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Justin Martyr's Sunday Worship Statement: A Forged Appendix

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There is a famous passage in the *First Apology* of Justin Martyr that has commonly been taken as clear evidence for weekly Sunday worship conducted by Christians in Rome in the middle of the second century A. D. The passage in question, Chapter 67, reads as follows:

> And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things, Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying, Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And those who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows, and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world, and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn [Saturday]; and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them those things, which we have submitted for your consideration.[1]

[1] *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1:186.

As far as I am aware, all Sabbatical advocates[2] and Dominical advocates[3] accept this passage as genuine; they simply interpret its connections in different ways. The position taken here is that this passage does not come directly from Justin, but was interpolated into his work at some later time by some unknown later writer. If this important passage is an interpolation, then the purpose of that interpolation is evident: it was used to further support the transition from Sabbath to Sunday by projecting that transition back as early as the middle of the second century, thus gaining further prestige for Sunday.

There are a number of lines of evidence, mostly unexplored, that point to this passage as a later interpolation. These lines of evidence are considered in order under the rubrics of literary context, literary style and literary relations.

Literary Context

The problems of the context of Chapter 67 lie in three areas. First, there is the problem of the location of this chapter itself in relation to the document of the *Apology* as a whole. The second problem has to do with the relation of this passage to what follows it, especially the nature of that writing. The third problem is the way in which this passage relates to what precedes it

1. Location in the Document. Chapter 67 is the last full statement in the *Apology*. It is followed by a short paragraph of conclusion (Chapter 68), and then come three letters from other authors, appended to the document. This means the statement about Sunday is the last full statement of the document, concluding the body of the *Apology* proper.

This is the location where an insert or interpolation fits with the very least amount of difficulty. An insertion in the middle of a handwritten document causes a much greater displacement of text. Attaching an unoriginal addition to the end of the manuscript does not require such a displacement.

A literary critical parallel commonly cited against the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is the epilogue in Deut 34, telling of Moses' death. Since Moses obviously did not write of his own death prophetically, it had to be appended by someone else, probably Joshua. A parallel suggestion can be proposed for the location of Chapter 67 in this document.

2. Relation to What Follows. After only a short paragraph of conclusion (Chapter 68), three letters were appended to this document following the Sun-

[2] Representative of this view is R. L. Odom, *Sabbath and Sunday in Early Christianity* (Washington, D. C., 1977), 128; S. Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday: A His torical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity* (Rome, 1977), 230-232; K. A. Strand, "The Sabbath and Sunday from the Second Through Fifth Centuries," *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, (Washington, D. C., 1982), 323.

[3] Representative of this position from this viewpoint are Willy Rordorf, *Sunday*, tr. A. A. K. Graham (Philadelphia, 1968), 262-273; R. J. Bauckham, "Sabbath and Sunday in the Post-Apostolic Church," *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical and Theological Investigation*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, 1982), 273.

day-keeping passage. Those letters are labeled as epistles from the Emperor [H]Adrian, the Emperor Antoninus Pius, and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. The *ANF* editor of Justin noted that the first of these three letters is "generally credited as genuine" (1:186). The second and third letters are regarded as spurious (1:186, 187). The third letter is most clearly so, for in it Marcus Aurelius credits one of his victories to the prayers of Christians, thus vindicating them.

The purpose of these appended letters was to enhance the acceptance of the contents of the *Apology*. The last of these is clearly spurious, the middle one is most likely spurious, and the initial letter, from the Emperor [H]Adrian, has been accepted as genuine. Given its relation to the other two letters, it seems just as likely to me that the first of these three letters is also spurious.

What this does on the larger scale is to place the Sunday-keeping passage directly up against two or three spurious letters appended directly after it. Occupying that strategic position casts some doubt upon the authenticity of Chapter 67, also. Not only is it located at the end of the main body of the manuscript, but it is also located directly in front of a series of letters which are, for the most part, not genuine. We have here a potential case of guilt by association. The most obviously false of these three letters is the last one, supposedly from Marcus Aurelius. It stands in the same relation to the appended letters that the Sunday-keeping passage does in relation to the body of the document.

3. Relation to What Precedes. Chapters 65 and 66, preceding the Sunday-keeping section, deal with the Lord's Supper. Chapter 65 starts with the offering of the bread and wine at the occasion of a baptism of a new believer. The rest of Chapter 65 tells of the order of this brief service. Chapter 66 is a parenthetical discussion of the significance of the Lord's Supper: it is a special meal with a special meaning, not an ordinary meal. This chapter concludes with a brief notice of the imitation of this rite in Mithraism. The first part of Chapter 67 is actually the conclusion to Chapter 65, after the inclusion of the parenthetical discussion of Chapter 66. This conclusion tells about how the wealthy help the needy and how thanks is given to God for all things. There is no element of timing connected with the Lord's Supper or Baptism in Chapters 65 and 66.

It is only with the discussion of the Sunday service that the element of timing comes in. There are some major parallels between the contents of Chapters 65 and 66 and Chapter 67. There are also a few elements of major difference.

a. Differences. Chapter 65 begins with the observation that these things took place following the baptism of a convert. Chapter 67 says these things took place on Sunday. There is no mention of a baptism in Chapter 67. Chapter 65 clearly describes a local meeting, whereas Chapter 67 describes a large common gathering of Christians from all of the cities and the countryside round about Rome.

b. Aside from these two major differences, however, these two passages share much in common. Some of these features may be compared in parallel lists.[4]

Chapters 65 & 66	**Chapter 67**
1. "The apostles, in the memoirs composed by them . . ."	1. "The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read."
2. "That we may offer hearty prayers in common . . .	2. "Then we all rise and pray together"
3. "There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water,"	3. "bread and wine and water are brought and the president . . ."
4. "And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings,"	4. "The president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings"
5. "All the people present express their assent by saying, 'Amen'."	5. "And the people assent, saying 'Amen',"
6. "Those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced"	6. "There is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given."
7. "And to those who are absent they carry away a portion."	7. "To those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons."
8. "And the wealthy among us help the needy"	8. "And they who are well to do, and willing, gives what each one thinks fit" [extended expansion on the work for the needy].

Some of these similarities have been noted before, but their complete parallelism has not been spelled out previously as is done in the list above. One scholar holds that this means the Sunday service was modeled after the baptism and eucharist that are described previously.[5] Indeed he thinks the former service was conducted on the day mentioned in the latter passage.

The difficulties with this position become evident when it is noted how directly the first passage, Chapter 65, has been paraphrased in the second passage, Chapter 67. When the previous passage is utilized, as is the case in most if not all of the passages listed above, it is paraphrased in such a way as to show the paraphrase has taken place. Often elements are inverted in their word order, a common sign of plagiarism. For example, deacons come at the beginning of the statement on distribution in Chapter 65, but at the end of the statement on the

[4] 1 am accepting here the view that the English translation in *ANF* follows, at least approximately, the word order of the original Greek.

[5] Rordorf, 262.

same subject in Chapter 67. Other instances of the same phenomenon can be noted above. This is not a case in which two services were alike, but a case in which clearly identifiable elements from the first service were borrowed to create an impression that a second service also took place, when in actuality it had not.

Two irregularities may be noted in the parallel lists given above. The reference to the "memoirs of the apostles" comes from Chapter 66, but it too has been used in Chapter 67, along with all of the other material from Chapter 65. The statement about the wealthy taking care of the poor actually comes from the beginning of Chapter 67, before the Sunday service is identified. This is really the end of the statement in Chapters 65 and 66. The Chapter division has been put in the wrong place. It should have been located immediately preceding the statement about the Sunday service.

It is also of interest to see how that statement at the beginning of Chapter 67 concludes, since it ends with a benediction,

"And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things [i.e., the Eucharist]. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ and through the Holy Ghost."

This is a benediction, a doxology. That is probably where the original text of the *First Apology* ended. It is probable that everything that follows after that has been forged. This includes:

1. The Statement about Sunday worship (Chapter 67)
2. The Introduction to the Letter of Hadrian (Chapter 69)
3. The Letter from the Emperor Hadrian (Letter No. 1)
4. The Letter from the Emperor Antoninus Pius (Letter No. 2)
5. The Letter from the Emperor Marcus Aurelius (Letter No. 3)

All of these follow the final statement upon the subject of the Lord's Supper in Chapter 65 and 66. The doxology to that extended statement comes at the beginning of Chapter 67. That probably is where the original manuscript of Justin ended. The plagiarized (reduplicated with modifications) statement was then added as the rest of Chapter 67. Three letters with the introduction to the first were then added to give the emphasis of the Emperors' endorsement of Christians, specifically, their worship on Sunday. Only in a general sense could it be said that these three letters were for the purpose of enhancing the general content of Justin's *Apology*. More specifically, they were forged for the purpose of stressing the Sunday-keeping statement. Having once presented a false proposition, the anonymous author then backed it up with the authority of three forged letters from three emperors. The evidence of the connections present here is that this entire bloc of material was forged at the same time and added to the end of Justin's *Apology* at the same time. The forger of the three letters is also the forger of the main statement in Chapter 67 on Sunday keeping.

The literary architecture of this forgery can be outlined as follows"

Chapters 65 and 66	**Chapter 67**
Statement about baptism of a local candidate celebrated by a local group.	Statement about Baptism deleted. Statement about worship on Sunday by a large general congregation added.
Points 1-8 listed above	Points 1-8 adapted
Parenthetical explanation of the Lord's Supper	Parenthetic statement about the Lord's Supper deleted. Replaced by expanded statement for the poor and needy
Negative judgment on the imitation of Lord's Supper in Mithraism.	Sunday, the day of God's creating light and matter, the day of worship
Positive statement about how the Christians reminded each other of these things"continually."	Emphasis: "Sunday," "First day," "The same day," "Day after that of Saturn," "Sunday"

The writer of the spurious passage in the last half of Chapter 67 really did not want his readers to forget about Sunday. Aside from the statement about Sunday at the beginning of the passage, he mentioned it five times in four different ways at the conclusion to this passage, and a sixth reference describes Friday as the day before that of Saturn. This is not an incidental mention of a meeting held on Sunday, but is driving the point home as hard as possible by overemphasis. In the parallel passage at the beginning of Chapter 67 with which the discussion of Chapters 65 and 66 end, there is no mention of Sunday, only that Christians reminded one another of the meaning of the Lord Supper "continually." That is what has been expanded into this chronologically specific statement.

Literary Style

The question then is, how characteristic of Justin's writings is this explicit attention to detailed chronology. This subject can be examined from two different points of view. First there is the question of how much attention he paid to chronology in general. Then there is the matter of how much attention he paid elsewhere to the chronology of the passion week. If attention to those chronological details are characteristic of his word usage, that would tend to support Chapter 67 as authentic and genuine. If this attention to chronological detail is not characteristic of his other writing, then that would tend to support the idea previously advanced above that Chapter 67 is not original with Justin.

I have chosen here for purposes of comparison only Justin's *First Apology*. Since this is the work in which Chapter 67 appears, it provides the most direct literary example for comparison. A survey of his other works probably would yield the same results, but this particular document provides the most immediate grounds for comparison.

1. General Chronology. It readily becomes apparent from a survey of the *First Apology* that chronological statements are uncommon there. There is one case where Justin hypothesizes about persons who would live in a certain way for "one year" (Chap. 57). He gives the interval between David and Christ as 1500 years (Chap. 42), inaccurate by half a millennium. He talks about the prophets who prophesied of the coming of Christ 5000, 3000, 2000, 1000, and 800 years before Christ (Chap. 30), evidently going back to Enoch or Noah in the LXX for the highest of those figures. He mentions that 150 years have passed since Christ's birth under Cyrenius and his death under Pontius Pilate (Chap. 46). In his very first chronological statement, he holds that Plato said that a special period of punishment for the wicked would last 1000 years (Chap. 8).

These constitute the sum total of the chronological statements I have been able to locate in Justin's *First Apology*. From this survey three conclusions emerge: First, Justin is not very interested in chronology, since this is all of that kind of material that can be found in the work. Second, his chronological statements were very round and approximate, usually being given in the thousands or hundreds. He does not even differentiate chronologically between the date for the birth of Christ and his death, even though they were separated by over thirty years. He measures both off with the general figure of 150 years. Third, I have not found any other dates in this entire work that deal with days of the week or days in a month. That type of detailed chronology is not part of his concern.

2. Crucifixion Chronology. Justin is very much a cross-centered philosopher. His entire *Apology* is permeated with references to Jesus crucifixion. It is interesting to see that he is so bold as to hold up the cross of Christ before the emperor with such frequency and vigor. The following are the chapters in this work that refer to the crucifixion of Jesus: 13, 21, 22, 32, 35, 36, 38, 42, 46, 48, 50, 51, 53, 55, 60, 61, 63. Some of these statements are brief, while others are more extended. Some of these add the resurrection. Others add the resurrection and ascension. A few of them give the whole series of birth, death, resurrection, and ascension.

It is interesting to survey these passages to see what Justin says about the chronology of the cross. He never mentions the day of the week or the day of the month on which Jesus died or was resurrected. He does not identify it as the 6th day, the preparation day, the 14th of Nisan, or the Passover. None of these references carry with them any specific date for the resurrection. In other words, the specific chronology of the days when Jesus died and was resurrected are not of great concern to Justin. He is far more interested in demonstrating these as historical events and drawing from them their meaning for salvation.

The closest Justin ever comes to giving a date for the crucifixion is to say Christ was crucified under Pontius Pilate (Chaps. 13, 35, 46, and 48). Once he mentions that he was crucified during the reign of Tiberius (Chap. 13). These are very broad, bold chronological strokes that have nothing to do with the specific chronology of the Sunday resurrection found in Chapter 67. That type of

writing is quite different from Justin's approach both to chronology in general and to the chronology of Christ's death and resurrection. That passage does not look like any of Justin's other writing on these subjects. It looks rather as if it has come from another hand.

Literary Relations

Thus far only the internal contents of the First Apology have been considered in evaluating the Sunday-keeping statement of Chapter 67. There are, however, other materials outside of that work that bear upon the question of the Sunday-keeping mentioned in it. That proposal can also be evaluated by these external sources. One source for this kind of external evaluation comes from Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*. Trypho was a Jew, and thus he looked at Justin's Christianity from that point of view. Another source that bears upon this investigation comes from the record of Justin's martyrdom.

1. *The Dialogue with Trypho*. It was apparently at Ephesus that Justin met the Jew Trypho and engaged him in dialogue. (He says it took place on the walks of Xystus, which Eusebius locates at Ephesus). The dialogue does not start out as a dialogue, but as a monologue in which Justin tells of his history, including his conversion to Christianity (Chaps. 1-9). Then, beginning with Chapter 10, the true dialogue begins. Justin first complains that Christians are blamed because they do not follow Jewish teachings: "Is there any other matter, my friends, in which we are blamed, than this, that we live not after the law, and are not circumcised in the flesh as your forefathers were, and do not observe sabbaths as you do?" Then he goes on to say that Christians are also accused of cannibalism because of their observance of the Lord's Supper and that they also are accused of immoral conduct. Thus there were five accusations levelled at the Christians: 1) they did not keep the law; 2) they did not circumcise; 3) they did not keep Sabbath; 4) they practice cannibalism; and 5) they practice immorality. Trypho virtually dismisses the final two charges, but he does concentrate on the first three issues. It is interesting to see that these three issues of the law, circumcision, and the Sabbath come up right at the very beginning of this dialogue, for they are at the heart of their differences. Trypho goes on to spell out these differences.

> But this is what we (Jews) are most at a loss about: that you, professing to be pious, and supposing yourselves better than others, are not in any particular separated from them, and do not alter your mode of living from the nations, in that you observe no festivals or sabbaths, and do not have the rite of circumcision; and further, resting your hopes on a man that was crucified, you yet expect to obtain some good thing from God, while you do not observe his commandments. (*Dialogue*, Chap. 10).

Trypho puts the challenge straight to Justin:

> If, therefore, you can defend yourself on these points, and make it manifest in what way you hope for anything whatsoever, even though you do not observe the law, this we [Jews] would gladly hear from you, and we shall make other investigations. (Ibid.)

Justin comes back with the defense that the old law of the ten commandments was just Jewish, but that Christians have a new law in Christ,

> For the law promulgated on Horeb is so old, and belongs to yourselves alone; but this is for all universally. Now, law placed against law has abrogated that which is before it, and a covenant which comes after in like manner has put an end to the previous one; and an eternal and final law---namely Christ---has been given to us, and the covenant is trustworthy, after which there shall be no law, no commandments, and no ordinance. (Ibid., Chap. 11).

Then Justin makes the application of this principle to the questions about law, circumcision, and Sabbath.

> You have now need of a second circumcision, though you glory greatly in the flesh. The new law requires you to keep perpetual sabbath, and you, because you are idle for one day, suppose you are pious, not discerning why this has been commanded you; and if you eat unleavened bread, you say the will of God has been fulfilled. The Lord our God does not take pleasure in such observances; if there is any perjured person or a thief among you, let him cease to be so; if any adulterer, let him repent; then he has kept the sweet and true sabbaths of God." (Ibid.)

For Justin, then, keeping Sabbath does not consist of observing the seventh day of the week without working thereon, but of doing good deeds and repenting of sins that are past. In this way one keeps a perpetual Sabbath that is no longer tied down to any one day, but is ever ongoing in a spiritual way.

