John/Mark as the host of the Last Supper, "a position sometimes associated with the Beloved Disciple, based on the seating arrangements (the Beloved Disciple was to the right of Jesus, the guest of honor; John 13:23)" (90). Furlong describes this as "another possible identification of John/Mark with the Beloved Disciple" (90). This seems quite a stretch.

Furlong proposes that the conflation of John/Mark with Mark the Evangelist and the Alexandrian Mark obscures the fact that historically they were three separate figures. I remain to be convinced that our earliest sources allow us to be so certain that they were three separate figures. Furlong's reconstruction partly rests on his conviction that he can tell the difference between those parts of a source text that reflect purported earlier obscured Johannine traditions and those parts that reflect later Markan accretions. This opens him to a potential critique that either the obscured Johannine traditions are less present than he asserts or that the Johannine and Markan traditions developed in a different sequence than that which he proposes. Furlong remains coy as to whether his proposed identification of John/Mark with John the Evangelist and/or the beloved disciple represents an equivalent obscuration of originally separate figures or whether there was a single figure standing behind such traditions.

Furlong's study presents a wealth of traditions relating to the various Marks and Johns that is truly commendable. The breadth and depth of

research are exemplary, and Furlong has done us a great favor in drawing our attention to such a rich collection of traditions. He writes clearly and engagingly, necessary corrections being "figure" rather than "finger" (12) and "have been merged" instead of "have had to merged" (185). His study is a valuable contribution to our understanding of tradition history relating to important early Christian figures.

Andrews University Cedric Vine

Gupta, Nijay K. *A Beginner's Guide to New Testament Studies: Understanding Key Debates*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020. xii + 196 pp. Softcover. USD 24.99.

Nijay K. Gupta is an associate professor of NT at Northern Seminary in Lisle, Illinois. A prolific author, Gupta has published numerous books and commentaries on the NT, the most recent being *The New Testament Commentary Guide: A Brief Handbook for Students and Pastors* (Lexham Press, 2020). In addition to his professional responsibilities, Gupta has a significant online presence through his popular blog *Crux Sola*, dedicated to the NT.

In *A Beginner's Guide to New Testament Studies,* Gupta discusses thirteen topics. Starting with the Synoptic problem, Gupta takes a look at the historical Jesus, the writings of Paul, the interpretation of the book of Revelation, and the use of the HB in the NT, to mention a few. Not surprisingly, Paul's corpus takes up three chapters ("Jesus and Paul," "Paul's Theological Perspective," and "Paul and the Jewish Law"). Major thought leaders on each topic are discussed and their views summarized. Some chapters are divided into two or more "debated topics" (e.g., ch. 6, "Paul and the Jewish Law" presents two subtopics: "Why Was the Torah Given to Israel?" and "What is Paul's Problem With the Works of the Law?"). Chapters are intuitively organized, and subtopics are clearly titled and succinctly addressed, rarely running for more than one page per subtitle. Discussions move forward nimbly, and a final reflection recaps the main points. Further reading recommendations for both beginner and advanced readers are placed at the end of each chapter, along with the resources used.

As an example of the approach offered, one could mention the chapter titled "Interpreting the Book of Revelation," which reflects the current renaissance in scholarly interest in Revelation. Gupta briefly lays out basic principles for the interpretation of Revelation (88–91), followed by a nine-part thumbnail sketch of the book (91–94) and a discussion of the four main schools of interpretation: preterist, historicist, futurist, and idealist (94–99). A reflection section ties up the loose ends and helps the reader stay focused on Revelation's overall rhetorical thrust rather than getting lost in the details.

Similarly, I found Gupta's interest in the issue of women in the NT (ch. 10, "Women in Leadership in the New Testament")—an enduring controversy in many denominations—to be refreshing. He divides the issue of gender equality in the church into two main interpretative camps: the "hierarchical male authoritative leadership" and the "egalitarian authoritative leadership" camps. He then quickly peruses the formative biblical texts used to support each view, followed by the critical responses from each camp to the other's hermeneutical approach. Gupta suggests four methodological issues that will continue to impinge on this question: "culture and truth," protology vs. eschatology, "analyzing narratives," and "experience and hermeneutics." The dilemma plaguing both views, suggests Gupta, lies in "the tension in relation to how the testimony of Scripture is understood as a *product* of its culture and as a testimony that can *transcend* its ancient culture" (142, emphasis in the original). Due to the important contribution of women to the church, Gupta's perceptive call to let "grace flow from humility" (143) sets a charitable tone for both sides of the aisle.

Yet even if just a general guide, the book surprises, both for what the author chose to discuss as well as for what he left out. For example, there is no engagement with the important issue of textual criticism of the NT. The epochal Epistle to the Hebrews, deserving a separate chapter due to its understanding of the "Christ event" in light of the Israelite sanctuary typology and prophecies, gets a scant mention (163, 170). Surprisingly, Jesus Christ takes up only one chapter in the book, "The Historical Jesus," rendering the book's Christology somewhat lacking. The already excellent chapter "Jesus and Paul"—which discusses the perceived tension between the teachings of Jesus and those of Paul—would have been strengthened by a discussion of how Paul, as a Jew, understood Jesus's life, death, and resurrection in light of the HB. As a corollary of this discussion, especially in light of its philological and theological implications for a correct understanding of "salvation history" (*Heilsgeschichte*), a core argument in the book, an overview of how Jesus's death effected atonement would have been desirable, framed mainly by the expiation vs. propitiation debate. In turn, a discussion of how righteousness is taken hold of by the Christian through Jesus Christ—either imputed (forensic justification) or imparted (through sanctification)—could have helped illuminate the chapter titled "Justification by Faith and Judgment According to Works." It was also surprising that the chapter "The New Testament and Empire" barely brings up the book of Revelation (124), considering how it is suffused with anti-empire language and imagery. All things considered, it would probably be unfair to expect a general guide to cover every single topic of scholarly debate, neither does Gupta propose to do so at the outset. Still, perhaps longer discussions could have been shortened to accommodate a few of these important points while still keeping the book concise.

An author index, followed by a Scripture index, ends the book. I would have appreciated a complete bibliography; some of the sources used are found in the reading recommendations at the end of each chapter, while others are relegated solely to the footnotes. I also think that a subject index would have been helpful, especially for a book with a beginner readership in mind, one with the potential to become a quick reference work. The chapter titled "The Old Testament in the New Testament" is the longest in the book, and Gupta rightly focused on the two main intertextual approaches revolving around the tension between respect vs. disregard for the original HB context by the NT authors. As such, I would have made it the first chapter in the book since the use of the HB by the NT authors colors the entire conceptual spectrum, from the Gospels to the book of Revelation, and is a topic of enduring interest in scholarship. Lastly, I think that adding a conclusion as a separate chapter (perhaps titled "Final Reflections") could have served as a summary and pointed readers toward additional subjects to probe. This absence, however, does not diminish the value of the last chapter, titled "The Application and Use of Scripture," which explores how Christians should read, interpret, and apply Scriptures today from two main points of view: "from the Bible" (as a wholly sufficient source of truth) and "beyond the Bible" (God's will as ongoing revelation).

Despite these few observations, in *A Beginner's Guide,* Gupta has successfully navigated the ancient waters of the NT, filled as they are with ageless warring factions, and not a few icebergs. Gupta stays in active dialogue with academia, attempting to make sense of what he calls "the cacophony in scholarship" (xii) to lay before the reader the core methodological issues, textual difficulties, and varied interpretations on each subject, all the while not trying to impose his own novel readings. His clever handling of the issues reflects the fast-paced dynamic of a classroom; he demonstrates a notable ability to summarize the issues without compromising on scholarship or foisting his solutions on the reader. Gupta's writing style is free-flowing and accessible, and discussions do not assume prior knowledge or commitment to the various views presented. Chapters and sections are often introduced and interspersed with personal stories of how the issues have either shaped or were shaped by the author's maturing understanding of the NT and Christianity. This style prevents the discussion from turning into dry perorations on technicalities, keeping the conversation relevant to readers.

In sum, *A Beginner's Guide to New Testament Studies* is essential reading for beginner courses in NT and general college courses on religion, as well as for the layperson seeking to remain abreast of current scholarly debates.

Orlando, Florida André Reis

Hasel, Frank M., ed. *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Adventist Approach*. Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute/Review and Herald Academic, 2020. 488 pp. Paperback. USD 14.95.

Biblical Hermeneutics: An Adventist Approach grew out of a request made at the 2015 General Conference session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in San Antonio, Texas. It was there noted that "we have a world church looking at the same Scriptures and coming up with very different interpretations…. The world church should take time to study and to bring together what our hermeneutic really is, because we're using two very different ones" (2). The General Conference Steering Committee agreed to work with the Biblical Research Institute (BRI) to address this issue, and the result is the present volume, which builds on four prior BRI publications on hermeneutics (*A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics* [BRI, 1974], *Biblical Interpretation Today: An Analysis of Modern Methods of Biblical Interpretation and Proposals for the Interpretation of the Bible as the Word of God* [BRI, 1985], *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach* [BRI, 2005], and *Interpreting Scripture: Bible Questions and Answers* [BRI, 2010]).

This latest attempt at defining Adventist hermeneutics contains a brief sketch introducing the book's twelve contributors, all noted scholars in their field, followed by a general introduction by Frank M. Hasel and fourteen chapters. Because knowledge is always an interpretation of reality, and interpretation always contains biases, the book appropriately commences with Kwabena Donkor's chapter on "Presuppositions in Hermeneutics." Donkor explores the micro-, meso-, and macrohermeneutical levels, offering helpful examples of each class. The macrolevel—which he terms theoretical biblical presuppositions—includes one's view of God, humans, the world, and knowledge. Donkor also notes nontheoretical presuppositions, which center on personal attitudes influencing one's interpretation; these may be negative (pride, doubt, and alienation from God) or positive (faith, humility, and submission to the Holy Spirit's guidance). Donkor advocates for a continual hermeneutical spiral between reader and text and between the parts and whole of the text. In this way, "the interpreter gets closer and closer to preventing nonbiblical presuppositions from being imposed on the text" (29).

Chapter two, Frank Hasel's "Elements of Biblical Hermeneutics in Harmony with Scripture's Self-Claims," addresses the normative role of Scripture from the perspectives of the Old and New Testaments and of Christ Himself. Hasel also underscores the Christological analogy of Scripture, which calls for an attitude of humble obedience on the part of the reader and a hermeneutic of faith that reads Scripture from a literary, historical-grammatical (as opposed to a literalistic) perspective. Hasel ends with four necessary presuppositions for approaching Scripture: (1) God's existence, (2) his supernatural nature, (3) and his actions in time and space as (4) a personal

Trinity. In the book's final chapter, Hasel revisits certain hermeneutical issues in more detail (such as reader-response approaches).

In "Variants, Versions, and the Trustworthiness of Scripture" (ch. 3), Clinton Wahlen addresses a common question—Which version of the Bible is the best? After looking at variants, he notes that Bible translations appear on a continuum: (1) formal word-for-word translations (ESV, NASB, NKJV, RSV); (2) functional translations aiming at faithfulness but not strictly literal (CSB, NRSV); (3) dynamic translations restructuring the language to convey the same meaning in the target language (NIV11, NLT); (4) culturally sensitive versions (NEB, TEV); and (5) paraphrased translations, where one person presents the content in a culturally clear way (LB, MSG, TCW). Wahlen provides a helpful chart of all these versions, noting their translation type (formal, literal, paraphrase), source of the text (MT, Textus Receptus, etc.), as well as accuracy, beauty of style, clarity, weaknesses, and strengths. He concludes that the Bible is "by far the most carefully transmitted and preserved book in history" (99), and while there is no perfect version, an attentive study of the text and context, comparison of several different versions, and faith in its divine origin will garner great results.