Is there any sign here that Justin was keeping Sunday? Not if Trypho's testimony is to be credited. According to Trypho, Justin not only does not have any law or commandments or covenant, but he does not keep any Sabbath or ordinances or festivals. Trypho does not say Justin is keeping Sunday instead of Sabbath. It is not a question of two different days of worship. It is a question of one day versus no day at all. If Justin has been observing a weekly Sunday, as is proposed in Chapter 67 of Justin's First Apology, Trypho surely would note it, but he makes no such accusation. The issue lies in not keeping Sabbath, not in keeping Sunday instead.

We are faced then with an internal contradiction in the writings of Justin. Either he is keeping Sunday, as Chapter 67 of the *Apology* states, or he is not keeping it or any other day, as Trypho states in the *Dialogue*. Do we have a case here of Justin against Justin? No, not if we acknowledge that Chapter 67 of the *Apology* was not written by Justin. Then Trypho's position stands out clear and readily recognizable in view of Justin's own response and testimony about the Law and the Sabbath without mention of or allowance for Sunday.

But one might argue that this dialogue occurred in Ephesus, where Christians did not keep Sunday, whereas Justin's *First Apology* was written in Rome, where Christians later in Justin's career may have been keeping Sunday. If that is the case, there is evidence that Sunday-keeping in the mid second century was only geographically sporadic. But the evidence against such Sunday-keeping in Rome, as posited by Chapter 67 of the *Apology*, is even more direct. It comes from the record of Justin's martyrdom.

2. "The Martyrdom of Justin Martyr." The story of Justin's martyrdom comes from a larger work entitled "The Martyrdom of the Holy Martyrs." This includes, along with the story of the martyrdom of Justin, stories of the deaths of Chariton, Charites, Paeon, and Liberianus. The story focuses especially upon Justin because he was the teacher of the others. There is an apocryphal addition to this text which tells of Justin's death by drinking the cup of hemlock. This he was supposed to have been given because he was a philosopher. In actuality, the body of the text tells of the way in which Justin and his fellow martyrs died. They were scourged and then led away to be decapitated (Chap. 5).

The author of this work is not known, but it is generally accepted as a genuine account of the actual martyrdoms. Of the historicity of this account the *ANF* editor of it has stated, "Though nothing is known as to the date or authorship of the following narrative, it is generally reckoned among the most trustworthy of the Martyria." In contrast to the theory of two Justins, one who was decapitated and the other who drank hemlock, the editor states, "But the description of Justin given in the following account, is evidently such as compels us to refer it to the famous apologist and martyr of the second century" (*ANF*, 1:303).

Given the generally accepted authenticity of this document as describing the death of Justin the Apologist, it is of interest to see what he has to say during his defense before Rusticus, the prefect who tries him and sentences him to death. One of the questions that comes up during Rusticus' examination of Justin has to do with the assemblies of Christians. The exchange between these two individuals runs as follows:

> Rusticus the prefect said, "Where do you assemble?" Justin said, "Where each one chooses and can: for do you fancy that we all meet in the very same place? Not so; because the God of the Christians is not circumscribed by place; but being invisible, fills heaven and earth, and everywhere is worshipped and glorified by the faithful." Rusticus the prefect said, "Tell me where you assemble, or into what place do you collect your followers?" Justin said, "I live above one Martinus, at the Timiotinian Bath; and during the whole time (and I am now living in Rome for the second time) I am unaware of any other meeting than his. And if any one wished to come to me, I communicated to him the doctrines of truth." Rusticus said, "Are you not, then, a Christian?" Justin said, "Yes, I am a Christian." ("The Martyrdom of the Holy Martyrs," Chap. 2, *ANF*, 1:305).

The contrast between this statement and that of Chapter 67 of the *Apology* could not be greater. That other text says that all Christians of the countryside and the cities come together in one great assembly on Sunday. Here Justin says he has never attended any such meeting. The only meetings he has ever attended were in the house of Martinus, down the stairs from his room. When anyone else sought counsel from him they had to seek him out personally.

The testimony of the "Martyrdom" rings true. A huge gathering of Christians on a weekly basis as is posited by Chapter 67 of the Apology could easily have looked threatening to the emperor. That is why Rusticus asked him twice about it and after that sentenced him to death. Meetings such as those proposed by the Sunday-keeping passage would surely have looked subversive to the emperor and consequently been treated as such.

In addition, this was not a popular time to declare one's Christianity publicly. One can see the result of this in the case of Justin and his friends. A similar but earlier execution of Christians appears to have been the occasion for Justin's *Second Apology* (*ANF*, 1:188-189). This was not a healthy time to appear in mass crowds for public worship on Sunday or any other day, for it could easily have resulted in the rounding up of some Christians and their execution.

On two grounds, then, such public meetings are very unlikely: because they would have been seen as a threat to the emperor, and because they probably would have resulted in bodily harm to the Christians who assembled in such a way. For good reason Justin says he knows of no such public assemblies, but only the house church where he lived. This local house church meeting is perfectly compatible with the type of meeting described in Chapters 65 and 66 of the *First Apology*. It is not compatible with the type of public meeting described in Chapter 67. Justin says he knows nothing of such a meeting. Since his life is at stake when he gives this testimony, and he dies for his faith immediately thereafter, we may take this recorded testimony as accurate. Chapter 67 of the *Apology* has been written by somebody else at some later time. It was not written by this Justin who was martyred in this way.

Chronology

While Justin's chronology is generally non-specific, and while he does not date the death and resurrection of Christ specifically in any other passage in the *First Apology*, he does make use of an unusual chronology to refer to the day upon which Christ was resurrected as the eighth day. That being the case, it interesting to review the three passages in which these references occur.

1. *Dialogue with Trypho*, Chapters 33-34. In this passage Justin returns to the issues with which the dialogue began in Chapter 10: Sabbath, circumcision, and the observance of the Law. His argument in the first part of Chapter 33 is that the Sabbath did not precede Moses; therefore, the people of that time were not obliged to observe it. As a consequence, we are not obliged to observe it,

either. He also argues that the elements of nature do not keep Sabbath, so we do not need to keep it, either.

From that point he turns to the subject of circumcision. In good Pauline fashion he argues that Abraham did not receive righteousness because he was circumcised, but rather circumcision was the sign of the righteousness that he had already received from God. Circumcision cannot be commanded of the whole human family for women, who can be just as righteous as men, for they are unable to receive circumcision like men do. The purpose of his discussion thus far is to dispose of circumcision and the Sabbath. He continues his dialogue about circumcision in Chapter 34,

> "Now, sirs," I said, "it is possible for us to show how the eighth day possessed a certain mysterious import, which the seventh day did not possess, and which was promulgated by God through these rites. But lest I appear now to diverge to other subjects, understand what I say; the blood of that circumcision is obsolete, and we trust in the blood of salvation; there is now another covenant, and another law has gone forth from Zion. Jesus Christ circumcises all who will---as was declared above with knives of stone; that they may be a righteous nation, a people keeping faith, holding to the truth, and maintaining peace." (*Dialogue with Trypho*, Chap. 34, *ANF*, 1:206)

The illustration here is taken from the fact that circumcision occurred on the eighth day. But, Justin says that old circumcision has been done away with. But there is a new circumcision. It is not a circumcision of the flesh, but of the heart, and in this way Christ can make us new persons living in righteousness, truth, and peace. This was prefigured typologically in the circumcision on the eighth day. It is not a prefiguration of the resurrection, but a prefiguration of the circumcision of our hearts.

2. *Dialogue with Trypho*, Chapter 41. Here Justin finds a type of the Lord's Supper in the meal the leper offered. Since the leper offered this after he was cleansed, we offer the Lord's Supper to God as evidence of our cleansing from sin. Then he turns to the subject of circumcision again.

> The command of circumcision, again, bidding [them] always circumcise the children on the eighth day, was a type of the true circumcision, by which we are circumcised from deceit and iniquity through Him who rose from the dead on the first day after the Sabbath [namely through] our Lord Jesus Christ. For the first day after the Sabbath, being [7] the first of all the days, is called, however, the eighth, according to the number of all of the days of the cycle, and [yet] it remains the first. (*ANF*, Chap. 41, 1:215, utilizing the marginal reading from footnote 7)

Once again, Justin's typological application of the eighth day of circumcision is that it symbolizes our spiritual circumcision and cleansing. The event which facilitates this spiritual circumcision is the resurrection of Christ, which also occurred on that eighth day. It was the eighth day according to the normal

human cycle (either the Jewish week with inclusive reckoning or the Roman *nundinae* or market days). The eighth day could be reckoned according to a normal human cycle, as he says in his last statement, but it could also be reckoned spiritually the first of all of the days thereafter. This does not mean Sunday is to be celebrated on a weekly basis. It means exactly the opposite. After the resurrection of Christ, all the days are the same. They are the spiritual and perpetual Sabbath-keeping that occurs when anyone repents or when a Christian does good works. All of the days after the resurrection, according to Justin, have been smoothed out into one great spiritual continuum. There is no day above another, neither Sabbath nor Sunday. The important thing is that we be spiritually circumcised, which was typified in the Old Testament legislation.

3. *Dialogue with Trypho*, Chapter 138. In this part of his dialogue with Trypho, Justin draws out lessons from the experience of Noah. He refers to the eight persons in the Ark and indicates that he believes that this typifies the eighth day upon which Christ was resurrected and delivered the human race from sin, just as Noah delivered the eight with him in the Ark.

> By this which God said was meant that the mystery of saved men appeared in the deluge. For righteous Noah, along with other mortals at the deluge, i.e., with his own wife, his three sons and their wives, being eight in number, were a symbol of the eighth day, wherein Christ appeared when He rose from the dead, for ever the first in power. For Christ, being the first-born of every creature, became again the chief of another race regenerated by Himself through water, and faith, and wood, containing the mystery of the cross; even as Noah was saved by wood when he rode over the waters with his household. (*Dialogue*, ANF, Chap. 138, 1:268)

Here Justin draws several lesson's from Noah's experience, not just one. The wood of the Ark prefigured the wood of the cross. One saved the eight persons in the Ark and the other saved all who come to him after he came forth on the eighth day. Aside from the strained nature of the typology here, there is no warrant for Sunday-keeping in this passage. On the contrary, the eight people in the Ark do not prefigure the Christian keeping of Sunday. They only prefigure one event that happened once, when Christ came forth from the tomb, so that he could now minister to us and become the head of a new regenerated race, just as Noah became the father of all the human beings on the earth after him.

4. Summary. It is interesting to see that the eighth day references only occur in Justin's dialogue with Trypho, not in either of his Apologies to the emperor. That is because only Trypho the Jew, being familiar with the Scriptures, would understand the illustration from which the eighth day lessons were drawn. Trypho knows infants are to be circumcised on the eighth day of their life, but the emperor probably does not. Trypho knows the Hebrew Scriptures say there were only eight persons present in the Ark, but the emperor probably would not know that fact. Thus, the typological illustrations used for the eighth day are only meaningful for a Jew like Trypho.

None of these typologies are very meaningful to us today. We agree that spiritually speaking, we need to be circumcised of heart, but the eighth day, on which literal, physical circumcision took place, is no longer very meaningful to Christians. We acknowledge that the Flood Story of Genesis tells us there were eight people in the Ark, but it would be difficult for us to say that each one of those persons stood for a day and the total took us to the eighth day. Only in a vague general sense can the wood of the Ark be compared with the wood of the cross, in that both were in instruments of deliverance.

It is interesting to see that to which Justin applies the eighth day. The circumcision performed on that eighth day typologically represents what Christ does for us, not what we do for Christ. It represents his circumcision of our hard heart, not our service to him on the eighth day. In Noah's case the deliverance of eight people in the Ark represents our deliverance by Christ with his resurrection on the eighth day. Again, it is something Christ does for us, not what we do for Christ. There is no warrant here for keeping a weekly eighth day to Christ, for our circumcision of the heart takes place on any day at any time, no longer on the old physical and literal eighth day. The theology expressed here is in harmony with what Justin has said elsewhere in his dialogue with Trypho: there is no warrant for keeping any day, Sabbath or Sunday, for all have spiritually become the same since the death and resurrection of Christ. This theology argues against the idea that Justin would have taught that the Christians in Rome in his time were keeping Sunday. That passage in the *Apology* was the product of another hand.

Conclusions

There are a number of lines of evidence which demonstrate that Chapter 67 of Justin's *First Apology* did not come from his hand. First, this passage comes at the very vulnerable juncture at the end of the body of his document. Second, it immediately precedes three letters from three emperors, all of whom endorse Christianity, indicating the false nature of these writings. Third, one can see where the author of this passage copied his material from the immediately two preceding chapters of the *Apology*. The borrowed phraseology can be traced through the whole passage when it is compared with those two preceding chapters. The paraphrasing and the inversion of elements present in the copy demonstrate the nature of the borrowing for the purpose of enhancing the acceptance of Sunday-keeping in the latter passage.

The specific dated elements in Chapter 67, emphasized over and over again, are obviously not typical of Justin's writing when they are compared with similar elements or the lack of them in the preceding portions of the document. Justin has very little interest in chronology, and that lack of interest extends to the dates of the events of the crucifixion and resurrection. He is more interested in typological numerology than he is in historical chronology. The nearest date that he gives for the crucifixion is that it occurred during the reign of Tiberius, when

Pontius Pilate was in Judea, and that was about 150 years past. This lack of interest in chronology, general and specific, presents a direct contradiction with the contents of the Sunday-keeping passage, where those elements are made very, very specific.

Then too, Chapter 67 contrasts with what we know of Justin's practice from his dialogue with Trypho and the story of his martyrdom. Trypho says, in essence, that Justin does not observe any day, and Justin agrees with him. That testimony becomes all the more direct when the examination of Justin by Rusticus is viewed for the light that it sheds upon Christian assemblies, or lack thereof. Justin twice denies to Rusticus that Christians have ever held any general assemblies like those hypothesized in Chapter 67 of the *Apology*. To have done so would have threatened the emperor and endangered the Christians participating.

Justin does employ a curious kind of eighth day typology, but even that does not support the idea that Christians of his time kept Sunday. On the contrary, that eighth day typology symbolizes the circumcision of the heart, not any keeping of the eighth day by Christians. Justin's teaching in dialogue with Trypho is that from the cross and the resurrection all days are equal spiritually and neither Sabbath nor Sunday are to be kept literally. When one does good works or repents, one keeps the perpetual Sabbath, no matter when those events occur in the week. Justin's theology on this point actually undermines the practice advocated in Chapter 67 of the *Apology*.

These lines of evidence demonstrate that Chapter 67 does not belong with Justin's *First Apology*. It was placed there later by some anonymous author who wished to enhance the acceptance of Sunday by reading it back into the time of Justin in the middle of the second century. We do not know who did this or when it was done, but one might estimate that it occurred sometime during the third or fourth centuries A. D., when the spread of the Christian Sunday took on greater proportions. That was not the case in Justin's time in the second century.

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Evangelical Theology and Open Theism: Toward a Biblical Understanding of the Macro Hermeneutical Principles of Theology?

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The adoption by a number of evangelical theologians of the so-called "open theism" as a viable theological option alongside the traditionally adopted tenets of classical theism not only involves obvious theological disagreements but raises the question of its implications for evangelical theology as a whole. Is the disagreement between the open view of God and classical theism a minor theological issue, or does it affect the hermeneutical core of the evangelical understanding of Scripture and the Gospel? This paper attempts to evaluate the disagreement between the open view of God and classical theism from a hermeneutical perspective in order to understand its causes, adumbrate its consequences, and assess its promises for the future of evangelical theology.

I will start by (1) introducing the controversy as perceived by active players in the conversation. Then, I will briefly describe (2) the hermeneutical perspective from which I will analyze and evaluate what this controversy holds for the future of evangelical theology. Next, I will deal with the issue of the (3) nature and extent of the controversy by looking at its subject matter. After this, I will take a brief look at (4) the biblical evidence on which each party builds its proposal. Then, I will consider the (5) realm of presuppositions or fore-conceptions conditioning each interpretation involved in the disagreement. Following this point further, I will turn my attention to (6) the cause of the controversy. Moving ahead, I will evaluate (7) the open view claim to the status of "new theological paradigm." This point opens the question about (8) whether or not evangelical theology requires an ontology. Finally, I will survey the sources from which evangelical scholars consciously or unconsciously derive their understanding of the macro hermeneutical principles of Christian theology. Due to the complexity

of the issues and their interpretations, I will limit the analysis to the main issues involved in the conversation between classical and open theisms.

1. Introducing the Controversy

Even though evangelical theologies differ in many ways, they have always assumed a common understanding of God's nature and acts. The so-called "open view" of God (also called "open theism," "new theism," and "free-will theism") has disrupted this consensus. Not surprisingly, some leading evangelical theologians have strongly opposed the new view and defended the traditional evangelical consensus on God's nature and acts.[1]

The open view of God has been around for some time now. Evangelical theologians could easily dismiss earlier expositions of the open view of God with the pretext that they were based on the ideas of process philosophy. However, six years ago a group of evangelical theologians, spearheaded by Clark Pinnock, radically challenged this perception by arguing for the open view of God from a biblical basis.[2] More recently, also arguing from a biblical basis, John Sanders[3] and Gregory Boyd[4] have made a case for the open view of God very attractive to evangelical minds.

A cursory overview reveals that the controversy between the classical and open views of God revolves around the way each camp understands the interface between divine activity and human freedom. On one hand, open theists are convinced that the classical view of God is incompatible with true human freedom (libertarian freedom). On the other hand, classical theists not only are persuaded that their view allows ample room for human freedom (compatibilistic freedom), but also consider the open view alternative as falling short of the biblical notion of God. Arguably, both parties understand the nature and acts of God in very different, even contradictory ways. But what is the controversy about? Not surprisingly, there is no agreement on this point. Rather, one gets the impression that open theists try to minimize the scope of their disagreement with classical theism as much as possible.

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[1] Notably, Norman Geisler has criticized the open view in some detail in two books: *Creating God in the Image of Man? The New "Open" View of God—Neotheism's Dangerous Drift* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1997), and *Chosen but Free: A Balanced View of Divine Election* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1999). Geisler, however, approaches the issue philosophically rather than biblically.

[2] Clark Pinnock, et al., *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994). These ideas were already in the making at least from the late seventies. See, for instance, Richard Rice, *The Openness of God: The Relationship of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Free Will* (Nashville: Review and Herald, c1980), and Clark Pinnock, ed., *The Grace of God and the Will of Man* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1989).

[3] John E. Sanders, *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998).

[4] Gregory A. Boyd, *The God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000).

The subtitle of Sanders's book, "A Theology of Providence," clearly shows that the open view of God is about divine providence, that is, about the way the Christian God relates to the world. Open theists challenge traditional theism's view on divine sovereignty-providence because it does not allow for "real" open historical relations between God and human beings. To them, classical theism has no place for true human freedom. Under fire from his own denomination, however, Gregory Boyd seeks to minimize as much as possible the extent and importance of the controversy generated by the open view of God within evangelicalism. He suggests that the debate, when properly understood, is not about God or His nature, but about "the nature of the future."[5] Moreover, he is convinced that "next to the central doctrines of the Christian faith, the issue of whether the future is exhaustively settled or partially open is relatively unimportant. It certainly is not a doctrine Christians should ever divide over."[6]

From the classical theistic perspective, Norman Geisler has a different evaluation about the extent and importance of the controversy. He sees the challenge brought about by open theism revolving around the most fundamental question of theology, namely, the nature of God.[7] "A person's view of God," Geisler explains, "is the most important thing about which he thinks. A true view of God has good consequences. And a false view of God has disastrous consequences."[8] Consequently, open theism "is a serious challenge to classical theism and with it, a serious threat to many important doctrines and practices built on that view."[9] Geisler summarizes some of the systematic consequences that follow from the open view of God as including "a denial of the infallibility of the Bible, the full omniscience of God, the apologetic value of prophecy, and a biblical test for false prophets. It also undermines confidence in the promises of God, his ability to answer prayer, and any ultimate victory over sin. Indeed, it leads logically to universalism and/or annihilationism."[10]

However, due to the recent publications by the open theologians mentioned above, classical theologians can no longer brush off on philosophical grounds the open view of God as an obviously heretical position. In a recent editorial, *Christianity Today* has recognized the importance of this debate and called theologians on both sides of the issue to do their "homework" and work hard "at checking and, if need be, adjusting the conceptual formulations of yesteryear."[11]

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[5] Boyd, 15.

[6] Ibid., 8.

[7] *Creating God in the Image of Man?, 73.*

[8] Ibid., 145.

[9] Ibid., 74.

[10] Ibid., 145.

[11] Editorial, "God vs. God: Two Competing Theologies Vie for the Future of Evangelicalism," *Christianity Today* (7 February 2000): 34-35. See also, Roger Olson, Douglas F. Kelly, Timothy George, and Alister E. McGrath, "Has God Been Held Hostage by Philosophy? [a discussion of *The Openness of God*], *Christianity Today* (9 January 1995). Most recently, *Christianity Today* has published, over two months, a series of e-mails between John Sanders and Christopher A. Hall in which

Agreeing with *Christianity Today* on the need to use the controversy as an opportunity to grow theologically, my goal in this article is not to take sides, but to explore the nature of the issue at stake, the extent of the "conceptual adjusting" required, and the "homework" needed to clarify the issues within the evangelical theological community.

2. Hermeneutical Analysis

We must start by recognizing the hermeneutical nature of the debate. Clearly, classical and open theists differ in their interpretation of the same issue. Be it the "nature of the future," as Boyd claims, or the "nature of God," as Geisler sees it, open theism has disrupted the inertia of traditional thinking on these issues. A conflict of interpretations calls for a hermeneutical analysis. The hermeneutical approach allows us to see the reasons behind conflicting interpretations. In other words, it helps us become aware of the basis from which each interpretation is made. This procedure not only helps us understand each position better, but also helps us make up our minds on controverted issues. We may decide for one of the two views under evaluation here, or we may decide there is a need to develop a new understanding.

Let us consider, first, the notion of hermeneutics as I will use it here. Traditionally, evangelical theologians have associated hermeneutics with biblical interpretation.[12] However, the act of understanding involved in theological thinking goes beyond the interpretation of texts to include the cognitive process through which theologians reach their conclusions and formulate their views.[13] In this broad sense, then, hermeneutics is the technical name philosophers give to the study of the human process through which we understand each other.[14] Of

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they debate God's openness ["Does God Know Your Next Move?" (21 May and 18 June 2001)]. The fact that this is the cover story ["An Openness Debate"] indicates the topic's importance to evangelical scholars and pastors.

[12] See, for instance, David S. Dockery, *Biblical Interpretation Then and Now: Contemporary Hermeneutics in the Light of the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992); Gerhard Maier, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, trans. Robert W. Yarbrough (Wheaton: Crossway, 1994); Gerhard F. Hasel, *Biblical Interpretation Today* (Washington: Biblical Research Institute, 1985); Henry Al Virkler, *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981); Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991); and Walter C. Kaiser and Moises Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994).

[13] Hans-Georg Gadamer, however, has underlined the universality of hermeneutics as present in all human understanding. Hermeneutics, in this general sense, considers the way in which human beings think ("The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem," in *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, ed. David E. Linge [Berkeley: U of California P, 1976], 1-17; and idem., *Truth and Method*, 2d rev. ed., trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum, 1989).

[14] For an introduction to hermeneutics as the general theory of interpretation see Josef Bleicher, *Contemporary Hermeneutics: Hermeneutics as Method, Philosophy and Critique* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan, 1980); Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*; F.D.E. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts*, ed. Heinz Kimmerle, trans. James Duke and

course this broad notion does not deny the hermeneutics of the text, but includes it in its universality.[15]

The study of the human act of understanding reveals the presence of a few necessary components. Human understanding moves from the subject that interprets to the issue or thing that is interpreted. The human act of interpretation, then, has a beginning, a movement, and an end (*telos*). The end is the issue (objective) interpretation seeks to understand.[16] The movement is the process through which we interpret the issues.[17] The beginning includes the thing (reality)[18] and the perspective (presuppositions)[19] from which we start the interpretive act.

To facilitate our analysis I am going to borrow from the language of Hans Küng and speak of three hermeneutical levels, namely, macro, meso, and micro hermeneutics.[20] While micro hermeneutics refers to textual interpretation and meso hermeneutics to issue or doctrinal interpretation, macro hermeneutics deals with the interpretation of the first principles from within which doctrinal and

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Jack Forstman (Atlanta: Scholars, 1977). From a theological perspective see Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with Special Reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980); idem., *New Horizons in Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992); and idem., "Biblical Theology and Hermeneutics," in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, ed. David F. Ford (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1997), 520-537.

[15] For an introduction to the development of philosophical hermeneutics see Raúl Kerbs, "Sobre el desarrollo de la hermenéutica," *Analogía Filosófica*, (1999): 3-33.

[16] Gadamer describes the objective to which the act of interpretation aims in various ways, including, for instance, "meaning," "content," and "subject-matter." Gadamer sees that the task of all hermeneutics is "to bring agreement *in content*" (*Truth and Method*, 293; see also 270 and 324, emphasis supplied).

[17] "[I]nterpretation begins with fore-conceptions that are replaced by more suitable ones. This constant process of new projection constitutes *the movement of understanding and interpretations*. A person who is trying to understand is exposed to distraction from fore-meanings that are not borne out by the things themselves. Working out appropriate projections, anticipatory in nature, to be confirmed 'by the things' themselves, is *the constant task of understanding*" (*Truth and Method*, 267, emphasis supplied).

[18] "All correct interpretation must be on guard against arbitrary fancies and the limitations imposed by imperceptible habits of thought, and it must direct its gaze '*on the things themselves*' (which, in the case of the literary critic, are meaningful texts, which themselves are again concerned with objects). For the interpreter to let himself be guided by *the things themselves* is obviously not a matter of a single, 'conscientious' decision, but is 'the first, last, and constant task'" (*Truth and Method*, 266-267, emphasis supplied).

[19] "A person who is trying to understand a text is always projecting. He projects a meaning for the text as a whole as soon as some initial meaning emerges in the text. Again, the initial meaning emerges only because he is reading the texts with particular expectations in regard to a certain meaning. Working out this fore-projection, which is constantly revised in terms of what emerges as he penetrates into the meaning, is understanding what is there" (*Truth and Method*, 267).

[20] Hans Küng uses the "macro, meso and micro" categorization to speak about the scientific paradigm in theology (*Theology for the Third Millennium: An Ecumenical View*, trans. Peter Heinegg [New York: Doubleday, 1988], 134).

textual hermeneutics operate. Macro hermeneutics is related to the study and clarification of philosophical issues directly or indirectly related to the criticism and formulation of concrete heuristic principles of interpretation. Meso hermeneutics deals with the interpretation of theological issues and, therefore, belongs properly to the area of systematic theology. Micro hermeneutics approaches the interpretation of texts and, consequently, proceeds within the realm of biblical exegesis. Let us analyze the controversy between the classical and open views of God from the hermeneutical perspective.

3. Meso Hermeneutics: Identifying the Issues

The existence of an interpretive process becomes obvious when two parties interpret something in different ways. In order to understand and eventually overcome a disagreement, we need to become aware of what the quarrel is about.

In section 1 above we identified some issues. We may classify them according to their scope and influence, beginning with the narrower issues and moving to the broader and more influential ones. We have, from the open view perspective, Gregory Boyd emphasizing (1) "the nature of the future" and John Sanders addressing the broader issue of (2) divine providence. From a classical perspective, Norman Geisler suggests the controversy revolves around the even broader and more influential topic of (3) the nature of God.[21] The central controverted issues, then, are very broad and influential: the nature of God and the way in which He relates to His creatures.

So far, however, open theists have shown more interest in reflecting on the concrete relation of God with creatures than in the somehow more theoretical question of the nature of God. Still, as they explore the doctrine of divine providence from the nonnegotiable conviction that God enters into "a give-and-take-real-open relationship" with his creatures,[22] other issues are unavoidably included. Due to their systematic links with the question of providence, open theologians address issues such as divine activity, foreknowledge, predestination, and human freedom.

These issues are important not only because of their broadness, but also because of the central systematic role they play in the task of conceiving and formulating the entire edifice of Christian theology. Few theologians would deny

[21] Clark Pinnock, Richard Rice, John Sanders, William Hasker, and David Basinger clearly affirm that the open view of God advances a new understanding of "God's nature and relationship with his creatures" (Clark Pinnock et al., *The Openness of God*, 8). They also understand the issue under discussion is the nature of God: "[N]o doctrine is more central than the nature of God. It deeply affects our understanding of the incarnation, grace, creation, election, sovereignty and salvation. Moreover, the doctrine of God is full of implications for daily living. One's view of God has direct impact on practices such as prayer, evangelism, seeking divine guidance and responding to suffering," ibid.

[22] Ibid.

that "Christian doctrine is systematically presented by the relating of all individual themes to the reality of God."[23] This controversy, then, has the potential to affect the whole range of Christian teachings and interpretations of Scripture. Boyd's attempt to reduce the importance and systematic effect of the controversy does not match the systematic role built into the issues themselves.

4. Micro Hermeneutics: The Biblical Evidence

In solving theological questions, evangelical theologians are supposed to give primacy to biblical data. Consequently, open view theologians argue their case for a new notion of divine providence from scriptural evidence. Not surprisingly, classical theists attempt to refute their opponents on the same basis and to build a biblical foundation of their own. There is no doubt that both parties understand biblical evidence in different and mutually exclusive ways.

Open theologians challenge classical theism on account of their interpretation of selected biblical texts that seem to imply that God enters in a "give-and-take-real-open" relation with human beings. Before analyzing the biblical evidence in favor of the open view of God, Richard Rice correctly reminds us that "it is not difficult to surround an idea with biblical quotations."[24] The crucial test to say that a notion is biblical, Rice argues, is whether or not "the idea is faithful to the overall biblical portrait of God."[25] On this basis, Rice contends that classical theism "does not reflect faithfully the spirit of the biblical message, in spite of the fact that it appeals to various biblical statements."[26]

Open view theologians survey biblical evidence thematically. Rice organizes his analysis of biblical data in favor of the open view around the concept of God. He starts by underlining that, according to the Bible, we should think of God from the perspective of love rather than power. "To be faithful to the Bible we must put love at the head of the list."[27] Sanders, who so far has provided the most detailed analysis of biblical evidence supporting the open view of God, organizes his study around the notion of divine providence.[28] More recently,

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[23] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromley, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), I: 59.

[24] Richard Rice, "Biblical Support for a New Perspective," in *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God*, 15.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., 21. Rice also deals with divine feelings, intentions, actions, the incarnation and death of Jesus, and passages that seem to support the classical view (divine changelessness, prophecy, foreknowledge, and predestination), ibid., 21-58.

[28] Sanders, 39-139, surveys the biblical evidence following a chronological order beginning with creation and following with issues like the fall, divine suffering (God regretting previous decisions and changing his mind), God testing Abraham's faith, human beings prevailing upon God, Joseph's story involving risk, divine human relations within the covenant, intercessory prayer, divine repentance, the presence and absence of God, the potter and the clay texts, divine life and humiliation, Jesus' birth and the Bethlehem massacre, his baptism, temptation, confession, transfiguration,

Boyd organizes his analysis of biblical evidence around the issue of divine foreknowledge. Centering on this issue, he argues that the biblical evidence favors the open view of divine providence and lends no support for the classical view.[29]

From the classical theistic perspective, Norman Geisler deals with biblical evidence in order to show the inadequate biblical basis on which open theism builds. He organizes his survey thematically around the notion of the being and actions of God.[30]

Why do open theists dismiss the classical view's appeal to biblical evidence as invalid? According to Rice, because it is not based on the "broad sweep of biblical testimony."[31] Geisler, recognizing that in this controversy "the biblical arguments are fundamental,"[32] concludes that open theism "fails to establish a biblical basis for its beliefs."[33]

Would a more complete analysis of the biblical evidence help evangelical theologians overcome this controversy? I personally do not think so. Our brief reference to the way each party deals with the biblical evidence suggests that the cause for disagreement lies somewhere else. Both parties use the same biblical evidence (micro hermeneutics) to provide different views of the same theological issues (meso hermeneutics). My conviction is that more biblical evidence will not move the parties to accept each other's point of view or lead to a new theological position that is grounded on the hermeneutical nature of the process through which the evidence is handled. Our analysis of biblical evidence is never a "neutral" process of discovery yielding the "objective" meaning that everyone will understand in the same way. On the contrary, the interpretive process is always conditioned by hermeneutical presuppositions that may be

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compassion, dialogue and healing grace, Gethsemane, the cross, the resurrection, the church, Rom 9-11, eschatology and providence, predictions and foreknowledge.

[29] Boyd, 24-87, shows that the classical view which revolves around the notion of exhaustive divine foreknowledge has no real biblical foundation. To that end he deal with texts on divine Sovereignty of history, foreknowledge of chosen people, of individuals, of Christ's ministry, of elects, of end times, in Isaiah 46, and 48, of Israel future, in individual prophecies, of Peter's denial, of Judas' betrayal, implied in the divine setting apart from the womb, in our days being recorded in God's book, in prophecies of kingdoms, in divine ordaining of national boundaries, in the predestination of the Messiah and the church. In favor of an open future (against foreknowledge) Boyd deals with texts on divine regret of previous decisions, on God asking questions about the future, on God confronting the unexpected, on God getting frustrated, on God testing people to know their character, on God speaking in terms of what may or may not be, on believers hastening the Lord's return, on the potter and the clay, and on reversed divine intentions.

[30] Geisler deals with texts on divine aseity, eternality (timelessness), simplicity, immutability, on divine changeability, on petitionary prayer, on divine repentance, the allegation that divine repentance implies God ignorance of the future, and the question of anthropomorphisms (*Creating God in the Image of Man?*, 75-91).

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., 75.

[33] Ibid., 90. See also Geisler's argument, 75-91, against the proper biblical foundation of open theism.

defined in various ways. Thus, the micro and meso hermeneutical levels where the controversy between classical and open theisms takes place is conditioned by the deeper and foundational macro hermeneutical level.

5. Macro Hermeneutics: Causes of Theological Disagreement

Theological controversy takes place when various parties understand the same issues in different, even mutually exclusive, ways. This seems to be the case in the classical theism-open view of God controversy we are analyzing. We should ask, where do diversity of interpretations come from? Are they always the result of faulty evidence or reasoning? Or do they follow from the normal exercise of our rational faculties?

Obviously many, but not all, disagreements result from faulty evidence and/or reasoning. When this is the case, overcoming disagreement requires a careful review of all the relevant evidence and the rational processes through which we arrived at our conclusions. However, more serious disagreement takes place when the controversy is grounded in different perspectives (foreconceptions or presuppositions) that involved parties bring to the table.