In chapter four, "History, the Bible, and Hermeneutics," Michael Hasel addresses the tension between *Historie* (history as fact) and *Heilsgeschichte* (salvation history), which sees biblical history as theologically meaningful yet not necessarily factual. Hasel presents scholars who have questioned or rejected the historicity of Abraham, Moses, David, and Solomon. But does the lack of extrabiblical evidence determine the lack of Scripture's historicity? Hasel offers five reasons suggesting that "both the presence and lack of evidence must be tentative and provisional" (122). Hasel then proposes four ways to approach the Bible historically. Among other things, he questions the assumption that approaches Scripture as guilty until proven innocent. He acknowledges that Christian historiography "requires divine revelation to interpret and explain history" (124). Ultimately, if the events of Scripture are not as recorded, then neither can the promises it contains be trusted. Any critical method that treats Scripture as literary fiction cannot call itself Christian, for "fiction does not engender hope" (129). The only God that can be known is the God who acts in history. Thus, it is important to view history from a prophetic perspective.

Cultural bias is the theme of chapter five, "Culture, Hermeneutics, and Scripture: Discerning What is Universal," coauthored by Clinton Wahlen and Wagner Kuhn. They note that prelapsarian Eden had a vertical (God-oriented) culture and a horizontal (human-oriented) one. However, after the fall, Cain developed a purely human-oriented culture. Yet through Seth God sought to restore the divine image by the "understanding and practice of the elements of the culture exemplified in Eden" (139). The authors also explore biases in reader-determined interpretations, offering examples of gay and trans

readings. In addition, they look at human-originated cultural issues, showing that Scripture either rejects them (child sacrifice), reveals their absurdity (idol worship), adapts them (kingship), or corrects them (polygamy and slavery). In contrast, God-oriented culture derived from Eden is universal (Sabbath and monogamous marriage). Regarding God-oriented culture established after Eden, the authors offer a helpful chart of laws relating to circumcision, ritual washings and baptism, food laws, and slavery—showing their scope, function/meaning, and intercultural application. They conclude that culture is "intrinsically good and beautiful to the extent that it reflects the intention of God for human beings" (169).

Scientific bias is explored in Leonard Brand's chapter, "Faith, Science, and the Bible" (ch. 6). Brand acknowledges the amazing discoveries of science but laments that these have given science a false prestige. Biases are inevitable, and scientists are not "neutral truth-finding machines" (184). Students of science are often warned, "Half of what we teach you is wrong. We just have to wait for more discoveries to know which half is wrong" (184). As such, scientific findings are a mere "progress report." Brand concludes that both creationists and evolutionists have biases, and both must be open to having their views corrected by the evidence, which will ultimately uphold the *sola Scriptura* foundation, for "the book of nature and the written Word of God, rightly understood, each shed light on the other" (208). Biases are again noted in Ekkehardt Mueller's "Principles of Biblical Interpretation" (ch. 7). Mueller uses John 7:45–52 to reveal fallacies in biblical interpretation—biases, appeals to human authority, *ad hominem* arguments, the argument from silence, and ignoring the complexity of truth. A correct hermeneutical approach allows Scripture (and other believers) to correct our biases and encourages us to humbly rely on the Holy Spirit's guidance. The bulk of the chapter centers on his excellent exegesis of 1 Cor 9:5. Besides exegesis, Mueller looks at the study of biblical themes (such as Sabbath) and offers a brief example of Christology in the book of Revelation. He concludes by noting how to address modern challenges and ethical issues.

In the eighth chapter, "Inner-Biblical Hermeneutics: The Use of Scripture by Bible Writers," Richard Davidson explores how biblical writers interpreted Scripture. Davidson notes seven characteristics of intertextuality (originally suggested by Gerhard Hasel). These are the continuous history of God's people, quotations and allusions, key theological terms, the unity of major themes, typology, promise/prediction and fulfillment, and finally, the big picture of salvation history. Using these parameters, Davidson revisits various texts accused of eisegesis and exonerates each, revealing the hermeneutical approaches of each writer and concluding that the biblical writers were indeed "careful, sophisticated, precise exegetes and theologians …[who] consistently remain faithful to the Old Testament's intention" (263).

In chapter nine, "Understanding Biblical Apocalyptic," Gerhard Pfandl looks at principles for interpreting apocalyptic prophecies. First, he differentiates apocalyptic from classical prophecy, then offers characteristics and describes five interpretative approaches—historicist, historic-preterist, historical-critical (modern-preterist), futurist-dispensational, and idealist. Pfandl then reviews the apotelesmatic principle (dual fulfillment of a prophecy), noting its possibility only in classical prophecies, never apocalyptic, which have just one fulfillment. He reviews Desmond Ford's position (seeing multiple fulfillments of apocalyptic prophecy) and Glacier View's rejection of it.

Chapter ten continues looking at prophecy, in this case, "Conditional Prophecies About Israel: Some Hermeneutical Considerations" by Elias Brasil de Souza. Classical or dispensational premillennialists see a literalistic and unconditional fulfillment of prophecies concerning Israel. Yet de Souza shows how Jesus and the NT writers interpreted these prophecies of the HB as fulfilled in Jesus; how the NT redefines land, city, and temple; and how the final consummation of the covenant (at the end of time) will not only fulfill but intensify all covenant promises for God's people.

In chapter eleven, Michael Hasel explores "The Genesis Account as a Test Case for Biblical Hermeneutics." Hasel suggests that the first three chapters of Genesis are essential to understanding the rest of Scripture. He unpacks how these chapters reveal, among other things, (1) the authority, unity, and inspiration of Scripture; (2) God's character and moral accountability; (3) the origin and nature of humanity; (4) the origin of the Sabbath; (5) marriage and family; and (6) the origin of sin, death, and the plan of redemption. In short, "protology is the key to eschatology" (324). Hasel concludes by highlighting the absolute centrality of creation just as the Bible presents it. "Belief in creation gives us the assurance of a new creation that is close at hand. It encourages us to nurture our environment. It gives us the incentive to endure the trials and tribulations of today (2 Cor 4:16–17), and to live pure and upright lives, which give us the joy and certainty of our reward tomorrow (Matt 5:12)" (347).

Among other things, *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Adventist Approach* engenders a renewed appreciation for the gift of Adventism's unique engagement with Scripture. Denis Kaiser's chapter, "A Survey of Seventh-day Adventist Presuppositions, Perfections, and Methods of Biblical Interpretation (1845–1910)," generates a sense of wonder at the way God led this denomination in its formative years of Bible study. Kaiser highlights that while some early Adventist interpreters (such as A. T. Jones) felt that the Bible should be read literalistically (without interpretation), most of its leaders (such as J. N. Andrews) were students of modern and ancient languages and realized the need for a careful biblical reading. Ellen G. White herself did not approve of using her writings as the interpretive key to Scripture but emphasized the Bible as its own interpreter.

In line with this last point, John Peckham's chapter (ch. 13), entitled "The Prophetic Gift and *Sola Scriptura*," highlights the normative role of the biblical canon as ruling authority (which he terms magisterial), contrasting it to the subordinate (or ministerial) role of Ellen G. White. Peckham compares White to other noncanonical prophets—Enoch, Huldah, Nathan, Gad—who are divinely inspired yet noncanonical. Peckham underscores that all true prophets, whether canonical or noncanonical, are authoritative, yet the latter must be judged by the former. "As prophetic, Ellen G. White's writings are authoritative, but as noncanonical their authority is a ministerial authority that is functionally subordinate to that of the biblical canon—the only rule of faith and practice" (403).

Frank Hasel's concluding chapter, "Recent Trends in Methods of Biblical Interpretation," traces how the biblical hermeneutic of faith was replaced by the historical-critical method's hermeneutic of suspicion. Hasel traces the history leading to the modern "age of criticism" and explores Troeltsch's three principles of the historical-critical method: (1) criticism, (2) analogy, and (3) correlation, which reject the supernatural. While recent literary approaches rightly emphasize the genre, context, and verbal factors, "by focusing on the biblical 'story,' the historicity of biblical persons and events is often bracketed and neglected" (458). Postmodern approaches also correctly note the hermeneutical role of the reader, yet they neglect or outright reject authorial intent—including that of the assumed divine author. Hasel rightly wonders what hope is offered by biblical criticism since "biblical hope [such as the miraculous resurrection] is not grounded in wishful thinking but in the faithful promises of God" (460).

Biblical Hermeneutics: An Adventist Approach is a book of great value, and I have already recommended it to several friends. Although it is targeted to an Adventist audience, I believe its biblical grounding will garner the appreciation of Bible students across denominational lines. The tome is reader-friendly and filled with helpful charts and graphs, clear section divi sions, and summative conclusions. Aside from the wealth of information currently offered, a future study on hermeneutics might also delve more into the area of macrohermeneutics, exploring the nature, location, and history of hermeneutics as a philosophical discipline. A future study might also offer a comparison of Christian macrohermeneutics and the implication for biblical interpretation. Fernando Canale has proposed the following divisions: (1) the classical model of Augustine and Aquinas, (2) the Protestant model of Luther and Calvin, (3) the modern model of Schleiermacher, Hegel, and Gadamer; and finally (4) the postmodern model of Fernando Canale via Heidegger. The latest model explore how deconstruction (an area within hermeneutics) using Scriptural parameters can be utilized to critically analyze other models of Christian hermeneutics.

In conclusion, I believe this book has the potential to deepen the reader's appreciation for the process of retrieving the biblical text, provide handy tools and examples of responsible exegesis, and underscore important elements within biblical hermeneutics—particularly the need to continually revisit Scripture to correct and deepen one's views. Above all, I believe this volume will renew the reader's reverence and love for the divine author who continues to preserve his word and guide the humble seeker into greater and greater light.

Berrien Springs, Michigan Silvia Canale Bacchiocchi

Herr, L. G., D. R. Clark., and L. T. Geraty. *Madaba Plains Project 9: The 2004 Season at Tall al-Umayri and Subsequent Studies*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2020. xiv + 374 pp. Hardcover USD 99.95.

This is the ninth in a series of volumes on the excavations at *Tall al-Umayri*. It is an in-depth analysis of the tenth season (2004) of excavations. *Tall al-Umayri* is located in the southern region of Amman, on the western side of the airport highway near the exit to the Amman National Park. The site is large and tall, surrounded by an artificial glacis, with remains from the Middle Bronze Age to the Late Iron Age (as well as some ephemeral remains from the Classical Periods) on the mound and earlier remains largely from the Early Bronze Age just off the tall in the valley to the west. Excavations were carried out by codirectors Larry G. Herr and Douglas R. Clark and were sponsored by La Sierra University in a consortium with several other colleges and universities.

The volume consists of three parts: an overview, *Tall al-Umayri* (a section focusing on the different fields excavated), and subsequent studies. Chapter one is an overview of the 2004 season—placing the site in its geographical context, mentioning goals for the season, and listing all of the members of the team. This chapter concludes with an extensive bibliography of the site, an important resource to include for a project that spans thirty years. Chapter two is written by Larry Herr and places the results of the 2004 excavation season within the context of the previous seasons of excavation. This placement is important because the *Umayri* team publishes each excavation season as its own individual volume. Publishing each season hypothetically leads to detailed information being available as soon as possible. However, with the logistics of publication, this is not always the case, and so the 2004 season was published sixteen years later in 2020. Thankfully, the directors have made much of the raw data available for all seasons at www.umayri.opendig.org (the site is currently down as of submitting this review for publication). So

as more seasons are published, previous interpretations have to be revisited, dating readjusted, and conclusions reinterpreted. This chapter is where much of that work is shown. Of particular importance is the stratigraphic chart (23), which has been updated through the 2008 season but uses information known from the site through 2017. This chart and the subsequent comments section are very important because they indicate the stratigraphic connections between the fields excavated and give updates on how the current chart has changed over time. This chapter concludes with a section on "Settlement Patterns at Tall al-Umayri," placing the stratigraphy of the site within a larger regional and historical context of cycles of intensification and abatement.