Human understanding operates by projecting pre-understandings on its objects. As different persons attempt to understand the *same issue* (in our case, the nature and relation of God to the world), they project different perspectives on the *same evidence*. From this unavoidable rational procedure a variety of interpretations come forth. Yet variety of interpretations reached from a variety of perspectives do not necessarily lead to controversy or debate. A variety of interpretations may be complementary or contradictory. Serious theological controversy takes place when the parties realize that their views are not complementary but contradictory. Perceived nonreconcilable interpretations often originate from mutually exclusive pre-understandings.

Controversy is not necessarily a bad thing. Controversy can lead the entire community of faith to improve its understanding of the controverted issues. One way to deal constructively with controversial issues is to overcome them hermeneutically. This requires an open conversation in which both parties take a closer look at their own pre-understandings in hope of eventually overcoming the controversy. However, in changing some pre-understanding the parties could develop their thinking on the issues, mostly by uncovering, evaluating, and explicitly deciding on the various levels of pre-understanding operative in the debate. As the parties move their attention away from the results to the causes of their controverted theological positions, they might find a way of modifying their views and coming to an agreement. Unfortunately, the same process may draw them further apart. All depends on whether the parties evaluate and formulate their pre-understandings from the same or different sets of evidence.

6. Macro Hermeneutics: The Philosophical Ground of the Controversy

The source of the controversy between the open and classical views centers on the understanding at the macro hermeneutical level. Traditionally, Christian theology in general and evangelical theology in particular have defined the macro hermeneutical principles of interpretation from philosophical interpretations of being. Philosophical interpretations about ontology and epistemology have directly conditioned the way in which evangelical theologians have understood God.

Of course we want to believe our views are at the same time objective and biblical. Yet this is a point in which both parties agree: Traditionally, evangelical understandings of biblical evidence (micro hermeneutics) and theological issues (meso hermeneutics) have been directly conditioned by philosophy.

Geisler probably represents most theologians on both sides of the debate when he unambiguously states, "There is nothing wrong as such with having a philosophical influence on biblical and theological studies. Again, philosophy is necessary to do both exegesis and systematic theology. One need only be sure that he is utilizing good philosophy. Whether it is 'platonic' or 'process' is not the question, but rather whether it is *true*."[34] Theologians, however, disagree regarding what philosophy is "true" and what should inform the macro hermeneutical principles of Christian theology.

Geisler maintains that classical theism and evangelical theology build their view of God on the basis of Plato's and Aristotle's ontological views rather than Whitehead and Hartshorne.[35] According to him evangelical theologians should not only recognize this dependence but embrace and defend it as a foundational component of the evangelical system of theological truth.

Open theologians recognize Geisler's point: Classical theism builds on Greek philosophical insights. However, they do not see this as the correct basis on which to build, but as "a certain theological virus that infected the Christian doctrine of God."[36] They have also recognized that assumed ontological and epistemological ideas (macro hermeneutics) determine the classical interpreta-

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[34] Ibid., 96-97.

[35] Geisler is among the "silent minority" among evangelical authors that recognize the formative influence of classical philosophy in evangelical theology. With the disclaimer that he does not agree with everything that Aquinas ever wrote, Geisler tells us that he agrees, among others, with Aquinas' views on the nature and interpretation of Scripture, apologetics, ontology, epistemology, doctrine of analogy, reason and revelation, faith and reason, and human freedom and divine sovereignty (*Thomas Aquinas: An Evangelical Appraisal* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991], 21-22). Regarding God's being, he affirms: "Aquinas can provide a philosophical answer to the growing influence of the finite god of process theology. There is no better philosophical system capable of answering the threat raised by process theology and defending the traditional theistic and biblical view of God as an eternal, unchanging, and absolutely perfect Being" (ibid., 21). Obviously, Aquinas built his views on Aristotelian and Platonic philosophical ideas.

[36] Pinnock, et al, 9.

tion of controversial biblical texts (micro hermeneutics), particularly in relation to the question of analogy and biblical anthropomorphisms. Unfortunately, they seem to believe that the biblical view of God is free from ontological preconceptions.[37]

Open theism, consequently, claims to reject not only classical, but also process philosophical approaches on the ground that they do not match Scripture's views on God. Clark Pinnock boldly claims that "classical theists and process theologians, both sometimes speak as though they have the only two models of God. . . . We claim, however, that the open view is a superior paradigm in the light of the relevant biblical, theological, philosophical, and practical material."[38] This opens up the notion and function of theological paradigms.

7. A Paradigm Change?

Thomas Kuhn has described and analyzed the notion and function of paradigms in the area of contemporary science.[39] German theologian Hans Küng has argued correctly that paradigms also play a significant and analogous role in the area of theological research. According to Kuhn, a paradigm is the "entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community."[40] Paradigms help us understand new phenomena and solve new problems.[41] "As in natural science," explains Küng, "there is a 'normal science,' with its classical authors, text books, and teachers, that is characterized by a cumulative growth of knowledge, a solving of remaining problems ('puzzles'), and resistance to everything that might lead to the alteration or replacement of the established model of understanding or paradigm."[42] Yet when the operative paradigm in normal science cannot deal with significant phenomena and puzzles, the need for a paradigm change becomes apparent.[43] A paradigm shift takes place when a new one is produced and accepted by the community.[44]

In our case classical theism plays the role of "normal science," which tries to solve remaining problems from its assumed paradigm and resists its alteration or replacement. Open view theists play the role of challengers uncovering facts and puzzles the reigning paradigm leaves unresolved. Simultaneously, Geisler as

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[37] Commenting on the interpretation of biblical texts, Boyd, 119-120, remarks that passages speaking about God changing his mind "strike some [classical theists] as ridiculous because these readers bring to the text a preconception of what God must be like. Once one is free from this preconception, these passages contribute to the exalted portrait of the longingly sovereign God in the Bible."

[38] Ibid.

[39] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2d. ed. (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1970).

[40] Ibid., 175.

[41] Ibid., 23.

[42] Küng, 138.

[43] Kuhn, 66-91.

[44] Küng, 147.

defender of "normal science" (classical theism) tries to show there is no need for a paradigm shift because the classical paradigm is able to include all the facts and solve all the puzzles.[45]

The burden of proof obviously fall on those who dare to challenge the reigning paradigm. Sanders and Boyd are conspicuously aware of the tall order before them. They read the Bible in an apologetic mode in order to show that the classical paradigm cannot possibly account for the biblical facts. They know that in so doing their views run against centuries of reading Scripture from the classical philosophical-theological perspective.

So far, however, open view theologians are far from having produced a new alternative paradigm. In spite of their claim to provide a "superior paradigm" for the doctrine of God, they still work by assuming, at least partially, the old paradigm.[46] This takes place, probably, because so far open theists have not seriously dealt with the philosophical ground of the classical paradigm and its macro hermeneutical role.[47]

8. Theology without Ontology?

The controversy between open view and classical theologians makes the question of philosophy [macro hermeneutics] and its role in the interpretation of biblical texts [micro hermeneutics] and doctrines [meso hermeneutics] unavoidable for evangelical theologians. A close look at the controversy reveals the subtle, but pervasive way in which nonbiblical hermeneutical principles have shaped evangelical exegesis and theology.

The vortex of the controversy, thus, revolves around the way in which the parties conceive the ground and role of philosophy in theology. So far, however, both sides have fought the battle mostly within the meso and micro hermeneutic level. Consequently, open view theologians have not yet grounded their challenge to the classical and process views of God at the foundational philosophical level. Thus, their claim to provide a "superior paradigm" remains incomplete and truncated.

It is true that by arguing from a "literal," "face value" reading of Scripture, open view theologians make ontological claims such as the temporality of God, the relatedness of God to human freedom within the flux of historical causality, the rejection of divine foreknowledge, and the grounding of divine omniscience on present knowledge. However, they fall short of explicitly replacing the on-

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[45] Geisler's role as defender of "normal science" comes across clearly when we notice that he is not just against the open view of God, but also against process theology, which also challenges the classical paradigm.

[46] When open theists deal with the biblical motive of partial predetermination of the future, they build, by default, on the classical view of God and, therefore, on its macro hermeneutical ontological principles.

[47] I have dealt partially with the relationship between philosophy and paradigm in "Paradigm, System and Theological Pluralism," *Evangelical Quarterly*, 70 (1998): 195-218.

tologies they dismiss. Thus, they attempt the impossible—namely, to work without ontological presuppositions.[48] A new paradigm requires a new ontology as its macro hermeneutical ground.

Open view theologians do not seem to realize yet that their claim on divine providence requires a consistent ontological doctrine. One gets the impression that they see their claim as required by "neutral-objective" exegesis of the biblical texts (micro hermeneutics) and believe the ensuing doctrinal modifications (meso hermeneutics) can be integrated back into classical ontological teaching (macro hermeneutics). Yet that is not philosophically possible. For instance, classical ontology does not make room for a divine being who is simultaneously temporal and timeless. Process philosophy, however, has developed a bipolar ontology according to which God is simultaneously timeless and temporal. In the absence of an ontology built from biblical thought, process ontology appears as a logical candidate to ground the open view of God.

The suspicion that open view theologians assume a modified version of process philosophical thought increases, for instance, when we see them consistently replacing divine foreknowledge with present knowledge. One has the impression that the whole case for the open view of God hinges around the affirmation or denial of exhaustive divine foreknowledge of human free actions.[49] In the mind of open view theologians the affirmation of divine foreknowledge automatically grounds the classical view of God and makes the open view of God impossible. Not surprisingly, then, the denial of divine foreknowledge becomes a necessary condition for the open view of God. The denial of divine foreknowledge, thus understood, finds its ontological pre-understanding in the temporality of God, as taught by process philosophy. When we understand the temporality of God's being from process philosophical teachings, it becomes clear that God cannot know the future simply because it does not yet exist. This ontological presupposition is so strong that it requires evangelical open view theologians to engage in exegetical gymnastics to explain away the biblical affirmation of divine foreknowledge of future free acts.[50]

Arguably, open view theologians implicitly assume a dipolar ontology. They do not say it in so many words, but their view of providence requires it. Gregory Boyd's rendering of the open view of God seems to require a bipolar divine ontology. In Scripture, he argues, we find two types of texts, one speaking about future determinism and the other speaking about future openness.[51]

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[48] Kuhn, 79, states: "To reject one paradigm without simultaneously substituting another is to reject science itself. That act reflects not on the paradigm but on the man. Inevitably he will be seen by his colleagues as 'as the carpenter who blames his tools.'"

[49] From now on I will use the word "foreknowledge" to mean "exhaustive foreknowledge of human free decisions."

[50] See, for instance Boyd, 47-48, who assures us that when Paul uses the word foreknowledge (*proegnō*) in Rom 8:29, he in reality means "forelove."

[51] Ibid., 14.

The two sets of texts, he argues, must be understood literally; in other words, as describing things as they really are (ontological import of Scripture).[52] One group of texts (pole) has God determining history in the same way the classical God does—namely, by his powerful will which from eternity settles history and gives direction to the divine plan. The other group (pole) has God relating with human beings in space and time and, therefore, is unsettled. The first pole, according to Boyd, requires the notions of limited predestination and foreknowledge, while the second pole accounts for relational biblical passages.[53] Boyd does not speak of or recognize an ontological bipolarity in God, yet, arguably, his view of God assumes or may lead to a bipolar ontology.

Geisler has clearly perceived this striking blind spot in theologians claiming to advance a "superior paradigm." In spite of their express rejection of process philosophy as their ontological basis, Geisler finds open view theologians implicitly assuming what they explicitly deny—that is, dependence on the process philosophy paradigm. He concludes his philosophical evaluation of open view theism by remarking that:

> There are serious logical flaws within neotheism. On the one hand, it affirms in common with classical theism certain attributes and activities of God (such as transcendence, uncausality, necessity, and creation *ex nihilo*). But each of these logically entails some attribute of God that neotheism rejects. In point of fact, they lead to classical theism. Which neotheism labors to avoid. On the other hand, neotheism denies certain attributes of God (such as nontemporality, unchangeability, and pure actuality). Significantly, the affirmation of temporality, changeability; and potentiality in God lead logically to a process, bipolar theism, which neotheists claim they wish to avoid. But logically they cannot have it both ways. Both classical theism and panentheism are self-contained models in which the basic attributes stand or fall together. Therefore, if one accepts some of them, the rest come with the package, whether they are wanted or not.[54]

Yet open theism explicitly denies building on process philosophy's ontology.[55] William Hasker explains that open view theologians cannot adopt process philosophy because it advances the notion that God and the world are interde-

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[52] Boyd's emphasis on the reality of things as described in Scripture betrays an ontological level that is not technically addressed by open view theologians.

[53] Boyd, 14-15, 31, characterizes his view of providence and foreknowledge as "limited." However, I find this characterization does not fit the general tenor of his argument.

[54] Geisler, *Creating God in the Image of Man*, 125-126. He states further: "One things seems certain. If the logical consequences of neo-theists' unorthodox beliefs about God are drawn out, they will be pushed more and more in the direction of process theology and the liberal beliefs entailed therein. Only time and logic will tell in which direction neotheism will go" (ibid., 12; see also pg. 72).

[55] William Hasker, "A Philosophical Perspective," in *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God*, ed. et al.Clark Pinnock (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994), 138-141.

pendent, thus limiting divine omnipotence and unilateral actions in history.[56] However, this argument only bans a wholesale adoption of process philosophical thought. It does not eliminate the fact that the general bipolar pattern of process ontology can still help to ground the open view of God, while the Greek ontology assumed in the classical view cannot.

Open view theologians seem to forget that theologians usually modify the philosophical thought on which they build. For instance, classical theologians adjusted the general ontological patterns suggested by Plato and Aristotle for their theological purposes. In other words, they took Greek ontology as their basis and adjusted it to fit Christian revelation. Describing how classical theism began, Jack Bonsor remarks that biblical and philosophical thought changed. "Neither lost its soul. Something new emerged."[57] Theologians engage, then, in creative philosophical reflection, which produces the macro hermeneutical principles they will explicitly or implicitly assume when interpreting Scripture and formulating the doctrines of the church.

David Basinger, one of the leading philosophers of the open view of God, recognizes three major theological paradigms on divine providence: classical, process, and the open view.[58] Thus the open view of God seemingly appears as a "free standing" proposal with no ontological assumptions.[59] At the foundational ontological level open view theologians are, so far, noncommittal. Do they mean to say that Scripture's view of God is "nonontological"? Moreover, is a theology without ontology possible? Obviously, open theism needs to deal seriously with the philosophical question of ontology, both divine and human.

But how do we decide among competing philosophical ontologies? More importantly, how can we gain knowledge about the being and acts of God? This brings us to the question of the sources from which evangelical theologians decide their understanding of God's being and actions.

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[56] Ibid., 138-141.

[57] Jack Bonsor, *Athens and Jerusalem: The Role of Philosophy in Theology* (New York: Paulist, 1993), 26.

[58] David Basinger, *The Case for Freewill Theism: A Philosophical Assessment* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996), 11-14.

[59] Open view theologians do engage with philosophy, but only at the level of analyzing the inner consistency and outer coherence of the classical and open view theologies. Thus long and complicated rational arguments are analyzed to decide which proposal is more "rational." Introducing his brief comments on the philosophical side of his proposal, Boyd, 120, remarks that "[i]f one wants to add philosophical proof on top of this [the open view of God], things get a bit more complicated (to no one's surprise). There are plenty of brilliant philosophers defending the view that God *can*, in principle, foreknow future free actions and plenty who argue that he cannot, since this constitutes a logical contradiction. I personally am convinced that the best arguments lie in the second camp, but I'm also aware that this isn't an open-and-shut case." Thus, in addressing the philosophical question, open view theologians do not make their ontological presuppositions explicit. Eventually, unless they make their ontological views explicit from Scripture, the inner logic of the open view will decide this issue by default.

9. The Sources of Macro Hermeneutics and Evangelical Futures

Is the open view of God fully scriptural? Do open view theologians ground their new paradigm squarely on the full extent of scriptural evidence? Or does the open view of God also involve a nonbiblical macro hermeneutics? The following tentative answer to these methodological questions are intended to foster reflection on the important theological issues within the evangelical community.

In my opinion the open view of God rises from the classical paradigm's failure to account for human freedom (understood in a libertarian sense), both in Scripture and experience. The rise of historical consciousness during the twentieth century has made compatibilistic solutions to the predestination-free will debate increasingly unsatisfactory. Simultaneously, Alfred Whitehead readjusted classical ontology to the new historical and scientific consciousness.[60] His proposal, known as process philosophy, presents a bipolar god who is both eternal and "open" to the temporal process of the world.[61] Not surprisingly, by the end of the twentieth century liberal theologians began to explore the hermeneutical possibilities of the new ontological framework. Of course, evangelical theologians could not justify a change in the classical view of God from the starting point of process philosophy because it includes several features incompatible with the biblical notion of God.[62]

Fully aware of these developments, some evangelical theologians noticed that the classical view of God did not satisfactorily square with biblical evidence about God's acts in history. They also noticed the existence of biblical support for the classical view. Claiming faithfulness to Scripture, open view theologians seem to work within the same methodological paradigm used by classical theology. Accordingly, philosophy can help evangelical theologians define the macro hermeneutical principles of interpretation. The key here, as Geisler says, is to find the "true" philosophy.

Classical and open view theologians use different biblical texts to justify different ontological teachings as "true" and, therefore, as useful for evangelical theology. Thus classical theism uses texts that seem to require a timeless ontology of God over texts that point to divine change. Conversely, open theism gives primacy to biblical texts that point to divine temporality, change, and relatedness over texts that point to divine foreknowledge.

As far as I have been able to ascertain, neither side in the controversy justifies its unilateral choice of biblical data. This unilateral choice becomes the pretext each side uses as a biblical mandate to develop its distinctive "view of God" and its implied ontological patterns. From these pre-understandings each

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[60] Alfred Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (New York: Macmillan, 1929).

[61] For a brief introduction to the notion of a bipolar god see Geisler's *Creating God in the Image of Man?* 49-51.

[62] For a detailed comparison between the views of God according to theism, the open view of God, and process philosophy see ibid., 76-77.

party interprets the set of biblical data on which the opposite view builds its case.

In the case of open view theologians, their implicit temporal ontology (macro hermeneutics) affirms that God cannot know future things because they are not yet in existence. Moreover, God cannot know humans' future, free-will decisions because they are by definition unpredictable.[63] This ontological conviction requires a reinterpretation of the traditional understanding of divine foreknowledge (meso hermeneuitcs) and biblical evidence affirming the existence of divine foreknowledge (micro hermeneutics).[64] In addition, they reinterpret the meaning and function of biblical prophecy[65] and even feel the need to rewrite at least one key biblical passage.[66] These reinterpretations may very well be only the beginning of what most probably will entail a wholesale reinterpretation of biblical Christianity.

From what we have said so far, it becomes apparent that both classical and open view theologians use biblical evidence selectively. As classical theism interprets freedom in a way that does not fit the face-value meaning of relevant texts, so does open theism's interpretation of divine foreknowledge. Clearly neither classical nor open theisms build their views of God on an ontological basis equally responsive to the full extent of biblical evidence. Moreover, the principles guiding the selection and interpretation of biblical evidence are, in both cases, derived from ontological philosophies.

Can evangelical theology overcome the disagreement between the classical and open view paradigms? To devise another paradigm will only increase our theological fragmentation. Yet there may be another way. Perhaps evangelical thinkers may want to consider the possibility of doing theology within a new methodological matrix. Briefly put, instead of following the traditionally unchallenged methodological paradigm according to which theologians define their macro hermeneutical principles from philosophical and scientific teachings, we may try something different: Why not define our macro hermeneutics from Scripture? Instead of choosing our macro hermeneutical preunderstandings from the ontological teachings of some school of philosophy, why don't we attempt to build them from the ontological teachings explicitly or implicitly present in the full range of biblical evidence?

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[63] Richard Rice, "Divine Foreknowledge and Free-will Theism," in *The Grace of God and the Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism*, ed. Clark Pinnock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 129.

[64] For a synthesis of the open-view reinterpretation of divine foreknowledge see ibid., 134.

[65] For a summary of the reinterpretation of the notion of biblical prophecy advanced by open view theologians, see ibid., 134-136.

[66] I am referring to Boyd's suggestion, 47-48, that in Rom 8:29 Paul did not mean foreknowledge, but forelove.

10. Conclusion

The controversy between classical and open theisms does not revolve around minor exegetical or doctrinal issues, but relates to the hermeneutical core from which evangelical theologians understand Scripture, the Gospel, and the entire sweep of Christian theology and practice.

The clash between the classical and open views of God are not caused by the introduction of new evidence from Scripture, but rather from the introduction of new macro hermeneutical principles of interpretation. On one side, classical theism builds its view of God on the basis of classical Greek ontological understanding. On the other side, open theism explicitly rejects classical Greek ontological patterns and implicitly, perhaps by default, builds its alternate view of God from modern process ontological patterns.

Perhaps classical and open view theologians may continue to build and clarify their theological proposals without scrutinizing their assumed macro hermeneutical presuppositions. On this basis, further discussion of biblical data will never lead to theological agreement because both sides will continue to interpret the same data and theological issues from different macro hermeneutical perspectives.

Our analysis reveals that the ongoing debate between classical and open theisms has at least two important consequences for the future of evangelical theology. First, the debate helps us realize that evangelical theology builds its interpretation of Scripture and doctrines on the basis of Greek ontological patterns. For evangelical thinkers doing theology from a high view of Scripture this may be a very upsetting realization. After all, we implicitly assume our theology stands on a "neutral" or "objective" understanding of Scripture (micro hermeneutics). At least I remember how upset I was when I discovered this fact in my own theological understanding. We may try to deny this fact. But denial will not exorcize its presence nor its leading influence in the formulation of evangelical theology.[67]

Open theology also works within the same methodological paradigm. However, open view theologians explicitly deny any indebtedness to process philosophical patterns. Will they back up their alleged independence from Greek and process philosophies with an independent overall biblical ontology? Only time will tell. In the long run, however, the most significative contribution of open view theologians may reside not so much in their alternate interpretation of divine foreknowledge and sovereignty, but in their attempt to develop evangelical theology in faithfulness to biblical thought.

This brings us to the second consequence that this debate may have on the future of evangelical theology. As open theologians argue their views of God and the future from Scripture, they have implicitly uncovered the ontological

[67] This point is forcefully argued by Norman Geisler (*Thomas Aquinas: An Evangelical Appraisal* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991]).

import of biblical thinking. If biblical thought can be taken seriously to define some points regarding God's being, why couldn't we build our entire ontological thinking from Scripture? As both parties in this debate continue to strengthen their cases by going back to the Old and New Testaments, the long forgotten philosophical import of Scripture may become increasingly clearer to us.

Some among us argue that if evangelical theology is to survive and become relevant in our postmodern, post-denominational, post-theological, and post-Christian times, we should accommodate the macro hermeneutical principles of theology to tradition and to contemporary trends in philosophy, science, and culture.[68] However, why should we continue to define our macro hermeneutical principles from forever—evolving extrabiblical, philosophical, scientific, and cultural patterns of thought? Why should we insist on building on the same methodological paradigm that is a root cause of our present theological crisis? Could there not be a better way?

By arguing for the relatedness of God in human history, open view theologians have uncovered the ontological import of biblical thinking, thereby stumbling upon an idea that suggests the possibility of a better path. Macro hermeneutical principles for biblical theological interpretation may be defined also from biblical thinking. Though so far open view theologians seem unaware of the hermeneutical revolution adumbrated in their argumentation, we may want to give biblical thought a chance to shape the macro hermeneutical principles of evangelical theology. This paradigmatical move will not only help us overcome the classical-open view controversy on divine interaction with the world, but to rethink the entire scope of evangelical theology for the third millennium. Perhaps this is the time to think in the light of Scripture.

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[68] See, for instance, Stanley J. Grenz, *Renewing the Center: Evangelical Theology in a Post-Theological Era* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000).

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Old Testament Principles Relating to Divorce and Remarriage

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Deviation From God's Creation Ideal

In the beginning, God created man and woman for each other. When God presented Eve to Adam, Adam said:

> "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh. (Gen 2:23-24; RSV)

Thus, in a perfect world, a perfect and immortal couple were joined by God in an indissoluble social and spiritual union represented by the metaphor "one flesh." God's plan was eternal heterosexual monogamy between human beings. Note the aspects of this plan: (1) permanent, (2) heterosexual, (3) monogamous, and (4) between human beings. No law is stated to outline God's plan. He simply created it so, knowing it was good.

That the expression "one flesh" is a metaphor for a social ideal rather than a literal description of a physical reality became painfully obvious once sin and death entered into the world. Once this happened, the "permanent" aspect of God's plan was affected by mortality and sin. Due to mortality, one individual, comprising 50% of the "one flesh" unit, can die before the other, leaving the bereaved partner with the desire or need to marry again. Thus, "permanent" could no longer mean "eternal," but had to be redefined as "until death." Furthermore, due to sin and its negative effect on human relationships, one or both marriage partners may desire to escape from their permanent bond through divorce and may seek remarriage to other partners. Sinful desires also threaten the other aspects of God's plan, i.e., "heterosexual," "monogamous," and "between

human beings." Thus, we have aberrations such as homosexuality, polygamy, adultery, rape, pre-marital sex, prostitution, and sex with animals.

In light of Old Testament evidence, the above-mentioned deviations from God's ideal established at Creation are not equally offensive in God's sight. We can distribute them among the four aspects of God's plan which are violated:

1. "Permanent." Since remarriage after the death of one's spouse does not violate permanent heterosexual monogamy between human beings, given that permanent is defined as "until death," such remarriage does not receive a negative assessment at all. Divorce and remarriage, however, do violate permanence until death. Therefore, these practices are viewed negatively by God, but are tolerated under certain circumstances and regulated, primarily for the benefit of women involved, in order to mitigate their most evil effects (Deut 24:1-4, etc.; see below).

Heterosexual practices which not only violate permanence but also occur outside the marriage relation—e.g., adultery, pre-marital sex, rape, prostitution—receive negative assessments and penalties to varying degrees, depending upon factors such as whether or not existing marriage relations (including betrothal) are violated, whether or not consent is violated, etc.[1]

2. "Heterosexual." Homosexuality is categorically condemned as an abomination and carries the death penalty (Lev 18:22; 20:13).

3. "Monogamous." Polygamy violates monogamy by multiplying marriage partners of one sex or the other. In ancient Near Eastern culture, it was the female side which was multiplied. While polygamy violates monogamy, it does not violate the principle of permanence. Polygamy is tolerated in the Old Testament, but regulated, mainly for the benefit of women involved, in order to mitigate its worst effects (see, e.g., Exod 21:10-11; Lev 18:18; Deut 21:15-17).

4. "Between Human Beings." Sexual acts between human beings and animals are categorically condemned as abominations and carry the death penalty (Lev 18:23; 20:15-16).

The pattern which emerges from the Old Testament data can be summarized as follows:

1. Where heterosexual relations between human beings are concerned, violation of permanence or monogamy is tolerated without penalty, although restricted, but practices which not only violate permanence but also occur outside the marriage relation incur penalties.

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[1]Adultery violates an existing marriage and carries the death penalty (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22). If pre-marital sex involves a betrothed woman, it is regarded as adultery, punishable by death (Deut 22:23-24), but if the woman is unbetrothed and seduced, the penalty is forced marriage (including payment of the bride price) at the discretion of the woman's father (Exod 22:15-16). Penalties for rape depend upon the status of the victim: death if she is betrothed (Deut 22:25-27); fifty shekels and forced marriage with no right of divorce if she is unbetrothed (Deut 22:28-29). Concealed immorality by a woman living in her father's house, evidence of which is her lack of virginity discovered at the time of her marriage, is punishable by death (Deut 22:20-21).

2. Sexual relations with partners other than human beings of the opposite sex are categorically condemned and incur the death penalty.

The above discussion does not cover all possibilities. For example, an incestuous marriage does not violate the four aspects of God's ideal mentioned above, but it does violate a fifth aspect necessarily introduced in the course of human degeneration: marriage partners cannot be close relatives (Lev 18:6-18; 20:17-21), except in the case of levirate marriage (Deut 25:5-6; cp. Gen 38:8-10).

To conclude this introduction to Old Testament principles governing sexual unions, it is clear that in the Old Testament, God's attitude to divorce is fairly close to His attitude to polygamy: both are tolerated but restricted, the restrictions primarily benefiting the women involved. Neither is approved or recommended. That divorce and polygamy are treated similarly is no accident. Both can involve "taking two wives in their lifetime" (Fitzmyer 1976: 220, quoting the Damascus Document from Qumran, 4:20-21).

As Jesus pointed out (see Mk 10:2-12, esp. vss. 5-9), the most important Old Testament passage from which principles governing marriage are to be derived is Gen 2 (see above). Thus, even though we live in a world of sin and death, we should seek to fulfill God's ideal established at Creation rather than attempting to get away with as much as possible. Nevertheless, biblical law granted some concessions to human weakness and inadequacy. The concession with which this paper is concerned is the right of divorce and remarriage. Biblical law did not institute divorce and remarriage, but tolerated and restricted it (Driver 1902: 272). Although God allowed divorce under some circumstances, He hated unjustifiable divorce:

> And this again you do. You cover the Lord's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor at you hand. You ask, "Why does he not?" Because the Lord was witness to the covenant between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. Has not the one God made and sustained for us the spirit of life? And what does he desire? Godly offspring. So take heed to yourselves, and let none be faithless to the wife of his youth. "For I hate[2] divorce, says the Lord the God of Israel, and covering one's garment with violence, says the Lord of hosts. So take heed to yourselves and do not be faithless." (Mal 2:13-16; RSV)

Here, the two major problems with divorce are:

1. Divorce is the breaking of a covenant to which God is witness.

2. Divorce robs God of godly offspring. How? The text does not say, but perhaps it implies that broken homes are not conducive to spiritual life.

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[2]Ironically, the Hebrew verb is *śānē',* the same verb as in Deut 24:3—"and if the latter husband *hate* her, and write her a bill of divorce . . ."

Isa 54:6 mentions another problem with divorce: it causes grief and suffering to a forsaken wife.

The Right of Men to Divorce Their Wives, But Not to Take Them Back After They Remarry

Two Old Testament legal prescriptions indicate circumstances under which a husband may divorce his wife if he chooses. The first is Deuteronomy 21:10-14, which allows an Israelite man to divorce a foreign captive woman whom he has married if she does not please him. She is then free to go where she wishes, with the obvious implication that she may remarry. The law protects such women by prohibiting their sale or treatment as slaves. The second law is Deut 24:1-4, which is far more important to us because it is the only Old Testament legal prescription specifying grounds on which an Israelite man can divorce a woman of his own nationality and status: an Israelite free woman. This is why the Pharisees were interested in this passage and asked Jesus concerning it (see Matt 19:3ff; Mk 10:2ff).

I quote Deut 24:1-4 (RSV) here in analyzed form, showing the three main parts of the law (A., B., C.) and key words which establish the structure of the law (bold type), in addition to verse divisions (1, 2, 3, 4).

A. Protasis (describing conditions under which the law applies)
  (1) **When** a man takes a wife and marries her, **if** then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency[3] in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house,
  (2) **and if** she goes and becomes another man's wife,
  (3) and the latter husband dislikes her and writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, **or if** the latter husband dies, who took her to be his wife,
B. Apodosis (stating the legislation)
  (4) **then** her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled;
C. Motive (reason for the legislation)
  for that is an abomination before the Lord, and you shall not bring guilt upon the land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance.

Note the following points:

1. The scope of the law is limited to cases in which husbands choose to dissolve marriages. It does not cover cases in which women are free to leave their husbands for willful neglect or abuse (see on Exod 21, etc., below).

[3]For reasons to be explained below, I find this translation to be more accurate than, for example, NRSV—"something objectionable about her," and NJPS—"something obnoxious about her."

2. Deut 24:1-3 is descriptive, not prescriptive. Since the apodosis, containing the legislation itself, deals only with remarriage, the law directly regulates remarriage; it does not directly regulate divorce (Laney 1992: 9). It is implied that divorce according to an already existing procedure is the given condition under which the remarriage legislation applies (Craigie 1976: 304-305).[4]

3. Deut 24:1-3 outlines the divorce procedure in some detail. The text does not simply say: "When a man divorces (Heb. *šillaḥ*, lit. "sends away") his wife . . ."[5] Furthermore, the need to mention "indecency" suggests that ancient men could find other reasons for wanting to divorce their wives.

4. Although in a narrow sense the ground for divorce is "indecency," the full ground for divorce is that a husband is no longer able to love/like his wife because she has committed indecency. The words "she finds no favor in his eyes" are not superfluous. If a woman commits indecency, her husband can forgive her and continue to love her and retain her as his wife. He does not have to submit to pressure to get rid of her, whether such pressure should come from his relatives or anyone else. If, on the other hand, he can no longer love her on the basis of a certain kind of sufficiently significant negative reality, he has the option of divorcing her.

5. The words "she finds no favor in his eyes *because* he has found some indecency in her" mean that the "indecency" must be the real reason for the breakdown of the relationship, not simply an excuse for divorce on other grounds.

6. The primary purpose of the law is clear in Deut 24:4: to avoid bringing guilt upon the land through the abomination of remarrying a former wife after an intervening marriage (see Isaksson 1965: 25). A secondary purpose may have been to discourage excessively hasty divorce.[6] According to Driver, the follow-

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[4]The expulsion of Hagar (Gen 21:9-14) is a different kind of case. Hagar was only a slave functioning as a surrogate mother, and her expulsion was endorsed by God.

[5]This Hebrew verb "is the usual Heb. word for divorce; cf. v. ^{4} $22^{19.29}$ Is. 50^{1} Mal. $2^{16.}$ A divorced woman is gᵉrûšāh, lit. *one driven out, expelled* (Lev. 21^{14} 22^{13} Nu. 30^{10} Ez. 44^{22}); but the verb *grš* is not found in this sense (Gn. 21^{10} being scarcely an instance)." (Driver 1902: 271).

[6]There have been a number of other proposals concerning the purpose of the law. For example:

(a) To protect the second marriage. This idea, suggested by Yaron (Yaron 1966: 8-9), is attractive, but it "fails to explain why the rule would apply after the death of the second husband when the second marriage would no longer be in jeopardy" (Laney 1992: 10).