The following four chapters are detailed descriptions of material from each phase excavated in Field A (The Western Citadel), Field B (The Western Defense System and Northwestern Domestic Area), Field H (The Southwest Acropolis), and Field L (The Southern Edge). Each chapter follows the same format, beginning with an introduction and then describing the material excavated by stratum. The introduction contains some important charts on the phasing and stratigraphy of the field, as well as the grid plan of the squares excavated. The description of each stratum is accompanied by a digitally rendered top plan and copious photographs. These top plans have changed over the years and now include more shading and texture; however, it would be beneficial if these top plans and photographs could be published in color. Some of the photographs are reproduced in color in the "Plates" section. Hopefully, in volume ten, these color plates will be incorporated into the text for ease of access.

The last section consists of four chapters focusing on pottery, sherds with secondary marks, objects and artifacts, and a Persian seal impression. The pottery chapter written by Larry Herr is always a highlight of each *Umayri* volume, with extensively documented parallel reference lists and much hand-drawn pottery arranged by stratum. It would be helpful to ultimately begin incorporating color in this chapter as well, either in the plates themselves or with accompanying color photographs. I know that this project has begun digitally drawing pottery using a 3D laser scanner and software program (Karasik, A., and U. Smilansky, "3D Scanning Technology as a Standard Archaeological Tool for Pottery Analysis: Practice and Theory." *Journal of Archaeological Science* 35 (2008):1148–1168). So hopefully, the authors will take advantage of the newest version which allows for two-dimensional color images of the 3D model. It would be beneficial, now that there are many vessel types represented in many strata at the site, to have some plates showing vessel assemblages and how certain vessel types change over time at the site. The chapter on sherds with incised marks or repair holes by Gloria London is three pages long. It is essentially a list, with descriptions of the marks and how they were made. The chapter on objects and artifacts, written by Douglas Clark, makes some changes from the previous volumes. There is a new organization

of objects based on material instead of function. This change is welcome and allows for better ease of use and less need for interpretation. This chapter functions more as a catalog than the chapters of previous volumes, with summary paragraphs, detailed tables, high-quality photographs, and stippled drawings. There is a promise of more complete comparative treatments of groups of objects to come later. As with the pottery, it would be beneficial for color photographs or 3D images to be incorporated into this type of chapter in the future instead of in the plates at the end. The final chapter consists of two pages on a sixth Persian provincial seal impression from the site. There is a photograph of the seal, but it would be beneficial to have a drawing of the inscription as well.

This *Umayri* volume continues the scholarly tradition of the previous eight seasons' final reports. It is thorough and detailed in the information it provides on each of the fields excavated, the pottery, and finds discovered. It is a valuable resource for any scholar who specializes in the archaeology and pottery of the Southern Levant. It is also a useful tool for students learning about archaeology and attempting to understand the excavation process from beginning to end. It is encouraging to see these volumes change and adapt to new technologies over time, and I hope they will continue to do so in the future.

Charlevoix, Michigan Owen Chesnut

Horton, Michael. *Justification*. 2 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2018. viii + 399/527 pp. Paperback. USD 74.99 set.

Michael Scott Horton has written a significant book on the Christian doctrine of justification. He is currently the professor of systematic theology and apologetics at Westminster Seminary in California and editor-in-chief of *Modern Reformation* magazine. Some of his books include The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way (Zondervan, 2011); *Calvin on the Christian Life: Glorifying and Enjoying God Forever, Theologians on the Christian Life* (Crossway, 2014); and *Rediscovering the Holy Spirit: God's Perfecting Presence in Creation, Redemption, and Everyday Life* (Zondervan, 2017). These two volumes are the fourth part of a series in dogmatic studies by Michael Horton.

In these thought-provoking volumes, Horton seeks to show "the way forward in constructive theology," by way of "renewal through retrieval" (1:11). The trail to "theological renewal," according to Horton, is in "drawing more deeply upon the resources of Holy Scripture, in conversation with the church's most trusted teachers (ancient, medieval, and modern) who have sought to fathom Christ's unsearchable riches" (1:11). To achieve this goal,

Horton divides his work into four parts in each volume: (1) being aware of the question under discussion; (2) paying particular attention to the biblical, theological, and exegetical patterns of the doctrine; (3) giving attention to some "ecclesiastical statements" regarding the doctrine; and (4) locating the doctrine within a more extensive system of theology as well as its practical application. Volume one of *Justification* has twelve chapters, and volume two has eleven chapters.

This book provides an excellent historical survey of the development of this critical doctrine that gives the sixteenth-century Protestants their character as Reformers. Horton has produced an exegetically and theologically engaging book, meticulously exploring this vital doctrine's biblical origin and engaging with different interpretations of the Reformers' understanding of salvation. Starting from the patristic period and following through to recent debates, the book's historical section is very comprehensive and is woven in such a way as to give weight to Horton's conclusions.

In his evaluation, "the Reformation's formulation of *justification* and its broader quest was little more than the product of an early modern obsession with the self" (1:23). In place of this, he introduces his notion of "the great exchange." Horton's idea of the "great exchange" reveals how a sinless Messiah assumed human sinfulness so that sinful humanity can have a sinless heritage and blameless stance in the presence of its Creator. Diognetius's declaration "O sweet exchange…that the sinfulness of many should be hidden in one righteous person, while the righteousness of one should justify many sinners!" (quoted on p. 39) forms the organizing theme of Horton's book. Horton uses this illustration to describe the liberating union between a righteous and holy Jesus and sinful humanity. Under this theme, Horton provides readers with different portraits of justification and links the concept of justification with related notions of salvation from the apostles' perspectives (1:40–41).

He states that "the great exchange" serves as a bridge to understanding other topics in salvation, such as "election, redemption, adoption, new creation, and glorification" (1:41). In his opinion, the Christian teaching of penance conflicts with his understanding of the divine provisions of the "great exchange." Horton claims "the virtue of penance has its beginning in fear" (1:98). Subscribing to Scotus's view of justification and penance, Horton presents Martin Luther's experience as the true example of the doctrine (1:142). The central question that relates to penance is "whether works are the fruit of faith or the root" (1:255). The Reformers believe that the believer will produce good works because he or she is united in Christ. For Horton, good works are not a means of salvation. Rather, they signal Christ's invisible presence within the individual. In this, Horton is just repeating what Christians have been teaching for centuries.

Horton links the relationship between works and faith to the relationship between the law and grace. In light of the Protestant Reformers,

Horton understands that the law and the gospel are like conjoined twins. One cannot do without the other. However, the gospel is superior to the law because the law is deficient in its power to enable what it commands. Yet the law still acts as a guide "for holy living" (1:297). In his treatment of "justification and the Christian life," he explains how the Reformation changed the Christian perspective on repentance. The Reformers rejected penance as a sacrament and promoted baptism as a replacement for it. They reminded believers to constantly remember their baptism and that repentance should be a daily activity of dying to sin and being joined with Christ in the newness of life. Additionally, the Reformers "restored the public dimension of repentance" (1:360).

Horton advances the idea of the "great exchange" in the second volume, which unlike volume one mainly moves from parts to chapters. Part one surveys, "the horizon of justification." Horton makes a strong connection between acts and consequences within God's law given on Mount Sinai. The tension of this system is that Israel falls woefully short of God's standards. Horton explains that the function of the Abrahamic and Sinaitic covenants is the same within the history of redemption. The distinction of the Sinaitic covenant is that it functions as a parenthesis within the broad and pivotal history of the Abrahamic covenant (2:78). To Horton, the "great exchange" permeates both covenants, though Israel's rebellion against God warranted a covenant curse, God introduced an escape plan through Jesus.

Horton then goes on to elaborate on the Christian understanding of Jesus as the fulfillment of the covenant promises. In Christ, God would gather a worldwide family. Explaining further the fulfillment of the covenant in Jesus, Horton writes that the covenant of law (Sinai) was conditional, given that "Jesus has not come to give the covenant Sinai an extension but to fulfill it and bring it to an end" (2:91). The promises, however, are unconditional since they are the very substance of the new covenant. Based on this set of ideas, Horton encourages the reader to understand the Pauline doctrine of justification by grace "through faith alone under Abraham's covenant of promise and to view justification by the works of the law—the Pharisaic and Judaizing option of that time—under Sinai's covenant of law" (2:147).

In part two, Horton evaluates "the achievement of justification" as understood by the Reformers and recent scholars. He elaborates on the differing theological interpretations of the phrase "the righteousness of God." For example, German scholars Hermann Cremer and Gerhard von Rad saw it as a relational concept, while N. T. Wright suggests it to be God's covenant faithfulness (2:159–160). Horton rejects the latter position because he thinks that Wright's understanding of God's righteousness cannot be "imputed" or "imparted" to the believer; instead, God's righteousness is simply the reference to God's faithfulness to act according to his covenant. Building on Charles Lee Irons, Horton argues that Wright's "covenant faithfulness" is

methodologically flawed and guilty of the fallacy of illegitimate totality transfer (2:170–171). Horton's observation of Wright's stance echoes John Piper (*The Future of Justification: A Response to N. T. Wright* [Crossway, 2007]); Phillip D. R. Griffiths (*When Wright is Wrong: A Reformed Baptist Critique of N. T. Wright's New Perspective on Paul* [Wipf & Stock, 2019]); and D. A. Carson's (*Right with God: Justification in the Bible and the World* [Wipf & Stock, 2002.]) notion of salvation through faith and not faithfulness. They accuse the New Perspective on Paul of downplaying the transformational aspects of salvation in Paul's teachings. Without the emphasis on salvation through faith in Jesus, the gospel cannot be good news.

Further, in his understating, biblical evidence denies Wright's claim because "covenant faithfulness is not always merciful. It is the context within which God executes his righteous judgment, including deliverance to destruction" (2:170). In Horton's discussion on the theories of atonement, he argues that "the dichotomy between *Christus Victor* and the Anselmian view is unhelpful on both historical and theological-exegetical grounds" (2:199). He rather labels the works of Jesus as "Vicarious Victor" and concludes that "like forensic justification, substitution is not the whole story, but without it, the other chapters are left blank" (2:197–200). Horton could have emphasized the demand such an exchange makes on the believer's life. Jesus took our estate so we can be accepted by God. Forensic justification is both an end and a means to sanctification. While it describes our escape from condemnation, it opens the door to Christ-like living through cooperation with the Holy Spirit.

In part three, Horton reflects on "the gift of righteousness." According to him, "justification is simply 'the gift of righteousness' in contrast with the righteousness by which God condemns and the righteousness that one may acquire by his or her deeds" (2:285). Logically, imputation confirms justification. It is the imputation of Christ's righteousness that keeps justification from being a legal fiction. The case "for justification rests on the case for imputation, for without the latter the former is indeed an arbitrary decree, a legal fiction, and, even more, an impossibility since God cannot justify without being just" (2:360). For me, the aspect of imputation makes a moral demand on believers. Once Jesus's righteousness justifies us through faith in him, we respond to this gracious exchange by living lives that conform to Jesus's image in us. As a whole, I can see Horton objecting to the Catholic and the New Perspective on Paul's understanding of the meaning of justification.

In part four (receiving justification), Horton elaborates on faith and salvation. He defines faith as the "knowledge of and assent to particular truths" (2:400). Faith is the glue that unites the believer and Christ for salvation. He summarizes the debate around the Greek phrase *pistis Christou*, which can either be translated as "faith in Christ" (the objectivist position) or "the faithfulness of Christ" (the subjectivist position). Richard Hays and N. T. Wright

rejected the objectivist view, saying that "it is too man-centered as opposed to Christ-centered" (2:401). "But this type of piety belongs to a different universe than the churches of the Reformation" (2:432), argues Horton.

In my opinion, *Justification* is a valuable contribution to the discussion on this vital Christian doctrine. However, Horton is not successful in clarifying the difference between justification and sanctification, which causes his argument to be incomplete at times. Horton conveys a strictly rational or psychological primacy of *justification* to sanctification. Such a view of sanctification casts a shadow on the connection between imputation and moral behavior. If, as seems to be the case, the objective is to rule out an ontological priority or a relationship of effective connection between the two graces, a clarifying statement to that effect would have helped the reader. Furthermore, it appears that Horton refers to justification together with sanctification as a "benefit" because of the union with Christ. He argues that "each of the benefits depends on the others that are before it. Just as glorification depends on election, redemption, calling, and *justification* and sanctification depends on everything leading up to *justification*" (2:470, emphasis added). Horton's explanation implies successive stages to the justification process. While justification is an instant declaration of forgiveness and imputation of Christ's righteousness, sanctification is a lifelong process that seeks to bring the believer's life in conformity with the life of Christ.

Concerning the structure and flow of the book, I found the inconsistencies with the utilization of introductions and conclusions unhelpful, even distracting. Other chapters appear less refined and more lopsided. Those with no theological background may find it difficult to follow the discussion in some parts of the book. Besides the shortcomings, I recommend this stimulating book, especially for those interested in the doctrine of justification. Michael Horton's exegetical analysis on the important biblical texts on the doctrine of justification is well done and well grounded in biblical languages. It provides a historical survey of various perspectives on key sections of the doctrine of justification. Thus, it can be useful as an exegetical guide for important biblical texts on justification. Overall, readers will find in it a road map to the broad history and exegetical issues around the Christian teaching on justification, with an emphasis on the Reformation's view on the subject.

Berrien Springs, Michigan Dennis E. Akawobsa

Jones, Robert. *White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2020. 336 pp. Paperback. USD 17.00.

White Too Long is one of the most damning and searing indictments of white American Christianity ever written. In the opening pages of the book, Obrey Hendricks, visiting scholar at Colombia University, describes it as a "work of rare courage, conviction, and analytical acuity. Part memoir, part brilliantly social history, it passionately lays bare the complicity of white Christianity in America's ongoing plague of racism" (foreword). Tracing America's history from colonial times to the age of Trump, Robert Jones demonstrates how intractable white supremacy has become in the DNA of American Christianity.

The book is divided into seven pulsating chapters. In chapter one, Jones reflects on the present state of white American Christianity and suggests that "after centuries of complicity, the norms of white supremacy have become deeply and broadly integrated into white Christian identity, operating far below the level of consciousness" (10). In chapter two, Jones goes back to the history of the United States of America and shows how American Christianity was influential for the architects and builders of white supremacy. In chapter three, the author reveals how the religious traditions and theology of this kind of American Christianity sanctioned bigotry, violence, and indifference toward African Americans. In the following chapter, he shows how the United Daughters of the Confederacy rewrote the history of the Civil War and convinced the nation to accept their (Confederate) version of history by building confederate monuments and celebrating confederate leaders and soldiers as heroes. They even changed the school curriculum and textbook to reflect their views. In chapter five, he analyzes several current surveys indicating that "white American Christians" are generally more racist in their attitudes than Americans who have no Christian affiliation. The same surveys also reveal that these white Christians believe they are not very racist. In chapter six, Jones offers a ray of hope to his readers by identifying some white Christians and other whites in America who confront white supremacy and understand how it has impacted their present reality. In chapter seven, the author tries to end on a positive note by showing a way forward, suggesting how racist white American Christians can heal themselves and bring about racial justice. He challenges them to acknowledge their moral failings and their need for repentance and to find ways to provide restitution to their victims.

By analyzing American Christianity, Jones takes us on a journey drawing from his own life story, history, and public opinion. As a detective, he demonstrates that American Christian theology and institutions have been the central cultural tent upholding the very idea of white supremacy. Unlike other scholars who assert the complicity of American Christianity with

racism, Jones goes beyond that and boldly asserts that "white Christians have not been simply complacent or complicit. Rather, as the dominant cultural force in America, they have been responsible for constructing and sustaining a project to protect white supremacy and resist black equality" (6). He cites the present infatuation of white evangelicals with Donald Trump as continuing evidence of their support of white supremacy.

Reflecting on his own story as a backdrop, Jones describes the role of white Christianity in the gruesome drama of slavery, "lynchings, and massive resistance to racial equality, all to maintain white racial innocence. Through every chapter white Christianity has been at the ready to ensure white Christians that they are alternatively—and simultaneously—the noble protagonists and the blameless victims. And the dominant white supremacist culture that American Christianity has sustained has returned the favor by deflecting any attempt to trace the ideology to its religious source" (20–21).

Jones sets out to demolish this pervasive lie of white supremacy permeating the culture by demonstrating that American Christianity is the originator, architect, and sustainer of white supremacy in America. He challenges white Christians to confront their moral failings as the only way forward to salvage the integrity of their faith. Like the Old Testament prophet Micah, who called Israel to repentance because they oppressed the poor, like a skilled surgeon using the knife of historical and social science analysis, theological critique, and the acuity of a journalist, Jones pulls back the curtain and exposes the cancer of white American Christianity—white supremacy. He reveals how they have cuddled this demon in their bosom while covering it with a veneer of Christian piety and respectability. By exposing this cancer, he is hoping that it can be excised so healing can take place.

In his concluding chapter, Jones calls for a reckoning by this kind of American Christianity combined with white supremacy, which involves confession and repair. Using the historic narrative of the "mark of Cain" that many white Christians used in the nineteenth century to justify their oppression of blacks, the author reverses this interpretation and puts it on white American Christians. In his own words: "It is white Americans who have murdered our black and brown brothers and sisters. After the genocide and forced removal of Native Americans, the enslavement of millions of Africans, the lynching of more than 4,400 of their surviving descendants, it is white Americans who have used their faith as a shield to justify our actions, deny our responsibility, and insist on our innocence. We, white Christian Americans, are Cain" (230–231). He continues, "Despite our denials, equivocations, protests, and excuses, as the biblical narrative declares, the soil itself preserves and carries a testimony of truth to God. Today God's anguished questions—'Where is your brother?' and 'What have you done?'—still hang in the air like morning mist on the Mississippi River. We are only just beginning to discern these questions, let alone find the words to voice honest answers"

(231). These poignant words of confession coming from a white Christian are only the beginning of what is necessary from white Christians in general to begin the process of healing. Will this ever happen? This is a call for each of us in our way to do something, and this author has shown us an alternative path.

In light of the recent movements for Black lives calling for social justice, this book takes on greater relevance and should be required reading for all who seek justice in this area. The author has carefully crafted, deeply researched, and persuasively argued a historically well-documented and powerful account of white American Christianity's role and legacy in the ideology and practice of white supremacy. He has challenged white American Christianity to face up to its responsibility and take courageous action to restore its moral soul.

Andrews University Trevor O'Reggio

Keener, Craig S. *For All Peoples: A Biblical Theology of Missions in the Gospels and Acts*. Baguio City, Philippines: Asia Pacific Theological Seminary Press, 2020. v + 108 pp. Paperback. USD 14.00.

Craig Keener is a NT scholar, widely respected for his detailed research and comprehensive documentation in his commentaries on NT books. The best known of these commentaries is perhaps his encyclopedic four-volume commentary, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary* (Baker Academic, 2012–2015). Although the current volume is a bit different than most of his previous works in terms of its brevity, Keener still engages in his usual insightful exegetical study of biblical texts. The brevity of this volume is in line with the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary Press Occasional Paper Series's goal "to produce smaller books comprised of articles that deal with theological, anthropological and missiological issues relevant to serving God in Asia" (v).

The book is divided into five chapters. In the first three chapters, Keener reflects on the missional thrust of the Gospels according to Matthew, John, and the book of the Acts of the Apostles respectively. To best achieve his purpose, Keener remains faithful to the same theological method of analyzing the missiological contribution of the above mentioned biblical books—he uses a key text in each of the three books (Matt 28:19–20; John 20:21–22; Acts 1–2) to elaborate on their unique missional perspective. In chapter four, Keener reflects on the NT image of the church as "One New Temple in Christ" and concludes that the best way for believers to demonstrate their unity in Christ is to let their loyalty to Christ be translated into their "loyalty to one another as God's family, above all ethnic, cultural, and earthly kinship connections" (96). In the fifth and last chapter, Keener refutes the widely held misconception of Christianity as a European movement. His reflection on Acts 16:8–10 from a historical and geographical perspective highlights the fact that the gospel is Asia's gift to Europe and the rest of the world.

Although a brief volume, *For All Peoples* makes significant contributions that have the potential to enhance contemporary approaches to mission. The book highlights in a unique way how women and gentiles occupy a place of choice in Jesus's life and ministry (4–10). First, while ancient Jewish genealogies usually mention only male ancestors to emphasize the purity of Israelite ancestry, Matthew names four women in Jesus's genealogy. What is particularly striking about the naming of these four women is the fact that all of them have an association with gentiles: Tamar was a Canaanite, Rahab was a Jerichoite, Ruth was a Moabite, and Bathsheba, the daughter of an Israelite (1 Chr 3:5), is named by her late husband, Uriah the Hittite, to highlight her gentile association. Second, the presence of gentiles near Jesus is a recurring theme in Matthew's Gospel, sometimes in contrast with the devotion of the Israelites. While the magi (Persian astrologers) come a long way to honor Israel's true king, the chief priests and scribes (Herod's wise men) make no effort to do so. A Roman centurion's faith is praised by Jesus as greater than that of the Israelites (Matt 8:10). And the gentile execution squad is the first to confess Jesus's divine sonship after his crucifixion (Matt 27:54). In this distinctive way, Matthew highlights the fact that gentiles were no afterthought in God's redemptive plan (6). He summons his readers to lay aside ethnic and cultural prejudice to love and serve others as Christ did. This is a prerequisite to effective cross-cultural ministry. Thus, apart from being a call to global mission, Matthew's Gospel is also a message of ethnic reconciliation in Christ (10).

Keener's strong emphasis on the mission as first and foremost God's prerogative is refreshing. In his earthly ministry, Jesus demonstrated what being sent by God entails: (a) he constantly sought intimacy with the Father and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit (24), (b) he fully submitted to the Father's purpose and deferred all honor to him (24), and (c) he intentionally and tactfully crossed ethnic, cultural, and theological barriers to reveal God to others (30). Because believers are sent by Christ in the same way he was sent by the Father (John 20:21–22), the specific and varied ways in which the church is privileged to participate in God's mission should be firmly rooted in Jesus's missionary example. As a human agency involved in God's mission, the church must come to the full realization that the mission of God is shared with prayerful and Spirit-led believers. Therefore, one of the primary tasks of the church and its leaders is to actively seek to discern and respond to the initiatives of the Spirit who is guiding and empowering God's redemptive mission. The enabling power of the Holy Spirit remains the power of mission.