(b) To prevent a type of incest. Wenham argues that the marriage relation establishes a permanent family bond (Gen 2:24) not ending with divorce. Therefore, just as a man is forbidden to marry his sister-in-law because she has, in effect, become his sister (Lev 18:16; 20:21), he is forbidden to remarry his former wife after an intervening marriage (Wenham 1979: 36-40). Laney responds, "The major difficulty with this view is that it seems to reach beyond what is clear to the reader. One wonders how many Israelites would have seen the connection between the "one flesh" of the marriage union and the incest laws of Leviticus 18:6-18. Wenham uses the phrase, "type of incest." Is remarriage to one's spouse after an intervening marriage actually incest or not?" (Laney 1992: 11). In my view, the answer to Laney's question is: "no." If it were incest, why is it not mentioned in Lev 18? Furthermore, if incest were the issue, we would expect that remarriage to an ex-spouse would be prohibited even if there were no intervening marriage.

ing elements in the law protect women against rash or arbitrary divorces (Driver 1902: 272): (a) A definite ground for divorce must be stated; (b) A proper legal instrument must be prepared and delivered into the hand of the wife in question; (c) A divorced wife is free to remarry, but if she does, she cannot be taken back later by her former husband. While these factors are significant, it must be pointed out that such measures would have had only limited effectiveness where a determined husband was concerned (Yaron 1966: 5).

The discussion below will consider the following questions arising from Deut 24:1-4: (1) What, according to this law, constitutes the legitimate ground for divorce? (2) What are the implications of the divorce procedure? (3) What are the implications of the prohibition of remarriage to an earlier wife after she has been married to another man?

The Legitimate Ground for Divorce

The cause for divorce is stated in vs. 1—"she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her." The reason for a second husband

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(c) To protect a stigmatized woman from further abuse by her offending first husband (Luck 1987: 64). Luck suggests that Deut 24:1-4 "does not intend to present us with a 'right' of the husband to divorce his wife but, rather, with a discussion of how God intends to care for the wife in the face of a man who wills to wrongly divorce her" (*ibid.:* 61) for something about her which he finds embarrassing (see *ibid.:* 60). Against Luck's view is the fact that the language of Deut 24:1 refers to the wife as having committed an offense; she has not simply embarrassed him by something which has happened to her through no fault of her own. Furthermore, Luck's assessment of the husband's character has no basis in the text (Laney 1992: 12).

(d) To deter greedy profit by the first husband. Westbrook suggests that Deut 24:1-4 seeks to prevent unjust enrichment of a woman's first husband by his remarrying her after an intervening marriage, thereby gaining access to wealth which the woman had acquired by inheritance upon the death of her second husband, or by a divorce settlement when her second husband divorced her without sufficient cause, i.e., without her committing a socially recognized misdemeanor (Westbrook 1986: 393ff). Westbrook's suggestion that two kinds of divorce function in Deut 24:1-4—(a) innocent wife and so indemnified, and (b) guilty wife and so not indemnified—is based upon comparison with Hammurapi Laws 141-142 and Mishnah Ketuvot 7:6 (cp. 7:4-5, etc.), where these distinctions operate (see Westbrook 1986: 396-398).

Laney points out several problems with Westbrook's view: ". . . the view is based on considerable speculation, it does not deal adequately with the key terms 'abomination' and 'sin on the land.' And the view implies that the first divorce and remarriage is presented with approval. This is contrary to a proper understanding of the clause, 'since she has been defiled' (24:4)" (Laney 1992: 13).

Westbrook's interpretation is based on the assumptions that in Deut 24:3 the divorce by the second husband is (a) without the cause of "indecency" mentioned in vs. 1, and (b) a husband divorcing his wife but lacking an allegation of "indecency" was obligated to provide her with a financial settlement, i.e., at least restoration of her dowry. To be more precise, it should be pointed out that the first of these two assumptions is really denial of an assumption that Deut 24:3 should be interpreted in the light of vs. 1, which includes the fact that a valid divorce of a woman by a man is based on "indecency" committed by the woman. Since vs. 3 does not explicitly mention a cause, Westbrook could be right in his assertion that the woman's second divorce is without cause. However, there is no indication of indemnification in the text of Deut 24:1-4 (see further below).

divorcing the same woman is given in vs. 3—"and the latter husband dislikes her" (literally "hates her," i.e., no longer loves her). Both husbands divorce the woman because they cease to like her and come to dislike her. While vs. 3 does not explicitly mention "indecency" as the cause of the second husband's dislike, this should probably be assumed on the basis of the fact that verse 3 is most naturally interpreted in the light of vs. 1 (Driver 1902: 271). In other words, it appears that all marriages, not only first marriages, are protected from dissolution by husbands without cause.

The Hebrew expression in Deut 24:1 which is translated "indecency" is the combination *ʿervat dābār,* meaning literally: "the nakedness of a thing" (Driver 1902: 270). A detailed discussion of this expression is warranted by its importance here and by the fact that its meaning has been debated for millennia (see below). We will first consider the range of meaning of each component of the expression, *ʿervāh* and *dābār*, and then compare the use of the combination in Deut 23:14 (Heb. vs. 15) with its use in Deut 24:1.

The Hebrew word *ʿervāh* means "nakedness"/"bareness," most commonly with reference to parts of persons, especially genitals, which, according to the dictates of modesty, should be covered to conceal them from the view of other persons. It is shameful for these parts to be uncovered/exposed (*glh*) and therefore seen by persons who should not see them.[7] For example, priests are forbidden to ascend the Lord's altar by means of steps, "that your nakedness (*ʿervāh*) be not exposed on it" (Exod 20:26 [Heb. vs. 23]; cp. 28:42; see also Gen 9:22-23). To "uncover the nakedness" of another person can refer to sexual relations (Lev 20:18, 19). Thus, Lev 18 and 20 prohibit incest by forbidding a person to "uncover the nakedness/genitals" of various kinds of close relatives.

In figurative usage with reference to a person, *ʿervāh* can denote (1) the physical nakedness of a figurative person who personifies a nation, or (2) the physical nakedness of a literal person as a metaphor for the moral shamefulness of that person.

1. Punishment of a nation can be represented by referring to the forceful, shameful exposure to public view of the nakedness of a woman personifying that nation: Isa 20:4; 47:3; Ezek 16:37; 23:10, 29; cp. Hos 2:3).

2. 1 Sam 20:30, Saul insults his son Jonathan by referring to "the shame of your mother's nakedness." The woman is not literally naked, but the idea of her physical nakedness is a metaphor for her moral shamefulness. Saul regards Jonathan as committing treachery against him by befriending David, thereby bringing shame upon himself and his mother. It appears that Saul regards Jonathan's disloyal behavior as stemming from the character of his mother, and Saul regards them as shameful in the same way that they would be shameful if they were physically naked. Perhaps the shameful nakedness of Jonathan's mother is

[7]Cp. the cognate Akkadian noun *ūru*, which means "nakedness" or "shame" (von Soden 1981: 1435).

meant to imply that Jonathan is the son of an adulteress,[8] and therefore that he is not regarded as Saul's legitimate son and heir.

In Gen 24:9, 12, *ʿervāh* refers to the "bareness" of something other than a person's body:[9] here the bareness of Egypt in time of famine has to do with its vulnerability to attack by a foreign power and/or its lack of food.[10] BDB 789 indicates that *ʿervāh* here is a figurative usage, which is true if the basic meaning of *ʿervāh* is "nakedness of a person." We will see that *ʿervāh* in Deut 23:14 (Heb. 15) may also figuratively refer to the "bareness" of something other than a person's body.

The second component of the expression *ʿervat dābār* is the common word *dābār*, which can refer to (1) human speech or a unit thereof, e.g., "command," "message," "word," or (2) a "matter," "affair," or "thing" about which one may speak, e.g., "act"/"deed," "event," "case" for judicial investigation, "something"/"anything." (Brown, Driver & Briggs 1953: 182-4).

Now we are ready to consider the combination *ʿervat dābār*. Aside from Deut 24:1, the passage under investigation, it is used only once, in the preceding chapter of Deuteronomy:

> You shall have a place outside the camp and you shall go out to it; and you shall have a stick with your weapons; and when you sit down outside, you shall dig a hole with it, and turn back and cover up your excrement. Because the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp, to save you and to give up your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy, that He may not see anything indecent (*ʿervat dābār*) in/among you, and turn away from you." (Deut 23:12-14; RSV; Heb.—13-15)

Here, the "thing" (*dābār*) which is naked/bare, i.e., uncovered, is something other than a human body or part thereof; it is excrement which comes from a human body. The issue is one of indecent exposure of something coming from a person which causes offense when it is seen in the one responsible, i.e., when the offense of that person is detected (see below). Note the following points:

1. The offense is not simply that one causes something disgusting, but rather that one leaves something exposed which should not be exposed. Thus, *ʿervāh* here has the meaning which it carries elsewhere when it is used without *dābār*: "nakedness"/"bareness" (see above).

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[8]The impact is equivalent to that of analogous modern insults.

[9]Compare the verb *ʿārāh*, of the same root as *ʿervāh*, which can refer not only to laying bare human bodies (see, e.g., Isa 3:17; 22:6; Zp 2:14), but also to laying bare other objects, e.g., foundations by tearing down walls built on them (Heb 3:13; Ps 137:7; both Piel).

[10]Lack of food could be understood not only as "bareness," but also as "emptiness." Cp. Gen 24:20, where the verb *ʿārāh* refers to emptying a water jar. The Akkadian adj. *erû*, of the same Semitic root as Heb. *ʿārāh* and *ʿervāh*, can mean not only "naked," but also "empty" and "empty-handed/destitute" (Oppenheim, A. L. et al., eds. 1958: 320-321).

2. There is no question of ritual impurity here. Normal elimination (urination or evacuation of bowels) never causes ritual impurity under the levitical system.

Returning to Deut 24:1, where a husband can divorce his wife for *ʿervat dābār*, "nakedness of a thing," the question is: nakedness of what thing? What is exposed, and to whom? Comparison with Deut 23:14 (Heb. 15) suggests that the offense involves indecent exposure of something belonging to or coming from the woman, which causes offense to the husband when that indecent exposure is found by him to have taken place. Thus, the ground for divorce is not anything in general which may cause offense, nor is it some kind of ritual impurity contracted by the woman.[11] Furthermore, it is wrongdoing performed by her rather than a condition she has acquired through no fault of her own, such as a physical characteristic[12] which could lead to unfavorable comparisons with other women. That wrongdoing is involved is clear from the language of Deut 24:1: the husband finds (Heb. *māṣāʾ*) the offense in (b) his wife. This combination is the usual biblical Hebrew way to express the idea of detecting a sin or crime (cp. 2 Kgs 17:4; 1 Sam 29:3, 6, 8; Hos 12:9; 1 Sam 12:5; see Brown, Driver & Briggs 1953: 593).[13] Finding wrongdoing means discovering evidence that it occurred. Thus, in order to divorce his wife, a man need not personally witness her indiscretion, but he needs evidence that it has taken place.

Based upon the above discussion of *ʿervat dābār* and its components, several kinds of indecent exposure come to mind as possible grounds for divorce:

1. We have seen that in Deut 23, unburied excrement is *ʿervat dābār*, the same expression used in 24:1. So could a wife be divorced for the ancient equivalent of failing to flush the toilet? The context in Deut 23 is a war camp where there would be no women. However, the fact that sanitation is required even for the unsettled conditions of military life implies *a fortiori* (all the more so) that it is required for settlements where there would be women. Here, legislation of the extreme case economically covers all other cases (see further be-

[11] If a man could divorce his wife every time she became ritually impure, he would have grounds at least once a month until her menopause (see Lev 15:19ff)!

[12] Against Craigie (1976: 305), who comments on *ʿervat dābār*: "In this context, the words may indicate some physical deficiency in the woman, though this meaning is uncertain. A physical deficiency such as the inability to bear children may be implied." Laney also suggests that *ʿervat dābār* may refer to a physical deficiency such as the inability to bear children. As support for this idea, he cites a possible parallel between Deut 24:1-4 and an old Assyrian marriage contract (Laney 1992: 5), but the contract only stipulates that if within two years the wife does not provide the husband with offspring, the wife will purchase a slave woman for this purpose and the slave woman can be sold later after a child is produced. The contract mentions divorce, stating that if either the wife or the husband initiates divorce, the initiating party must pay the other five minas of silver. However, there is no mention that inability to bear a child constitutes ground for divorce (for the text, see Pritchard, ed. 1969: 543). Neither is there any mention of inability to bear a child in Deut 24:1-4.

[13] Thus, the ancient Aramaic translation ("targum") of Onkelos translates the Hebrew *ʿervat dābār* in Deut 24:1 by the Aramaic words *ʿabêrat pitgam*, "transgression of a decree."

low). Nevertheless, while the appearance of *ʿervat dābār* in Deut 24:1, in close proximity to the use of the same term in 23:14 (Heb. 15), allows for the possibility that a woman could be divorced for failing to cover her excrement, there are factors which diminish the likelihood that this scenario is the main concern in 24:1:

a. It is unthinkable that a woman would reach marriageable age without training in this aspect of her culture and without awareness of the consequences of failure if those consequences included the possibility of divorce. Furthermore, there would be no motivation to get away with leaving one's excrement uncovered.

b. In Deut 23, it is God who is potentially offended to the point of altering His relationship with the offender, but in ch. 24, it is a man who is offended. It cannot necessarily be assumed that God and man would be offended to the same degree by a given offense.

c. In Deut 23:12-14 (Heb. 13-15), excrement is explicitly mentioned as the "thing" which is exposed, but 24:1 mentions only a woman. Thus, in keeping with the semantic range of *ʿervāh*, it is most natural to think of that which is indecently exposed as the woman herself, i.e., her body.

2. As just stated, the most natural interpretation of *ʿervat dābār* in Deut 24:1 is the indecent exposure of the wife. Since indecent exposure can occur in the context of sexual relations (see above), it is logical to assume that the range of offenses involving *ʿervat dābār* could include adultery. However, adultery was not simply a ground for divorce: "If a man is found lying with the wife of another man, both of them shall die . . ." (Deut 22:22). So in Deut 24:1, something less than adultery must be indicated. Nevertheless, the fact that *ʿervat dābār* could cover adultery was important for the later history of the application of the law.[14] Under Roman rule, for example, the death penalty for adultery fell into disuse.[15] Under these conditions, adultery could become a ground for divorce. This was recognized in Matt 5:32 and 19:9 by the wording of the exception clauses to Jesus' statements on divorce, which allow divorce for *porneia*." The Greek word *porneia*, which can be rendered "unchastity," "fornication," or "prostitution," covers unlawful sexual intercourse in general, including adultery (Arndt & Gingrich 1952: 699-700; cp. Hauck & Schulz: 1968 592).

3. Since premarital sex involves indecent exposure, it too could be called *ʿervat dābār*. However, Deut 22:13-21 covers the case of a bride who is found by her husband to have previously lost her virginity: she is executed if proven

[14]The same is true of homosexuality on the part of one's spouse, which would come under the semantic range of *ʿervat dābār*, but which was punished by death under Mosaic law (Lev 20:13).

[15]See John 8:3-11, telling how the scribes and Pharisees brought to Jesus a woman caught in adultery, referred to the law of Moses, and asked Jesus' opinion. Under the theocracy, there would have been no question in such a case. The trap laid for Jesus in this instance is based upon the discrepancy between the Mosaic penalty and the penalty allowed under Roman rule.

guilty.[16] Furthermore, the language of Deut 24:1—"When a man takes a wife and marries (lit. "is lord/husband over") her . . ."— indicates that the man has already accepted his bride, consummated the marriage, and commenced to live with her as her husband. So lack of virginity in a bride is ruled out in this context.

4. Although the term *ʿervat dābār* itself could refer to indecent exposure in general, whether or not sexual relations are involved, Deut 24:1 has in mind indecent exposure without sexual relations.[17] The idea that something less than sexual relations is in view here is reinforced by the fact that the verse uses the unusual expression *ʿervat dābār* rather than a term which would denote sexual intercourse, such as *šākab ʿim*, "lie with," *gillāh ʿervāh*, "uncover nakedness," or *nāʾap*, "commit adultery." "Indecent exposure" could be understood literally to mean that a wife improperly uncovers herself without physical contact of her sexual body parts with those of another person. Such "immodesty" could include a whole range of actions (or neglect of proper actions), e.g., not covering her arms or head in public[18] or bathing in the presence of one or more adult males other than her husband.[19] Additionally, "indecent exposure" could be understood figuratively (as pointed out to me by Prof. Raymond Westbrook of Johns Hopkins University) to mean "improper conduct with a man other than her husband," e.g., kissing him, allowing him to fondle her, acting in a lewd or sexually suggestive manner, or otherwise flirting, thereby tempting him to covet her (in violation of the tenth of the Ten Commandments—Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21; cp. Matt 5:28). The assumption of this kind of dynamic was the thrust of Michal's accusation of David: "How the king of Israel honored himself today,

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[16]Note that it is the bridegroom who presses charges. Cp. Matt 1:18-19, where Joseph chooses a quiet annulment of his betrothal to Mary, whose pregnancy he had not caused, over a public trial. It is doubtful that Mary would have been in serious danger of execution at this late date, but her humiliation would have been great.

[17]Driver concludes: "It is most natural to understand it of *immodest* or *indecent behaviour."* (Driver 1902: 271).

[18]Middle Assyrian Laws ¶40 reads as follows:

> Neither wives of seigniors nor [widows] nor [Assyrian women], who go out on the street [may have] their heads [uncovered]. The daughters of a seignior . . . whether it is a shawl or a robe or [a *mantle*], must veil themselves; [they must not have] their heads [uncovered]. Whether . . . or . . . or . . . they must [not veil themselves, but] when they go out on the street alone, they must veil themselves. A concubine who goes out on the street with her mistress must veil herself. A sacred prostitute whom a man married must veil herself on the street, but one whom a man did not marry must have her head uncovered on the street; she must not veil herself. A harlot must not veil herself . . . (Pritchard, ed. 1969: 183)

[19]See Babylonian Talmud Gittin 90a-b, referring to a wife who would "go out with her hair unfastened and spin cloth in the street with her armpits uncovered and bathe with the men" (Epstein, ed. 1977: 90a-b).

uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants' maids . . ." (2 Sam 6:20).[20]

Note three points:

a. Lack of sufficient covering can be affected by factors apart from the percentage of body surface which is covered when a person is standing still, e.g., direction from which a person is viewed,[21] activity which causes clothing to move,[22] thickness or sheerness of clothing, etc.