Keener's reflection on Acts 2:16–21 as a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (about the Spirit empowering of all God's people to be end-time prophets) is a breath of fresh air in the ongoing debate on race and gender in many Christian circles. In Joel 2:28–29, God promises an innovation in the last days: his Spirit and his accompanying gifts will be indiscriminately given to people of both genders, of all ages, and from all races, social strata, and walks of life to

create a new spiritual community devoid of any humanly imposed boundary. The believers' transcendency of ethnic, cultural, social, and gender barriers in the fulfillment of the Great Commission is a powerful demonstration to their contemporaries of the very image of life in God's kingdom (70). As a united and loving community, the church becomes not only a true reflection of Jesus Christ but also an answer to his prayer for unity among his followers (John 17:11, 20–23). While life has become so politicized around ethnic, racial, and national identities, the church, through genuine and loving relationships between its members, can irrefutably show our fragmented world that a community of ethnically, culturally, socially, and gender diverse persons can live in reconciled relationships with one another because they have agreed to be led by the Holy Spirit.

Keener's point—that the believers' "role as Jesus's agents is indispensable, because others would believe through their message" (26)—needs further clarification in order to avoid misunderstandings. As it stands, the sentence may be wrongly interpreted to mean that what Christians do in mission is indispensable for the salvation of non-believers. While the church is the primary human agency in God's mission, it is not his only agency. Because of other divine agencies such as dreams and visions, angels, and the superintending work of the Holy Spirit, God's saving mission to humanity is not deactivated in the absence of believers' mission.

Although *For All People* is not a comprehensive look at the biblical theology of missions, it is still a resourceful volume for an in-depth study of the topic, given the extensive references Keener provides in the footnotes. Any student or practitioner of Christian mission will find it insightful and at times thought-provoking.

Andrews University Boubakar Sanou

Moloney, Francis J. *The Apocalypse of John*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020. xxiv + 404 pp. Hardcover. USD 54.99.

Francis J. Moloney, a renowned Catholic scholar who specializes in the Johannine writings, challenges readers with his unconventional outlook on the book of Revelation. Unlike the majority of scholars who believe that the Apocalypse describes events of the Christian era, Moloney argues that its visions span from the creation of the world to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For him, the cross of Jesus is the ultimate revelation, the meaning, and the culmination of sacred history, the end of the old system, and the beginning of the new. Moloney draws his inspiration from Italian scholar Eugenio Corsini's *Apocalisse prima e doppo* (1980), a book he translated into English (*The Apocalypse: The Perennial Revelation of Jesus Christ*,

1983). Moloney's commentary is divided into thirteen chapters conveniently following the text of the Revelation. In addition, it contains two excurses: "Witnesses to the Law and the Messianic Promises of the Prophets" (53–55) and "The Lamb That Was Slaughtered from the Foundation of the World" (199–204). The book offers a bibliography as well as indexes of modern authors, Scriptures, and other ancient writings that readers will appreciate. The foreword is written by Corsini himself, who endorsed the book before his death in 2018.

The main thrust of the book is that the Apocalypse is a "prequel" rather than a "sequel." In other words, it outlines events of the HB from creation until the time of the church. For instance, the letter to Ephesus describes the fall of humanity, to Smyrna—the Exodus, to Pergamum—the desert wanderings, to Thyatira—the time of kings, to Sardis—the Babylonian exile, to Philadelphia—the return and rebuilding of Jerusalem, and to Laodicea—the blindness of Israel's leaders (their inability to recognize the Messiah in Jesus). The author offers a cyclical understanding of the septets. The seven churches, the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven plagues describe the same historical time frame from different perspectives. Each of the sevens, then, closes with "the victory of Christ's death and resurrection" (33). Thus the great tribulation (Rev 6:12–7:17) and the battle of Armageddon (Rev 16:1–21) both depict the eschaton in the death of Jesus on Calvary, not in the future (26, 121, 247–248). Consequently, Moloney interprets Babylon not as Rome but as Jerusalem. The death of Jesus, then, fulfills the mystery of God by judging Jerusalem and opening the door for the New Jerusalem, the church. Two other ideas support the main theme of the book. The author stresses that the Lamb was slaughtered before the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8), and from this Moloney infers that the saints who are persecuted and killed in the book of Revelation are not the Christian martyrs but rather the Hebrew believers who kept the word of God (the law) and were faithful to the messianic prophecies of the prophets. These prefigured the death of Jesus and set an example for Christians to be faithful during the hostile Roman empire (37–38). Satan's defeat by the cross ensured a new beginning where the church (the New Jerusalem) was to uphold the flame of the gospel until the second coming.

Although the book states that this view of the Apocalypse is as old as the first Christian congregations, it has not received much attention in the past and has been mainly rejected by modern scholarship (xiv). This commentary intrigued me with its innovative thesis and without a doubt will get its share of criticism. For example, the author does not clearly state his methodology for interpreting symbols. Although Moloney often appeals to allusions, the predominant method seems to be allegorical (106, 182, 242, 248). Frequently, the author spiritualizes the symbols, allowing fair room for imagination. For example, the six wings of the cherubs (Rev 4:6–8)

may allude to the six days of creation (92); the rider on the white horse (Rev 6:1–2) represents the *possibilities* of humanity (106); the fire from the altar (Rev 8:5) and the fire from heaven (Rev 20:9b) indicate Jesus's death and resurrection as the turning point in history (134, 314); the eagle in Rev 8:13 is the symbol of hope (138); and the seven and ten kings in Revelation 17:10–12, if multiplied, "produce seventy, the Danielic number for the weeks of years that must pass before the definitive establishment of God's 'everlasting righteousness' (Dan 9:24)" (267).

At times, the arguments seem speculative, as in the case of the sapphire color (Rev 9:17). Although sapphires are predominantly blue, the author advocates that John probably meant the black sapphires common in Australia and Madagascar (147). In addition, the commentary lacks consistency in the treatment of numbers. For example, the ten days of affliction (Rev 2:10) may allude to the ten plagues in Egypt (70), yet the five months of harming (Rev 9:10) are not chronological but rather a symbol of the complete suffering and domination (143). The forty-two months (Rev 11:1–2) depict the literal period of desecration of the temple by Antiochus IV (155). However, the same period in Rev 12:6 and 14 represents two symbolic eras when God provided for humanity after the fall (Gen 2–5) and for Israel during their wanderings in the desert (185–186).

Besides inconsistency with numbers, Moloney offers quite an unusual interpretation of the symbols in Rev 12. The woman is a symbol of the human condition. Being in pain represents "the difficulties of spiritual birth" set up by God in Eden when access to the tree of knowledge was forbidden (171–172). "The child born to the woman (12:5)…is not Jesus Christ, but a symbol of the *potential* of humankind" (176). Moloney's interpretation of the loss of humanity's potential is puzzling. For him, the potential "is not destroyed by the dragon" but, rather, is violently "snatched away" from the woman by God (176). Although it is possible to see what Gen 2–5 and Rev 12:1–6 have in common, one needs to be cautious not to overstretch the arguments to fit the text into the predetermined paradigm.

Another area that needs improvement is the interpretation of events surrounding the millennium. Moloney's view is that the thousand years cover the period of Israel (306, 310), during which Satan is bound and locked away (311), which means that he "does not exercise his diabolic influence directly" but acts through his agents (306–307). The story of Job makes such an understanding questionable since Satan directly afflicted Job. Moreover, equating the fall of Satan in Rev 12:1–18 with his captivity in the pit in Rev 20:1–6 (311) seems weak since the two chapters project opposite sentiments. While Rev 12:10 pronounces woes to the earth due to Satan's fall, Rev 20:1–6 bears a positive image for the world as a result of Satan's confinement. Furthermore, the book posits that Satan's destruction does not mean annihilation. It is a symbol of the turning point at the cross (313–314). The evil forces still exist

in the fiery lake; consequently, sin is still possible during the new creation era (322). Such an understanding of Satan's *binding* and *locking* during Israel's history and his *destruction* during church history (the new heaven and earth) raises a pragmatic question about what binding, locking, and destruction mean. From a practical standpoint, this is puzzling when one looks at all the horrors of world history.

Besides, there are a few minor suggestions that might improve the reader's experience. The author's cyclical view of the septets and frequent intratextual connections are commendable. It would be helpful if there were charts outlining (a) the parallels between the septets and (b) the overall historical time frame, with links to the book of Revelation. In addition, the phrases "Israel's sacred history" and the period "from the creation until the church" are used interchangeably. Such usage seems loose since both periods, although overlapping, are not identical. Some clarity in this matter is advised.

Overall, the commentary offers an unconventional view of the book of Revelation. Its allegorical and, at times, speculative nature may not be persuasive, yet it is likely to stimulate debate. This work might motivate researchers to probe its ideas further and maybe enhance its assumptions and historical application. Despite the criticism given above, this commentary is enriching in its theological insights, unusual intertextual connections, and overall understanding of the Apocalypse. Because of its unusual perspective, time will show whether it will be influential or not.

Berrien Springs, Michigan Stanislav Kondrat

Perrin, Andrew B., and Loren T. Stuckenbruck, eds. *Four Kingdom Motifs before and beyond the Book of Daniel*. TBN 28. Leiden: Brill, 2021. 353 pp. Hardcover. USD 196.00.

This is a collection of articles that reflects on a particular way that Jews and Christians, primarily, have schematized history. Although this layout of history, with its sequence of at least four kingdoms, harkens back to as early as the eighth century BCE (with Hesiod), it was popularized in the Judeo-Christian tradition because of the writings of Daniel. The symbols of the four-metal statue (Dan 2) and the four wild beasts (Dan 7) are familiar representations of this historiographical motif—thus, the priority of the book of Daniel in the development of this idea, as the title of the book suggests. Ranging from the biblical appropriation in Daniel to the modern interpretation of Hegel, the book shows how influential this division of time has been in literature and art. Some authors go beyond the four kingdom motif to address other types of historical periodization, such as the seventy weeks of Dan 9, or the ten eras of 1 En. 91 and 93 (the Apocalypse of Weeks), indicat-

ing that the division of time into four periods was not the only one familiar to writers in antiquity.

Besides the summary introduction by Andrew Perrin, the book contains fourteen chapters organized in somewhat chronological order of the material analyzed. This volume explores a wide range of usage of this historiographical device, from antiquity to modernity. Five of the chapters engage texts from the Second Temple period (the biblical book of Daniel, by Michael Segal; the Greek version of Daniel, by Ian Young; the animal representation of the motif, by Alexandra Frisch; 1 Enoch, by Loren Struckenbruck; and the Dead Sea Scrolls, by Andrew Perrin). Three chapters explore texts from the ancient cultures of the Mediterranean (the Sibylline Oracles, by Olivia Lester; Hesiod and Barnabas, by Kylie Crabbe; and Hippolytus of Rome, by Katharina Bracht). Four more chapters engage with appropriations from late antiquity and medieval literature (the Babylonian Talmud, by Geoffrey Herman; Christian apocalyptic texts, by Lorenzo DiTommasso; Christian Arabic texts, by Miriam Hjälm; and Ethiopic commentaries on Daniel, by James Hamrick). One final chapter covers the sweep of history from Rome to the Enlightenment with a reflection on the theories of time (by Brennan Breed). The historical approach of the collection exposes the reader to different appropriations of this motif before and beyond the book of Daniel, as the title suggests, and shows "the generative quality of this classic historiographical mechanism" (8).

Here I would like to highlight a few concepts that impressed me as I journeyed through the book though they are not fully articulated in this work. The basic characteristic of this historiographical motif is that a sequence of at least four kingdoms will pass before evil is destroyed and an everlasting reign is established. As Brennan Breed explains in the last chapter of the book, the four (or maybe five or six) kingdom motif assumes an unseen power that orchestrates human affairs. Thus, by nature, it is teleological chronology, or chronosophy (301). Breed's reflection on the human articulation of time is very well done and could be the first stopping point for readers of this collection. It establishes the theoretical framework that situates the contribution of the texts analyzed in each chapter to the development of the four kingdom motif. Students of history, in general, would do well to reflect on this particular influential philosophy of history that goes beyond the religious understanding of time.

Within the Judeo-Christian version of this motif, it is possible to identify a sequence of four, five, six, or even seven periods. The variety depends on how one distinguishes the elements in Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the statue (gold, silver, bronze, iron, clay, rock) or the components of the first vision of Daniel (lion, bear, leopard, terrifying creature, ten horns, horn from littleness, son of man) and assigns them to different periods in history. Surely, the first four and God's kingdom are the explicit protagonists of these visions, but it is

precisely the extra elements between the fourth and the kingdom of God that led to different applications of these symbols in history. The book indicates that the identity of the ten horns of the fourth beast of Dan 7 or the presumable ten toes of the feet of the statue in Dan 2 was an interpretative puzzle. Despite diverging interpretations, the motif is inheritably deterministic, for it expects the end of evil after the passing away of a specific number of power structures. Its eschatological purpose is by design a scheme of hope for those who believe in God, for it culminates with the eternal rulership of God and the destruction of oppressive powers. It was in this forward-looking manner that most interpreters used this scheme although a few understood it as a description of the past.

The collection also demonstrates that the major question addressed by interpreters of this motif was the identification of the fourth power, which in the version of the animal vision of Daniel, would give rise to a few more rulers (ten plus one). The crux and goal of the motif is its end. In Daniel, the earliest extant Jewish text to adopt the four kingdom motif, only the first power is identified—Babylon (2:38). Therefore, the work of matching the remaining symbols to historical powers was left to interpreters. Although the vision of Dan 8 is arguably not framed with four distinct elements, but with two animals and eight horns, most interpreters saw the vision of the goat and the ram as a development of the four kingdom motif, which in itself is an important observation of the inner interpretation of the book of Daniel. Since verses 20–21 of Dan 8 identify Media-Persia and Greece, these kingdoms have also been part of the scheme of most interpreters.

As mentioned by a few authors in the *Four Kingdom Motifs,* historically, most Christians saw the sequence of the four kingdoms representing Assyria/Babylon (B), Media-Persia (M/P), Greece (G), and Rome (R). The assumption was that they were living at the end of time, close to the arrival of God's kingdom. Influenced by 2 Thess 2, which says that the last enemy of God, called the son of perdition (aka the Antichrist), would arrive after the current restrainer was removed, most Christians understood the restrainer to be the Roman Empire. But even this majority view changed over time. The fading of the Greeks and the Romans as a Mediterranean empire forced interpreters to adapt their views of the fourth kingdom motif. Because Babylon is explicitly named in the book of Daniel as the first kingdom, the adaptation occurred toward the end of the sequence. After the fall of the city of Rome in the fifth century, many thought that Rome continued in Byzantium, or with the Caroligians, opening to the inclusion of groups such as Islam into the scheme. This flexibility testifies to the power of this historiographical idea. Others gave up the belief that Daniel was about the future and replaced Rome with Greece as the fourth empire. Daniel and the four kingdom motif became a thing of the past. Syriac commentaries on Daniel influenced Arabic and Ethiopic Christians (chs. 12 and 13), proposing the sequence of B-M-P-G.

Media (M) and Persia (P) were split to accommodate the Greeks (G) in the fourth position. As Rome became harder to identify in the medieval period, some Christians bought into an idea suggested earlier by, ironically as it may sound, a pagan. As Hjälm (ch. 12) points out, the position of Greece as the fourth kingdom was earlier advocated by Porphyry, a pagan who criticized the Christian belief in the predictive nature of Scriptures. Jerome, of course, as a believer in divine prophecy, rejected such a claim (256). Some Jews also came to question the predictive function of Daniel, I suspect because of the Christian chronological usage of the seventy weeks from Dan 9 to "prove" that Jesus was the Messiah. Interestingly, Hamrick shows (ch. 13) that Ethiopic Christians brought both views (B-M-P-G and B-M/P-G-R) together in the same manuscript (TDan1), suggesting that Christians were still divided about the proper view of the prophecies. Both Hjälm and Hamrick conclude that by the medieval period, the Greek view (B-M-P-G) had gained the support of the majority of Syriac and East African Christians. In this perspective, the debate changed from the identification of the fourth kingdom to the identification of the second. Putting it simply, Media and Persia were either a united kingdom or distinct powers in the prophetic view of Daniel.

This debate was already part of interpretations of the motif before Christianity, as Perrin's chapter on the Dead Sea Scrolls demonstrates. In a few Aramaic texts found in the Qumran caves (4Q552, 4Q553, 4Q553a), Babylon is identified as the first power ruling over Persia. Does this mean that Babylon and Persia were seen as one? The text is not clear because ruling over Persia could just be a geographic description and not evidence that they were understood to be one in the sequence of the four kingdoms. However, this might indicate that the idea of splitting Persia and Media is very old. If this is the case, as most interpreters of this Qumran texts see it, what we find here is a sequence, as far as I know, found nowhere else (B/P-?-?-?). Since the texts are fragmented and no other names are given, interpreters are again left to their imagination in identifying the possible power the author(s) had in mind besides the first. And from Perrin's table of different proposals for the scheme of 4QFour Kingdoms, one can see no consensus. These are the views presented in the table: (1) B/P-M-G-R, (2) B/P-G-Syria-R, (3) B/P-G-Seleucid Syria-R, (4) B/P-G-Ptolemaic Egypt-Seleucid Syria, (5) B/P-G-R-Kingdom of God, and (6) B/P-M-G-Kingdom of God.

One can see from these suggestions that Media is often absent, and in the last two proposals, the kingdom of God becomes the fourth kingdom, which in my opinion, deviates significantly from the version of Daniel's vision most often used by interpreters. Another significant point is that the Ptolemies and Seleucids are seen by some as distinct from Greece and each other. Adding these different interpretative suggestions, the chapters of Michael Segal (ch. 2) and Ian Young (ch. 3) show the variants of the texts of Daniel that might make a difference in the identification of the fourth

kingdom. Although their views of these textual variants may challenge traditional Christian views of Daniel, I was not convinced that they make a difference. What I do see is that the LXX manuscripts indicate that Dan 2 was read in light of Dan 7, with an emphasis on the fifth element of the sequence. A more serious challenge to strongly held views on Dan 7, in my opinion, is Segal's take on the "time, times and half a time." From a linguistic perspective, Segal convincingly argues from data from Daniel itself (e.g., Dan 12:7) that this period of time should be "best understood as a superlative," as the final time (25). This would question the traditional views of preterists, historicists, *and* futurists, who each in their own way apply the phrase of Daniel as representing three and a half years, either in the time of Antiochus, or the medieval period, or in the foreseeable future. This view might also challenge the connection futurists make between Dan 7:25 and 9:25.

In all, this book shows the multiplicity of views about the details of the biblical and extrabiblical appropriation of the four kingdom motif. The plurality is arguably a byproduct of the prophetic text itself, which provides only a few specific names. As James Hamrick rightly describes, interpreters of this motif continued "the hermeneutical work already begun within Daniel itself by deciphering the symbols left untouched by the dream-interpreter Daniel and the interpreting angel" (275). Maybe because its format is simple and its message is not explicitly explained, for it deals with the future, the Danielic rendition of the four (five) kingdoms still captivates the imagination of readers. And I assume it will endure and draw more speculation until the ushering of God's kingdom.

Four Kingdom Motifs is a great reflection on this influential historiographical scheme. Rich in details, the book will benefit any interpreter of the book of Daniel, as well as those interested in prophecies, regional views of Christian Scriptures, or simply the history of ideas. The book was licensed to creativecommons.org and is now available for free at the following link—https://brill.com/view/title/59157?language=en.

For the publisher, a few typological mistakes are still found in the current form of the book: pp. 73, 80, 98, 211, 277.

Berrien Springs, Michigan Rodrigo Galiza

Scacewater, Todd A., ed. *Discourse Analysis of the New Testament Writings*. Dallas, TX: Fontes, 2020. xxiii + 747 pp. Paperback. USD 49.95.

When reading academic literature about the NT, one quickly encounters a great number of methodologies. From the twentieth-century, one finds form criticism, tradition criticism, redaction criticism, narrative analysis, feminist

criticism, womanist criticism, postcolonial criticism, and the list goes on. These were added to the earlier disciplines of philology, textual criticism, and source criticism. Since the 1980s, another method of biblical interpretation has gained popularity, especially among Bible translators associated with the Summer Institute of Linguistics—discourse analysis. It seeks to identify markers in the text which indicate the various emphases intended by the author, in the hope of better understanding the message of the text. The method views the biblical text, in its totality, as a means of communication. Although publications in biblical studies using discourse analysis are becoming easier to find, this methodology remains opaque for many. As stated in its preface, *Discourse Analysis of the New Testament Writings* seeks to fill two gaps in NT academia. First, it gives examples of various methodologies within the field of discourse analysis (ix). Second, it provides a book-by-book analysis of the entire NT (x). It is the combination of these two elements that makes this volume unique. Numerous books and dissertations have been written that analyze the discourse of a single NT book. Steven Runge's *Lexham Discourse Greek New Testament* (Lexham Press, 2008) analyzes the entire NT corpus, but a single method is used throughout.

In *Discourse Analysis*, the reader can learn about the multifaceted discipline of discourse analysis while also gaining new insights into biblical passages. A helpful introduction gives a brief history of the emergence of discourse analysis in the wider field of NT studies, followed by a brief explanation of general concepts used throughout the book.

David Clark and Todd Scacewater analyze Matthew from the paradigm of drama, using categories like "Act, Scene, and Episode" (32). Their structures for the five discourses are especially helpful. Robert Longacre's chapter on Mark uses narrative analysis rather than pure discourse analysis, but the careful reader will find similarities between these two approaches. In his chapter on Luke, Todd Chipman first notes the importance of genre in determining the type of discourse analysis that would be appropriate for a given passage (92). His methodology is not unique, having borrowed much from Longacre. Nevertheless, Chipman offers quite a few insightful observations on the third Gospel. Michael Rudolph provides a helpful description of relevance theory in his treatment of John. With this approach, he finds, among other things, that the climax of the Gospel occurs not at the death or resurrection of Jesus, but at the cry of the Jews in 19:15 that "We have no king if not Caesar" (138), a conclusion that will undoubtedly ruffle a few scholarly feathers. Jeanny Read-Heimerdinger concludes the narrative portion of the NT with her chapter on Acts. She analyzes the text of Acts as found in Codex Bezae (176), which is unsurprising, given her previous work on that manuscript. While she provides a helpful dialogue between textual criticism and discourse analysis, her choice of a textual base renders her conclusions unhelpful for those wishing to come closer to the meaning of

the earliest attainable text of Acts.

Beginning the Pauline corpus, Aaron Sherwood analyzes Romans by focusing on what he calls Paul's "communicative strategy" (194). He shows how identifying the purpose of clauses can assist in coming to a greater understanding of the letter as a whole. Exegetically, he argues that the entirety of Romans works toward Paul's missionary goals. Most notable in R. Bruce Terry's chapter on 1 Corinthians is his use of computers to determine peak areas in the epistles. By charting word order and verbal usage, he seeks to locate the key points in Paul's argument. Fredrick Long champions the Inductive Bible Study (IBS) method to identify major structural relationships in 2 Corinthians. This IBS approach is prominent at Asbury Theological Seminary and is gaining popularity among specialists and non-specialists. Long's chapter is useful for those who want to see this method in action. Stephen Levinsohn, the doyen of NT discourse analysis, offers a step-by-step guide for determining structural boundaries in Galatians. While his conclusions are unsurprising, his method is clear and easy to follow. Scacewater returns to contribute chapters on Ephesians and Colossians. This is helpful because it allows the reader to compare how one scholar handles the genres of narrative and epistle differently. Although it appears halfway through the volume, Thomas Hudgins and J. Gregory Lawson's chapter on Philippians would be a useful starting place for the reader. They carefully lay out key issues in discourse analysis while intentionally avoiding jargon, and the result is a compact outline of Paul's argument.