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[20]2 Sam 6 is instructive regarding the nature and significance of an allegation of indecent exposure and its impact on a marriage. Here, a woman accuses a man of indecent exposure: "As the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart" (2 Sam 6:16). Later, "David returned to bless his household. But Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, "How the king of Israel honored himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants' maids, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!" David did not take kindly to this accusation:

> And David said to Michal, "It was before the Lord, who chose me above your father, and above all his house, to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the Lord—and I will make merry before the Lord. I will make myself yet more contemptible than this, and I will be abased in your eyes; but by the maids of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honor." And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death. (2 Sam 6:20-23; RSV)

David was not naked in the sense that his genitals were exposed. Verse 14 says explicitly that he was wearing a linen ephod. Furthermore, given the importance of modesty in connection with the Lord's rituals (see Exod 20:26 [Heb. vs. 23]; cp. 28:42) and given the concern of David to avoid another outbreak of the Lord's wrath after the punishment of Uzzah for touching the ark (2 Sam 6:7), it is unthinkable that David actually exposed himself in a lewd manner. "David's intention was not to expose himself in an unseemly manner before all and sundry but to humiliate himself before Yahweh" (Anderson: 1989: 107). But having been raised as a princess, Michal had certain ideas about public royal behavior. What Michal objected to, apparently, was David's temporary abandonment of royal dignity (". . . it is equally possible that she was not more strict in her views but rather more proud"; *ibid.:* 107). She regarded his behavior as immodest for a king and phrased her rebuke in the language of indecent exposure: "uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants' maids, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!" (2 Sam 6:20). David disagreed with Michal, and she was childless. Why did she remain childless? Perhaps her barrenness is to be taken as a sign of divine displeasure (Ackroyd 1977: 71). It is also possible that her marital relationship with David ended at this point, but there is no clear indication of this (Anderson: 1989: 107). Of course, it should be asked why Michal had had no child before this. She had previously been married to David, and then to Paltiel. Perhaps she was simply infertile. But placement of the notice of Michal's barrenness where it is in the text seems to imply that her barrenness had something to do with her accusation of David. In any case, Saul's line did not continue through David and Michal is not heard from again. The bottom line is that an issue of indecent exposure, whether rightly or wrongly perceived, had a devastating impact upon an ancient Israelite marriage in spite of the fact that Michal could not divorce David.

[21]See Exod 20:26 [Heb. vs. 23], referring to priests on altar steps, viewed from below.

[22]See 2 Sam 6:16—Michal saw David "leaping and dancing before the Lord."

b. It is likely that some cases of indecent exposure would be regarded as basis for the assumption that illicit intercourse had been committed or was about to be committed.[23]

c. It almost goes without saying that "indecent exposure," both literal and figurative, is culturally defined. For example, what we would regard as a modest one-piece bathing suit would in many cultures, past and present, be regarded as woefully inadequate. On the other hand, many people who would, in accordance with their cultural norms, punish a woman for baring her arms and/or legs in public would not think twice about a woman exposing a breast to suckle a child. In any case, in keeping with the use of *ʿervat dābār* in Deut 23 and 24, the offense in question is repugnant to the husband to the extent that it can cause a break in the marriage relationship (cp. 2 Sam 6).

If *ʿervat dābār* in Deut 24:1 refers to something less than illicit sexual intercourse, and if Greek *porneia* refers to illicit sexual intercourse, we can understand how in Matt 5:31-32 Jesus raised the standard for marriage above that of Deut 24:1 by allowing divorce only for the most serious sexual offenses:

> It was also said, "Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce." But I say to you that every one who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity (*logou porneias*), makes her an adulteress; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. (RSV)

The Mosaic law referred to is Deut 24:1. As the ground for divorce, Greek *logou porneias*, "a matter of fornication," functions here in Matt 5:32 as the non-synonymous functional equivalent of *ʿervat dābār*.[24] I say "non-synonymous" because the meanings are different: while Greek *porneia*, "unchastity/fornication," i.e., illicit sexual intercourse, is broader than Greek *moicheia*, "adultery" (Hauck & Schulz 1968: 581), it is narrower than Hebrew *ʿervat dābār*, which can encompass not only illicit sexual intercourse, but lesser exposures as well.[25] Thus, Jesus says that whereas Moses allowed divorce for inde-

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[23]Cp. Num 5, where a woman's guilt or innocence in a case involving suspicion of adultery without sufficient evidence (which I term "*porneia* paranoia") is determined through a cultic ordeal. The ordeal works on the principle that something impure (e.g., a morally impure woman) cannot contact something holy (e.g., holy water, etc.; see vs. 17) with impunity (cp. Lev 7:21). The ordeal procedure was "to protect a suspected but unproved adulteress from the vengeance of an irate husband or community by mandating that God will decide her case" (Milgrom: 1990: 354).

[24]The Septuagint translation of *ʿervat dābār* is *aschēmon pragma*, which could be understood as "shameful deed" or "ugly thing" (see Liddell & Scott 1940: I, 267; II, 1457).

[25]A Hebrew equivalent of *porneia* is *zᵉnût* (Fitzmyer 1976: 220-221). Fitzmyer points out that in Jer 3:2, 9, the Septuagint uses *porneia* to translate *zᵉnût* (*ibid.:* 221), which Brown, Driver & Briggs (1953: 276) interpret as "fornication." The verb from the same root is *zānāh*, which in literal usage refers to being or acting like a harlot, i.e., committing sexual immorality (idid.: 275). The equivalence of *porneia* and *zᵉnût* is strengthened by the fact that *porneia* is also connected with prostitution. Not only can *porneia* refer to sexual relations with a prostitute; the Greek root of *porneia* originated in reference to prostitution (1 Cor 6:13ff; see Hauck & Schulz 1968: 580-581).

cent exposure without illicit sexual relations, He permits divorce only if illicit sexual relations take place.

It appears that Jesus was reacting to the position of the rabbinic school of thought referred to in the Mishnah as the "House of Shammai," but He was not simply endorsing that position. The House of Shammai interpreted *ʿervat dābār* in Deut 24:1 literally as *dᵉbar ʿervāh*, "a matter of nakedness," i.e., according to my view, "a matter of indecent exposure" (Mishnah Giṭṭin 9:10).[26] Strikingly, in Matt 5:32, Jesus' Greek phraseology follows the syntax of the House of Shammai formulation: *logou*[27] *porneias*,[28] "a matter of fornication." The differ-

[26]Bacchiocchi, Laney, and others interpret Shammai as referring to marital unchastity (Bacchiocchi 1991: 173; Laney 1992: 6), but the Hebrew of Mishnah Giṭṭin 9:10 simply uses the two words which appear in Deut 24:1, although in reverse order (see above). If Bacchiocchi and Laney were correct, and if *porneia* in Matt 5:32; 19:9 meant "unchastity," the exception clause in these verses ("except for unchastity") would give Jesus' teaching on divorce no higher standard than the House of Shammai, a problem which Bacchiocchi recognizes (Bacchiocchi 1991: 180). For a number of reasons, including the fact that the respective contexts of Matt 5:32 and 19:9 indicate that Jesus' standard was, in fact, higher than that of Shammai and also Deuteronomy, Bacchiocchi looks for a narrower meaning of *porneia* and concludes that the Matthean exception clauses refer only to marriages to near relatives, which are prohibited in Lev 18:6-18 (ibid.: 183-189). This interpretation, which is not a new idea (see refs. in Fitzmyer 1976: 210 n. 52), is preferred by Fitzmyer, who finds support in a passage from a Qumran text: the Damascus Document 4:12b-5:14a:

> . . . there is clear first-century Palestinian support for an interpretation of *porneia* in Mt 5:32 and 19:9 in the specific sense of zenût as an illicit marital union between persons of close kindship. Matthew, therefore, would be making an exception for such marital situations for Gentile Christians who were living in a mixed community with Jewish Christians still observing Mosaic regulations. (Fitzmyer 1976: 221; cp. 210, 218)

Because I understand Deuteronomy and Shammai to be referring to indecent exposure, a lesser offense than unchastity, I have no problem with interpreting *porneia* in Matt 5:32 and 19:9 as fornication in general (i.e., not limited to incestuous relations) and at the same time identifying Jesus' higher standard: Jesus allows divorce only when illicit sexual relations take place. However, a further problem must be faced: If *porneia* in Matt 5:32 and 19:9 means simply "adultery," why is not *moicheia*, the usual word for "adultery," not used (Fitzmyer 1976: 209)? Are there sexual acts out of the range of *moicheia* which would fall under *porneia* as grounds for divorce? Two examples which comes readily to mind are: (1) Sexual relations within the context of incestuous marriages (see discussion above), and (2) homosexual acts (see Jude 7). Therefore, rather than limiting the meaning of *porneia* in Matt 5:32 and 19:9 to incestuous marriages, I would suggest that in these verses, *porneia* is chosen because it covers not only adultery, but also such aberrations as incestuous marriages and homosexual acts. Another perversion appears in Lev 18:23—sexual relations with an animal—but I am not sure that this would be covered by *porneia*. In Lev 18:23, this kind of act is labeled *tevel* (cp. 20:12), which carries the idea of "confusion, violation of nature, or the divine order" (Brown, Driver & Briggs 1953: 117). The Septuagint translates this word in Lev 18:23 by *museron*, "loathsome, abominable, detestable" (Arndt & Gingrich 1957: 531).

[27]Genitive because it follows *parektos*, "apart from"/"except for." That *logou* here is the equivalent of Hebrew *dābār* was pointed out to me by Prof. Ivan Blazen of Pacific Union College.

[28] Genitive of *porneia*. Hauck and Schulz suggest that "*λόγοσ πορνείασ* in Mt. 5:32 is perhaps modelled linguistically on the Heb. formula" (Hauck and Schulz 1968: 591). They do not perceive that the order of the two Greek words in Matt 5:32 reverses the order of the equivalent

ence between the two formulations is the difference between the range of meaning of *porneia*, illicit sexual intercourse, and that of the broader term *ʿervāh*, exposure in general. Remember that because capital punishment for adultery had basically died out by Jesus' day, *ʿervat dābār* in Deut 24:1, as interpreted by the House of Shammai, would now refer to all indecent exposure, including that which involved sexual relations, as a ground for divorce. Thus, Jesus was stricter than the House of Shammai, and much stricter than the rabbinic House of Hillel, which interpreted *ʿervat dābār* in Deut 24:1 with unwarranted looseness to mean: "Even if she spoiled a dish for him" (Mishnah Giṭṭin 9:10; trans. Blackman 1963: 444).[29]

The Divorce Procedure in Deuteronomy 24:1 and its Implications

According to Deut 24:1, the divorce procedure consists of a man writing for his wife a divorce document (*sēper kᵉrîtot*, lit. "document of cutting off/separation"; see Driver 1902: 271), putting it in her hand so that she possesses it, and dismissing her from his house. Undoubtedly the divorce document would contain something like the formula, "She is not my wife, and I am not her husband" (Hos 2:2) and also a statement to the effect that "you are permitted to (i.e., free to be married by) any man" (Mishnah Giṭṭin 9:3).[30] The close connection between the ideas of separation from a marriage partner and freedom to remarry is stated by Yaron:

Hebrew words in Deut 24:1, but is the same as the order of the formula as interpreted by the House of Shammai.

[29]The House of Hillel apparently stressed that in Deut 23, the term does not refer to sexual misconduct, but to something else which is disgusting, i.e., uncovered excrement. So they regarded anything offensive to the husband as providing ground for divorce. They erred in missing (1) the differences between the two passages (see above), and (2) the fact that while the term *ʿervat dābār* in Deut 23 does not refer to sexual misconduct, it does not simply refer to something disgusting, but to literal exposure of something which should not be exposed. Cp. Mishnah Ketubot 7:6, stating conditions under which a woman could, under mishnaic law, be divorced without a marriage settlement, i.e., indemnification: transgressing the Law of Moses or Jewish custom. Examples of transgressing the Law of Moses are: if she should give her husband food that had not been tithed or have sexual intercourse with him when she is menstruating, etc. Examples of transgressing Jewish custom are: "If she go forth with her hair loose, or if she spin in the street, or if she hold converse with all men" (trans. Blackman 1963: 161).

[30]On the basis of comparison with Hammurapi laws ¶137-141 and Middle Assyrian Laws ¶37 (see Pritchard, ed. 1969: 172, 183; cp. an Old Assyrian marriage contract, *ibid.:* 543), Brown, Fitzmyer & Murphy suggest the possibility that the Israelite divorce document indemnified the wife (Brown, Fitzmyer & Murphy 1990: 105). Thompson makes a similar assumption: ". . . probably the strongest deterrent to divorce in Israel and all over the ancient Near East was financial, since the husband had to forfeit the dowry and may even have been involved also in other payments to his former wife" (Thompson 1974: 244). However, Middle Assyrian Laws ¶37 (see above) leaves such payment up to the discretion of the husband: "If a seignior wishes to divorce his wife, if it is his will, he may give her something; if it is not his will, he need not give her anything; she shall go out empty." Indemnification is not mentioned in Deut 24:1 and there is no evidence that *sēfer kᵉrîtūt* was a technical term which referred to indemnification as well as cutting/separation.

> The immediate legal consequence of divorce, and indeed its primary purpose, is to allow the woman to enter upon a marriage with another man, of her choice (Yaron 1966: 5).

It has been suggested that the divorce document protected women in the following ways:

1. The procedure, although brief, would slow down a divorce and thereby help to prevent extremely rash expulsions by making the husband take the trouble to procure a document and formally dismiss the woman himself. Although the text reads literally that the husband himself would write the divorce document, very few Israelite men were literate. Thus, most men would have to pay scribes to write their document. Perhaps acquiring the services of a scribe would require a man to prove that he had sufficient justification for divorce (Driver 1902: 272). Of course, the text does not require a third party to write the divorce document. A man could do it himself in a short time if he had the ability to write.

2. The divorce document would protect the woman by proving that she was divorced and therefore had the right of remarriage. Thus, she would not be accused of adultery if she married again (Phillips 1973: 160). Furthermore, in the divorce document, the husband would have relinquished all rights to the woman and could not interfere with her second marriage in an attempt to get her back.

While it appears that the divorce document benefits the woman, the last point stated above is weakened by the fact that women could leave their husbands under some circumstances of neglect or abuse, in which cases their husbands would not be required to provide them with divorce documents (see on Exod 21, below). If a woman whose marriage had been dissolved must have a divorce document in order to remarry without a charge of adultery being brought against her, why would a neglected or abused women, innocent of any wrongdoing, be less protected by law than a woman who had committed indecent exposure? The fact is, a previously married woman, whether she had been widowed, divorced, or had left her husband for some reason, would have returned to the home of her father[31] or other close relatives, who would have taken care of her and possibly arranged for her to remarry. Not being a virgin, she would not need a divorce document to protect her from a charge of adultery or promiscuity because her relatives could testify to the history of her status and behavior.

If a divorce document was not needed to protect from a charge of adultery when remarriage occurred, could it have protected from a charge of adultery at all? Perhaps. When a husband gave a woman a divorce document, he thereby indicated that he regarded her offense as the misdemeanor of indecent exposure, not the crime of adultery. It appears that he thereby relinquished the right to subsequently press a charge of adultery based upon the evidence of that indecent exposure. Thus, although a divorce document would carry some stigma, it

[31] See, for example, Lev 22:13; Judg 15:1-2; 19:2ff; 1 Sam 25:44.

would protect her from harassment by her former husband if, for example, he became jealous when she remarried and attempted to bring up the past in an effort to destroy her.

Responding to my last paragraph, Prof. Raymond Westbrook of Johns Hopkins University has written to me: "The idea that a divorce document indicated that the wife's crime was indecent exposure, not adultery, is contradicted by Jer. 3:8." Jer 3:8 reads: "She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce; yet her false sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the harlot" (RSV). Westbrook is indeed correct in interpreting this verse to mean that YHWH figuratively sent the northern kingdom of Israel away with a decree of divorce on the grounds of (spiritual) adultery, i.e., idolatry. Thus, he could be correct in regarding my hypothesis of the last paragraph to be invalidated. However, there are some factors in Jer 3:8 which neutralize Westbrook's argument:

a. Under Pentateuchal law, a woman who committed adultery would not live long enough to carry a divorce document around in her purse (see Deut 22:22).

b. The ground for divorce in Deut 24:1, where the divorce document is specified, is "indecency," not adultery.

c. Jer 3:8 is a prophetic passage, not a legal passage. It reflects legal practice, but in an extended sense and for a theological purpose. We are dealing here with historical relationships between YHWH and nations, which are analogous to, but not identical with, relationships between human husbands and wives as governed by law. It is true that YHWH could have rejected northern Israel for the spiritual equivalent of "indecency," but in his mercy, he did not. He also could have destroyed Israel for her first spiritual adultery, i.e., idolatry. In fact, it was not until Israel had committed numerous idolatries that YHWH cast Israel off, i.e., divorced her, as mentioned in Jer 3:8. When God divorced Israel, it was not so that she could remarry, as in Deut 24:2; she was destroyed by the Assyrians (in 722 B.C.), as Jeremiah well knew. Thus, it is clear that Pentateuchal legal practice cannot be safely extrapolated from a theological prophetic oracle.