Daniel Patte speaks of two "textual levels" when analyzing 1 Thessalonians: the dialogic level and the warranting level (418). In other words, Paul uses statements with a past time referent to warrant those actions he is encouraging in the present. His discussion does a good job of bringing out the importance of personal relatedness in Paul's exhortation. Michael Aubrey brings a syntactic/semantic approach to discourse analysis in his chapter on 2 Thessalonians. More so than others in this volume, Aubrey's chapter reads like a brief commentary on the epistle but with a stronger emphasis on the flow of the argument. Before analyzing the Pastoral Epistles, Isaiah Allen first provides a helpful rubric for describing the various emphases within the field of discourse analysis. He specifically embraces the linguistic school of relevance theory, in which immediate context trumps synchronic or diachronic word usage. In the final chapter on Paul's epistles, David Allen largely follows Longacre in delineating the structural markers of Philemon.

Cynthia Westfall examines Hebrews using Michael Halliday's systemic functional linguistics. This allows her to identify the cohesion, topic, prominence, and message in each paragraph of the book. William Varner attempts to use discourse analysis to unravel the puzzling structure of James. He proposes Jas 3:13–4:10 as the peak of the epistle, with the preceding and following material offering support (573). In his chapter on 1 Peter, Ervin

Starwalt primarily follows Longacre. He places each sentence into a hierarchy, showing how Peter's theses are supported by evidence, circumstance, and other functional categories. The brevity of 2 Peter allows Christopher Fresch to go into some depth describing how the epistle's argument is structured to highlight the importance of truth. Ernst Wendland covers the three Johannine Epistles in the following chapter, in which he uses a form-functional methodology. He differs from many authors in this volume by taking a bottom-up approach to discourse analysis (652). David Clark returns to give his analysis of Jude, in which his focus is the alternation between first-, second-, and third-person main verbs. Stephen Pattemore's chapter on Revelation first gives a helpful discussion on the meaning of "context" before describing the text itself. Conclusions regarding the discourse of Revelation are rather broad, likely due to space limitations. A brief bibliography concludes the volume.

The extent to which *Discourse Analysis* succeeds in its goals of illustrating methodologies and analyzing the NT text varies from chapter to chapter. Some, like Hudgins and Lawson, give a thorough and clear explanation of their methodology, but not all will be so simple to follow. As far as exegesis is concerned, *Discourse Analysis* is a bit like owning a volume from a different commentary series for each book of the NT. The varying techniques assist the reader in finding which method (or at times, which author) is most preferred, but the reader will inevitably find some chapters bereft of useful insights. This volume is required reading for anyone looking to put discourse analysis into practice for NT interpretation. For those conducting specialized research on a given book of the NT, this work should at least be referenced. A minister looking for pastoral or homiletic insights will likely be disappointed by the overly technical approaches. For the specialist, however, it provides a wealth of examples illustrating the use of this important new tool for the exegete's toolbox.

Dallas, Texas Jonathan Campbell

Waters, Guy Prentiss, J. Nicholas Reid, and John R. Muerther, eds. *Covenant Theology: Biblical, Theological, and Historical Perspectives*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020. 672 pp. Hardcover. USD 60.00.

Covenant theology refers to the theology of the Reformed churches, which understand the relationship between God and humankind as governed by two covenants, the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. The covenant of works and the covenant of grace span the whole of Scripture. They are like bookends that hold together the biblical storyline, all the individual relationships between God and his people throughout the ages. These covenants are, perhaps, anticipated by the covenant of redemption, a covenant between the

persons of the Trinity before creation to save humanity should they sin.

The main points of covenant theology are summarized in chapter seven of the Westminster Confession of Faith. This confession, which has had a strong influence in Calvinist denominations, was completed by the Westminster Assembly in 1646, ratified by the General Assembly at Edinburgh in 1647, and approved by the English parliament in 1648. It explained in thirty-three chapters the Assembly's understanding of all the most significant aspects of the Christian faith and established itself as "the definitive statement of Presbyterian doctrine in the English-speaking world" (F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church,* rev. ed. [Oxford University Press, 2005], 1745). The Confession's understanding of the covenant, however, functions as an organizing principle for its theology—it provides coherence to the roles of Adam and Christ in the history of redemption, the nature of Jesus's incarnation and atonement, and the relationship between the HB and the NT and between the law and the gospel. Thus, covenant theology has been considered the "architectonic principle" of the Westminster Confession of Faith (24).

Covenant Theology is written from a confessional Reformed perspective, and its purpose is to defend covenant theology against the challenges that have been made against it. It consists of the contributions of twenty-six scholars, all current or past faculty members at Reformed Theological Seminary. It was written from a variety of perspectives and fields of knowledge but is in fundamental agreement with the historical understanding of covenant theology as it was expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith. The work is not monolithic, however. Contributors sometimes disagree on aspects of covenant theology—for example, the nature of the Noahic covenant, the covenant of redemption, and the issue of republication in the Mosaic covenant, among others—which does not detract from the quality or effectiveness of the work but allows for a nuanced understanding of covenant theology.

Covenant Theology is intended for seminary students, pastors, and educated laypeople. It provides readers with an integrated approach to the study of the covenants and is divided into three sections. The first two sections address covenant theology issues from the perspective of biblical studies and historical theology respectively. The last section includes studies from a variety of disciplines. The book closes with a very helpful annotated bibliography of Reformed works on covenant theology and detailed general and Scripture indices. The openly adopted confessional perspective shapes the argument and makes the work transparent and clear but sometimes limits its usefulness to the audience. For example, the annotated bibliography at the end of the work is limited to major works in the Reformed tradition. The inclusion of Scott W. Hahn's *Kinship by Covenant* (Yale University Press, 2019), however, who writes from a Roman Catholic perspective, suggests that

a wider perspective is often helpful in a defense of covenant theology.

The first section, "Biblical Covenants," explores the covenants from a biblical perspective. The first chapter provides biblical evidence for the covenant of redemption, which predates all the covenants. This covenant is one of the most controversial aspects of covenant theology but is not essential to it. The main purpose of this section, however, is to present the biblical basis for the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, both of which are central to covenant theology but do not appear in Scripture under these names. Their existence and implications for God's nature are also debated. *Covenant Theology* concedes that these covenants are theological derivations but argues that they are an integral part of God's intended revelation and underlie all the particular covenants between God and his people.

"Biblical Covenants" is the longest section of the work, with almost twice as many chapters as the second and third sections respectively. Its size shows the importance it has for the work. This section also provides an analysis of the particular covenants between God and his people (Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and New) and their reception in the NT. One aspect of covenant theology that the work does not discuss, though central to Reformed theology, is why the covenant of grace is only available to the elect, those who were chosen for salvation through God's decree. If Adam as federal head represents all humanity, why would the actions of Jesus, the new federal head, be only accessible to the elect? The relationship between covenant theology and predestination is not explored enough in the work.

The second section, "Historical Theology," traces the roots and development of covenant theology from the early church to recent history. Ligor Duncan demonstrates that the early church understood that there was "a fundamental, underlying unity to God's saving plan" throughout the history of redemption and both continuity and discontinuity in the relationship between the HB and the NT (309). Both beliefs are fundamental tenets of covenant theology. Douglas F. Kelly also documented that though covenant is not mentioned in medieval theology, it provides the necessary substructure that provides unity to its theology. The unity of the covenants is seen in the understanding of the unity of Scripture and the understanding of the nature and role of God.

Howard Griffith explains the uneven understanding and construction of covenant thinking among the Reformers. Bullinger was the first to write a treatise on the covenant in Scripture, but it was Calvin who developed the understanding of the covenant that would become foundational to the understanding of salvation and Christian life. D. Blair Smith traces the covenant theme after the Reformation. He focuses on how covenant theology became "the warp and woof" of the theology of the Westminster Confession of Faith (361).

Especially relevant for Reformed theology today is Mark I. McDow-

ell's analysis of the contributions by Barth and the Torrance brothers to the covenant debate. Together, they have made "the most serious challenge" to covenant since the Reformation (401). Barth rejected the doctrine of double predestination and suggested the idea, later developed by J. B. Torrance, that a covenant of works describes God as a God of justice and not as a God of love and that this relationship obviated or made unnecessary the role of Christ as the mediator of creation from eternity. McDowell suggests that Barth does not fully stand within the Reformed tradition and that the critiques of the Torrance brothers rest "on a series of theological missteps in their analysis of confessional orthodoxy" (425).

The historical section ends with Michael Allen's analysis of the retreat of covenant thought in contemporary theology. He attributes this decline to a shift in theological discourse away from the questions and concerns that drove classical theology. He also notes that the theme of participation (*methexis*) in recent theology overlaps with the doctrine of the covenant and often crowds it out. Allen concludes the chapter with a very helpful identification of seven principles for the ongoing theological appropriation of covenant theology. He calls for a fresh appreciation of the relationship of covenant theology to the most fundamental theological tenets of Christian theology: the nature of God, the nature of human beings, and the relationship between God and humanity. The relationship between covenant theology and these fundamental theological tenets impacts all other aspects of theological discourse.

The third and last section contains studies on the relationship between covenant theology and a variety of collateral disciplines and theological movements. The chapters on ancient Near Eastern and Second Temple Judaism backgrounds for covenant studies are insightful and useful, mainly for more advanced students. Similarly, Benjamin L. Gladd's study on covenant thinking in contemporary NT scholarship addresses concerns for those who have waded a little more deeply into NT waters, especially regarding the new perspective on Paul and apocalypticism.

The last four chapters of the section are of special interest to every reader since they focus on practical implications and concerns that affect most believers. O. Palmer Robertson addresses the relationship between Israel and the church. He helpfully notes that God's covenants have always had in mind the benefit of the nations, not only of the chosen people. While the observation is correct, Robertson is not clear whether God is making the covenant with his chosen people (Abraham, Israel, David) to save or benefit the nations or whether God is including the nations in the covenant with his people. The difference is subtle but significant since it has implications for the nature and mission of the church. Michael J. Glodo explains the challenge that dispensationalism, a highly developed and coherent system, presents to the church. Scott R. Swain explores the relationship between the law and the gospel in contemporary new covenant theologies and provides an excellent

and insightful analysis of the continuity of God's moral requirements for his people in the HB and the NT. Finally, Derek Thomas explores the implications of covenant theology for the understanding of the sacraments and the baptism of infants.

Covenant Theology provides an excellent introduction to the biblical basis, historical trajectory, and theological and practical implications of the historical understanding of covenant theology in the Reformed Calvinist tradition. The book is well informed, fair in its treatment of the topic, written with clarity, and provides an integrated approach to the topic. It is, in my opinion, the best introduction to covenant theology for seminary students at the moment.

Andrews University Félix H. Cortez

Wilkerson, Isabel. *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*. New York, NY: Random House, 2020. xi + 476 pp. Hardcover. USD 32.00.

Isabel Wilkerson is an acclaimed *New York Times* bestseller and Pulitzer Prize winner. In her new book, *Caste*, she critically examines how the United States of America has been historically shaped by a rigid hierarchical system. Such a system has lingering social effects and is a hidden metric still in use to determine human worth. She compares this system of ranking humans based on inherited physical features such as skin color, hair texture, or eye shape to India's caste system. While India's caste system is based on religion, in the United States, race constitutes the visible agent of the unseen force of caste. A caste system, she writes, is

> an artificial construction, a fixed and embedded ranking of human value that sets the presumed supremacy of one group against the presumed inferiority of other groups based on ancestry and often immutable traits, traits that would be neutral in the abstract but are ascribed life-and-death meaning in a hierarchy favoring the dominant caste whose forebears designed it (17).

Although Wilkerson admits that caste is not the only explanation for everything in American social structure, she insists that the economic, political, and social landscapes of American life cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration the entrenched hierarchy its caste system has created. In addressing this polemical issue, Wilkerson's goal is not to solve all the problems that an old caste system has created in America but to shine new light onto its history, its consequences, and its continuing intrusion in everyday life, with the hope that it will one day be overcome. Thus, she strongly rejects the portrayal of slavery by many as nothing more than a "sad, dark chapter" in US history. She is of the view that because many Americans of today have inherited distorted slavery-era rules of social engagement in

total disregard of the fact, in her view, that all human beings are genetically the same, it is vital to revisit the annals of history. Her rationale is that

> in the same way that individuals cannot move forward, become whole and healthy unless they examine the domestic violence they witnessed as children or the alcoholism that runs in their family, the country cannot become whole until it confronts what was not a chapter in its history, but the basis of its economic and social order. For a quarter of a millennium, slavery *was* the country (43, emphasis original).

Because historical facts are stubborn, they cannot be *simply* buried or dismissed as out of step with current reality.

One of the most important merits of *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* lies in its deep and methodologically researched narrative. Wilkerson interweaves well-documented historical data with the stories of living individuals. Her unprejudiced academic reading of the history of slavery in America, in my opinion, is very instructive. By comparing the caste systems of India, Nazi Germany, and America, she brings to light eight pillars that have sustained the caste system in these nations—the firm belief that: (1) racial discrimination is part of God's divine will and the laws of nature; (2) social status is ascribed from birth and is therefore deemed immutable; (3) marriage should be restricted to people within the same caste; (4) the dominant caste (considered pure) can be polluted by contact with members of subordinate castes; (5) in all social systems, there must be a class of people whose duty it is to do menial tasks; (6) the class of people to perform the drudgeries of life must be dehumanized and stigmatized; (7) terror and cruelty are legitimate means of keeping the subordinate castes subjugated; and (8) members of the dominant caste are inherently superior, and members of the subordinate caste inherently inferior.

The factuality of these assumptions does matter as long as they contribute to the well-being of the upper class. In the total absence of feelings and morality, such a hierarchical system is primarily about the allocation of power and resources to the dominant caste. One of the hurtful truths this book reveals is how European settlers in America used the Bible to justify the enslavement of Africans and the cruelty inflicted on them in American forced labor camps. These settlers used their self-interested interpretation of the Bible to justify the creation of "a hierarchy of who could do what, who could own what, who was on top and who was on the bottom and who was in-between" (23). In doing so, some English Protestants, the upper-rung beneficiaries of this caste system, knowingly disregarded the foundational biblical truth that God is no respecter of persons because all human beings are equally created in his image. This fundamental biblical teaching is an affirmation of the unity as well as the dignity of all humanity. It is an irony that a group of people who fled persecution and starvation in Europe spearheaded the persecution and starvation of African slaves in America.

One of the best ways to describe *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* might be to view it as a modern-day prophetic voice urgently inviting the reader to a deep reflection of his or her ideas on this subject, assuming that no ethnic group is immune to prejudice. It is not an invitation to sterile reflection but an invitation to act based on the deep understanding of the problem of human prejudice. This type of reflection is necessary since

> by adulthood, researchers have found, most Americans have been exposed to a culture with enough negative messages about African-Americans and other marginalized groups that as much as 80 percent of white Americans hold unconscious bias against black Americans, bias so automatic that it kicks in before a person can process it…. The messaging is so pervasive in American society that a third of black Americans hold anti-black bias against themselves (186–187).

This unfortunate reality keeps the caste system humming among people of every color, creed, and gender. It is also imperative to carry out a deep reflection on race as a mere social construct, given the socioemotional, physical, mental, and financial large-scale impact of racial discrimination.

Reading *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* was an emotional, spiritual, and eye-opening experience. Although some sections of the book are nerve-racking, this book is a must-read, not only for the community and organizational leaders but also for anyone interested in expanding their perspective on the American social, economic, and political landscape. It could also serve as an excellent textbook for educational institutions intentional about training world changers.

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Wright, Christopher J. H. *Here Are Your Gods*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020. viii + 164 pp. Paperback. USD 17.36.

Christopher J. H. Wright, international ministries director of the Langham Partnership and author of many books, including *The Mission of God* (IVP, 2018), has written an insightful and thought-provoking work analyzing idolatry both in the Bible and in the contemporary world. A central idea of the book is expressed in the subtitle, *Faithful Discipleship in Idolatrous Times*. In this book, Wright raises two timely questions: What kind of people should Christians be in a world riddled with all kinds of idolatry? and What does it mean to be a disciple and follower of Jesus Christ in the twenty-first century? Wright suggests that the present culture is not that different in its idolatry than the first-century world of the apostles and Jesus. He also postulates that "the biblical category of idolatry—when it is even considered at all—is often handled or dismissed with shallow understanding and simplistic responses"

(2). In his eight chapters, organized in three sections, Wright explores the deeper, more complex waters of idolatry, both then and now, intending to elevate the awareness of his readers to the singular solution to the problem of today's idolatry: the radical calling of lifting the cross of Christ higher and still higher "in this world of evil, folly, idolatry, and confusion. For it was *in* such a world, and *for* such a world, that Jesus died and rose again, and calls us to follow him" (146).

Wright opens his first section, "The Lord God and Other Gods in the Bible," with an exploration of whether the gods we meet in the Bible were "something or nothing" (3). He concludes that, paradoxically, they were both: they were nothing because they lacked divine existence as the one true living God has, while at the same time, they were "something within the world of the peoples and cultures that named them, worshiped them, subjected themselves to them, or enlisted them in whatever objectives were being pursued by the powerful among men for their own ends" (10). He then introduces another paradox, this one derived from the HB's repeated observation that we are the makers of our gods. We bow to idols fashioned from wood or metal into a likeness that suits us, something that we *know* is not divine. This, Wright notes, is "part of the absurdity of worshiping them" (30). Yet, he concludes, our awareness of their being merely human constructs offers an element of hope: if constructed, they can also be deconstructed. "They are no more durable than the people or empires that make them" (31).

Wright moves on to explore the interface of mission and idolatry, pointing out and investigating the necessity of engaging, exposing, and unmasking the so-called gods of other cultures by identifying and condemning idolatry. The "most fundamental distinction in all reality" (32) is that presented in the creation narrative of Genesis, the distinction between the creator God and creation. He goes on to note that the root of all idolatry is the rejection of "the God-ness of God and the finality of God's moral authority" (34). Particularly helpful in this section of chapter 3 is Wright's four-part categorization of the "gods" that humans worship: (1) things that entice us (35), (2) things we fear (36), (3) things we trust (38), and (4) things we need (39). We worship and seek to placate what we are afraid of, elevate to levels of idolatrous trust things that will give us security, and "seek to manipulate and persuade" anything we think will give us those items we believe are necessary for our well-being and prosperity (41). Wright posits that the only cure for these idolatrous tendencies is to restore a knowledge of the true and living God, the one alone who gives sustenance and protection and, therefore, the one alone worthy of worship.

Closing his first section, Wright concludes that the one true living God "battles against all forms of idolatry and calls us to join him in that conflict" (64) in the hope of restoring all of creation to its original purpose. This battle will include a biblically informed missional approach that understands the manifold ways in which we make gods for ourselves and the forms that these

gods take, as well as our motives for creating and worshipping them. Key to our success, Wright posits, is the understanding of what the Bible says about how idolatry negatively affects humanity.

Wright's second section, "Political Idolatry Then and Now," explores the concept that God rules over the nations and that they rise and fall according to very specific God-originated criteria. From the Bible, Wright traces the sequence of the rise and fall of nations, concluding that "all empires come to an end under the sovereign hand of God" (75). After defining common internal and external factors repeatedly present before the collapse of historic dominant world powers, Wright explores factors present in the dominant powers of today, positing that as we share similar biblically-defined deviations from God's expressed will, we, like they, are standing on unsustainable ground. In the closing chapter of the section, entitled "God in the Political Arena," Wright then proceeds to lay out God's desired standards for public life and office as expressed to Israel. He posits that not only was Israel intended to be a means of delivering God's redemptive blessings to the world but also that it was to be a model of how a nation should function.

As he closes his second section, Wright challenges Christians to engage more with the topic of idolatry. He thinks that Christians have neglected the topic of idolatry, precisely because "we ourselves are unconsciously involved with and sometimes dominated by the false gods of the people around us" (93). As we Christians morally deteriorate, so does our civilization. When we are deeply syncretistic and idolatrous, our civilization will surely reflect this. He concludes by noting three gods of contemporary culture: prosperity (94), national pride (97), and self-exaltation (100). With the realization that Western Christianity and Western civilization stand on the very brink of our judgment for ignoring God's divine directions, Wright then turns to his final section to explore the question of how Christians should live in such a world as this.

The two chapters of the last section, "God's People in an Idolatrous World," close out Wright's timely exploration of biblical and contemporary idolatry. He leads into his final thoughts with the concept that Christians must habitually recognize and reject the gods of this world and "persistently choose the living God instead" (109). They must live by the story of God (110), commit to the mission of God (116), and submit to the reign of God (124). This last point is vital—Wright notes that this means Christians are to reject collusion with political power and wealth (126) yet not withdraw from the world or violently revolt against it (127). Instead, they are to follow Jesus in his way of living, modeling the kingdom of heaven while still surrounded by the idolatrous kingdoms of the earth. They are to imitate "the Jesus of the cross, not the Jesus of Constantine" (128). All of our loyalties, political views, choices, and support are, therefore, to align with God's expressed criteria for his kingdom and not with the kingdoms of this world. "Living in and for the

kingdom of God must mean living a life that is different from the kingdoms of this world" (133).

His final chapter is a call to holiness, a life lived in contradistinction to the values of the surrounding world, and a call to prayer. This life is to be one made attractive by "being filled with goodness, mercy, love, compassion, and justice" in order to be a truly positive influence in the world (135). Christians are to be an integral part *of* society while remaining fundamentally, radically different *from* it (138). In addition to living lives reflecting the will of God, Christians are to live lives of prayer. They are to pray for the entry of God's will into this world, as taught in the Lord's Prayer (139). This entails that Christians should pray *for* and *against* those in power—*for* them, so that they will act in ways beneficial to society, and *against* them when they act against God's standards, values, and priorities (143). Wright closes by noting that when Christians uplift God and his values, Christ and him crucified, they can become influencers in the modern-day Babylon that they find themselves in, helping an idolatrous world come to know the one true living God.

Wright is to be commended for highlighting the nature of modern idolatry and for the thought-provoking idea that we Christians are not as immune to it as we might think. His work is biblically informed, clearly written, logically consistent, and highly readable. Especially provocative is his exploration of the current global political climate in light of the divine denouncement of proud human powers mentioned in Scripture. These previous kingdoms fell short of God's ideal and so passed from the stage of history.

Given the scale of repeated tragedies within Christendom when leadership chose ways that aligned with non-Kingdom solutions to problems both real and perceived, I very much expected Wright, in his discussion of "things that we trust" (38), to explore, even if briefly and in passing, the implications of implicitly trusting our clergy above and beyond the guidance of Scripture. I believe that this section of *Here Are Your Gods* would only be strengthened by the reminder that within the body of Christ, this version of idolatry is alive and needs to be as equally recognized and rejected as all other false gods are.

Here Are Your Gods is a contemporary reminder of the danger of idolatry. The author challenges Christians to consider by whose values they are currently living and reminds them of the eternal values of the true and living God. Incisively written, this is a good read for both Christian scholars and nonspecialists.

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