Prohibition of Remarriage to an Earlier Wife After Her Marriage to Another Man

Remarriage to an earlier wife after her marriage to another man is prohibited on the basis of her having been "defiled" by the second marriage.[32] Thus, the

[32] According to Deut 24:4, violating this prohibition is an abomination bringing guilt upon the land of Israel. For the idea that sexual offenses violate the land, cp. Lev 18:25, 28; 19:29; Jer 3:2, 9; Hos 4:3. Note that in the Damascus Document from Qumran, the Hebrew word *zᵉnût*, "fornication/unchastity," refers to "taking two wives in their lifetime," thus covering not only polygamy, but also remarriage following divorce (Fitzmyer 1976: 220, commenting on the Damascus Document 4:20-21).

second marriage is viewed from the point of view of the first husband, "falling into the same category as adultery, to which this term is applied (Lev 18[20] Nu. 5[13.14.20])" (Driver 1902: 272). This does not mean, of course, that the second marriage is illegitimate; the law of Deut 24:1-4 does not prohibit remarriage after divorce. Craigie comments on the defilement of the woman:

> The sense is that the woman's remarriage after the first divorce is similar to adultery in that the woman cohabits with another man. However, if the woman were then to remarry her first husband, after divorcing the second, the analogy with adultery would become even more complete; the woman lives first with one man, then another, and finally returns to the first. (Craigie 1976: 305)

Of course, Deut 24:3 refers not only to the possibility that the second marriage may end in divorce; it may also end with the death of the second husband. In either case, if the woman returned to her original husband after having sexual relations with another man, there would be a strong similarity to adultery. While the law of Deut 24 does not condemn a remarried woman to death as an adulteress is condemned to death, a remarried woman is made inaccessible to her first husband, just as an adulteress is made inaccessible to her husband.[33]

The prohibition of remarriage after an intervening marriage would have the following effects:

1. Divorce with remarriage would be taken seriously because it could not be undone. The fact that remarriage prevented reunion with a former husband would tend to make a man think twice before he set his wife free to remarry, and it would tend to make a woman think carefully before she remarried.

2. "Wife-swapping" and similar temporary arrangements could not be legalized by divorce. In other words, divorce could not be used as a mechanism to legitimate what should be regarded as adultery (Craigie 1976: 305). Ramban, a medieval Jewish exegete, makes the following comment on Deut 24:4:

> And the reason for this prohibition is so that people should not exchange their wives with one another: he would be able to write

[33] Watts suggests that "Hosea 3 seems to set this law aside for the Lord's relation to Israel. But the prophet's aim is probably to stretch this tension to the limit to illustrate God's covenant grace. This law was also a problem for Jeremiah in attempting to follow the same though to its conclusion (cf. 3:1ff)" (Watts 1970: 265). More accurately, the law which is mercifully laid aside for Israel in these passages is the death penalty for adultery. "Judah had not married a particular lover, but, like Gomer, had been unfaithful. Clearly God had not issued a divorce document (cf. Isa. 50:1). Therefore the renewal of His covenant (i.e., "marriage") relationship with Judah would not actually constitute a violation of Deuteronomy 24:1-4" (Laney 1992: 12). In Jer 3:1, the prophet refers to Deut 24:4, but the argument is by implication an *a fortiori* one (see Miller 1990: 164): If it is forbidden for a remarried divorcee to return to her first husband, how much more unusual is it for an adulteress to return to her husband? In Matt 5:32 and 19:9, Jesus allowed for the possibility of such mercy on the individual level; He did not forbid the reunion of a husband and wife after adultery by one of the partners.

> her a bill of divorce at night, and in the morning she will return to him. (Chavel 1976: 297)

3. A former husband with regrets would have no incentive to interfere in the marriage of his ex-wife in an attempt to get her back. He could not get her back even if her new husband died. So the former husband would not be tempted to arrange for an "accident" to happen to the new husband. The new husband would also be protected from intrigue "on the part of a woman desirous of returning to her former home" (Driver 1902: 272).

Other Restrictions on Men with Regard to Their Right of Divorce or Marriage to Divorced Women

As discussed above, Deut 24:1-4 restricts a man's right to divorce and remarriage by limiting the ground of divorce, recognizing a certain divorce procedure as legitimate, and prohibiting remarriage to the same woman after she has been married to another man. Other passages which restrict men's rights of divorce are as follows:

1. Deut 22:13-19. A man who wrongfully accuses his bride of not being a virgin at the time of their marriage can never divorce her. That is, even if she commits indecent exposure he cannot divorce her. Forfeiture of a man's right to divorce is a penalty imposed upon him for his wrongdoing. This does not mean that the marriage could never be dissolved, but only that it could not be dissolved on his initiative.

2. Deut 22:28-29. A man who rapes an unbetrothed virgin is forced to marry her and can never divorce her, i.e., even if she commits indecent exposure. The above comments on vss. 13-19 apply here as well.

3. Lev 21:7 (cp. vs. 14). Unlike a layperson, a priest is forbidden to marry "a harlot or a woman who has been defiled;[34] neither shall they marry a woman divorced from her husband; for the priest is holy to his God." The words "a woman divorced (*gᵉrûšāh*; passive participle) from her husband" indicate that a divorcee in this context is a woman whose husband has divorced her. Since Deut 24:1 restricts the ground on which a husband can divorce his wife to indecent exposure, a priest is forbidden to marry a woman who has committed indecent exposure. Given the holy status of the priesthood, this is a logical prohibition. What about a woman who did not commit indecent exposure, but who left her husband because of his neglect or abuse (see below)? Lev 21:7 does not prevent an ordinary priest from marrying such a woman, but the fact that the high priest cannot even marry a widow,[35] but only a virgin, prohibits him from marrying a woman who had left her husband. Note the three stage gradation in holiness, from laypersons to ordinary priests to the high priest, with increasing re-

[34]That is, apparently, a woman sexually defiled by promiscuity.

[35]Cp. Ezek 44:22, allowing ordinary priests to marry widows only if they are widows of priests.

strictions corresponding to increasing holiness. The holier a person is, the closer his life must conform to the Genesis 2 ideal for marriage.

Dissolution of Illegal Marriages

Ezra 10 records a reform in which Israelites who had unlawfully taken foreign wives (see Deut 7:3) were ordered by Ezra to divorce them and agreed to do so (see esp. Ezra 10:11-12, 19; cp. Neh 13:23-27). The divorces were accomplished by the offending men, but at the initiation of the religious leader on the basis of the fact that the marriages should not have been contracted in the first place and their continuation would have been destructive to the Israelite community.

Circumstances Under Which a Woman Could Be Freed From Her Marriage

Under biblical law, while an ancient Israelite man could, under certain circumstances, expel his wife from his home by the use of a divorce document (Deut 24:1), an Israelite woman had no such right to expel her husband from her home. If divorce is defined as the legal expulsion of one's spouse from one's home against his/her will, it could be said that biblical law recognized no right of divorce for women.[36] But this does not mean that marriages could not, under certain circumstances, be dissolved for the benefit of women without the initiation of their husbands.[37] Consider the following points of evidence and argumentation:

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[36]"By the later Jews, the wife was permitted in certain cases to claim a divorce, viz. if her husband were a leper, or afflicted with a polypus, or engaged in a repulsive trade" (Driver 1902: 271, referring to Mishnah Ketuvot 7:10).

[37]Luck points out that in Exod 21, passive or active abuse of a wife of lower status constituted breach of covenant, and the offended partner had the right to be released so that she could remarry. Luck comments:

> The question may now arise as to why this passage was not more explicitly discussed as a divorce passage by the rabbis in the days of Jesus. Two suggestions present themselves. First, the text may well have been thought not to apply to marriage per se, insofar as it deals, prima facie, only with concubinage. Second, the chief concern in the day of Jesus was to find a passage giving the husband a right to divorce the wife; in this text, the right of the wife to force a divorce from her husband is the prime concern . . . I am convinced that the failure of the Church to integrate this passage from Exodus into the theology of divorce is the single most significant reason for our failure to present a harmonious and reasonable doctrine of marriage/divorce. As we shall see, the principles that arise from this text establish a basis for Paul's teaching that "departure" is grounds for considering the marriage completely ended and for allowing the deserted partner the freedom to remarry (1 Cor 7:15). In fact, understanding the Exodus passage enables us to understand the meaning of "free" in the Pauline teaching. A similar comment could be made with regard to the teachings of our Lord himself (cf. Matt. 5:32 f., et passim). (Luck 1987: 51)

1. Exod 21:7-11. This law protected a Hebrew girl who was sold by her father as a maidservant to a purchaser who guaranteed that he or his son would marry her.[38] If before marrying her himself the purchaser decided not to go ahead with the marriage because he found that he did not like her, he had to allow her to be redeemed, i.e., by payment of money. If after marrying her "he takes another wife to himself, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights/oil(?).[39] And if he does not do these three things for her, she shall go out for nothing, without payment of money" (vss. 10-11). Thus, the husband was obligated to support his rejected wife with an adequate amount of the basic necessities of life. If he did not, he violated the contract by which he had acquired her and she was freed both from the marriage and from servitude.[40] It must be assumed that she was free to remarry.[41]

A qualification must be inserted here. A "slave wife" is more like a "concubine" than a "wife," "because a wife by definition has a status from which legitimate offspring can issue" (Prof. Raymond Westbrook, Johns Hopkins University, private communication). Thus, the "marriage" of which the dissolution is discussed in the preceding paragraph is not the same as a full status "marriage," as we normally use the term.

2. Exod 21:26-27. A slave or maidservant was released if the master assaulted him/her, thereby causing permanent physical damage, namely, loss of an eye or a tooth. Covered under this law would be the case of a maidservant who

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Since the exception clauses in Matthew are stated in the context of a discussion of Deut 24:1-4, where divorce in the sense of expulsion of one marriage partner by the other is in view, it appears that abandonment as a ground for dissolution of a marriage stands outside the scope of the discussions in Matthew rather than constituting an exception in addition to fornication.

[38]This is not simply payment of a bride-price, which was the standard procedure for marriage between free persons.

[39]On the basis of Mesopotamian and biblical evidence for a triad of commodities representing the basic necessities of life, S. Paul tentatively interprets the *hapax legomenon ʿōnātāh* as "oil" or "ointments." (S. Paul 1970: 56-61). The word has commonly been interpreted as "conjugal rights," but these "are nowhere mentioned in the documents from the ancient Near East as an integral requirement for marital support. It is hardly likely, moreover, that a husband would be obligated to fulfill such a demand on behalf of a rejected wife." (S. Paul 1970: 60).

[40]See S. Paul's discussion of Mesopotamian laws (Lipit Ishtar 28 and Laws of Hammurapi 148) which obligate a husband to provide for his first wife who because of illness is bypassed in favor of another wife (S. Paul 1970: 56).

[41]On the seriousness of willful neglect as viewed by Paul in New Testament times, see 1 Tim 5:8—"If any one does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." This has an important implication for the interpretation of 1 Cor 7:15—"But if the unbelieving partner desires to separate, let it be so; in such a case the brother or sister is not bound . . ." Thus, it could be argued that if a husband is a member of the church, but abandons his family and does not provide for them, he is to be regarded as an unbeliever and his wife is free.

suffered such abuse and who happened to be married to her master. Her release would end not only her servitude, but also her marriage.[42]

3. If a servant woman, who had been purchased and then married to her master, had the legal right to support and protection from severe physical abuse, and the legal right to freedom from her marriage if these rights were violated, does it not stand to reason that a free woman would have possessed at least equivalent legal protection? The question arises: Why is there legislation protecting a servant woman but not a free woman? Two answers can be suggested: (1) A slave woman would be of a more subjugated social status than a free woman, and thus more vulnerable to abuse. (2) Biblical law at times legislates extreme cases, which cover more usual cases by implication (see above on Deut 23:12-14).[43] Thus, it could be argued that if certain rights are stated for a slave woman, then the more so should a free woman possess those rights.

The point just made must be qualified. In the area of assault, it appears that free women were, indeed, more protected than slave women, but not necessarily by the right to leave their husbands. Lev 24:19-20 calls for retaliatory punishment in cases of assault resulting in permanent injury: "When a man causes a disfigurement in his neighbor, as he has done it shall be done to him, fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has disfigured a man, he shall be disfigured" (RSV). The masculine language of the law can be interpreted narrowly to refer to assault by one Israelite free man upon another. However, it appears that the law is intended to apply in every case of assault in which permanent damage is caused to one free person by another, whether the persons involved are male or female. I see no reason why this would not apply to assault on a marriage partner.[44] If I am correct, a free woman would be more protected

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[42]This is not the only law protecting slaves from physical assaults by their masters. Exod 21:20-21 allowed masters to beat their slaves, male or female, but not to kill them by doing so. So masters could discipline their slaves, but could not treat them as mere chattel to be disposed of at will. Could a master discipline a slave wife by beating her? Perhaps, to a certain extent, but the fact that a master had to provide adequate support for such a wife, i.e., not passively abuse her by neglect, even if he rejected her in favor of another woman, suggests *a fortiori* (the more so) that he should not actively abuse her. Of course, where discipline would end and abuse begin in this social context would to some extent be culturally defined.

[43]For example:

> A literal reading of Exod 21:22-25 yields a strange law of remarkably limited application. It describes a situation in which more than one man knock a woman, causing her the premature live birth of more than one child. While the knockers were more than one, only one must pay. In the sub-case, somebody else, presumably, addressed as "you" must give "life in place of life . . ." (Gane 1988: 11)

It appears that "the legislator attempted to economically cover a range of contingencies in a situation fraught with variables" (*ibid.:* 12).

[44]The fact that there are laws which provide penalties for assaults on slaves by their masters suggests that wives would also have been protected from assault. Note also the severe penalty for striking one's parents: death (Exod 21:15).

from assault than would a slave woman because talionic punishment involving permanent physical damage would be worse for a man than simply having his wife depart.

4. In the area of abandonment, Old Testament narrative evidence indicates that a free woman (in the sense of "non-slave woman") who was abandoned by her husband returned to the home of her father, who could arrange for her to remarry.

a. 1 Sam 25:44 informs us that after David fled from King Saul, Saul gave Michal, his daughter and David's wife, to another man in marriage. David had abandoned Michal through no choice of his own because Saul sought his life. Therefore, she returned to her father's jurisdiction and he arranged for her to remarry. It is true that Saul was king and that he hated David, but if David had not left Michal, effecting *de facto* dissolution of the marriage, Saul would have had no excuse to give his daughter away to another man. The implication is that abandonment under certain circumstances was regarded by the Israelites as the end of a marriage, and this circumstance left a woman free to remarry. There is no Pentateuchal legislation to this effect, apparently because it was not needed; free women were already protected by customary practice. David, however, did not regard his marriage to Michal as legitimately dissolved because he had been forced by Saul to leave his wife. Most likely in keeping with the prevailing custom, David recognized only willful abandonment as ground for dissolution of a marriage.[45] While Saul regarded David as a criminal, and therefore to be blamed for having to leave Michal, David regarded himself as innocent. Therefore, he later used his political clout to dissolve Michal's second marriage and take her back (2 Sam 3:13-16). Taking back his wife after an intervening mar-

[45]Cp. Hammurapi laws ¶135-136, which distinguish between involuntary capture and willful desertion:

> 135: If, when a seignior was taken captive and there was not sufficient to live on in his house, his wife has then entered the house of another before his (return) and has borne children, (and) later her husband has returned and has reached his city, that woman shall return to her first husband, while the children shall go with their father.
>
> 136: If, when a seignior deserted his city and then ran away, his wife has entered the house of another after his (departure), if that seignior has returned and wishes to take back his wife, the wife of the fugitive shall not return to her husband because he scorned his city and ran away. (Pritchard, ed. 1969: 171)

See also Middle Assyrian Laws ¶45, which stipulates that a woman whose husband is captured must be faithful to him for two years, and provision is made for her support during that time. After two years, she is free to remarry, and "they shall write a tablet for her as a widow. If in later days her missing husband has returned home, he may take back his wife who was married to an outsider; he may not claim the sons whom she bore to her later husband, but her later husband shall take (them)." (Pritchard, ed. 1969: 184).

riage did not violate the law of Deut 24:4 because David had not divorced Michal or even willfully abandoned her.[46]

b. Judg 14:20-15:2 reports that when Samson returned to his father's house in anger after his bride had revealed his riddle to his companions, Samson's father-in-law took this to be abandonment and gave his daughter to Samson's best man. Since Samson's bride and father-in-law were Philistines, this story reflects Philistine practice but, given the evidence of 1 Sam 25:44 (see above), it does not appear that Philistine practice differed in this regard from Israelite practice.

Summary of Biblical Principles and Modern Application

Some principles which operate in Old Testament legal and narrative passages dealing with divorce and remarriage can be stated in general terms as follows:

1. A wife is obligated to provide her husband with sexual fidelity. If she commits the sexual crime of adultery, she is put to death. If she commits a less serious offense of indecent exposure without sexual relations, her husband can divorce her if he can no longer love her as a result of her indecent exposure.

2. A husband is obligated to provide his wife with an adequate amount of certain basic commodities and to refrain from causing her serious physical harm. If he neglects or abandons her, the marriage can be dissolved by her returning to her father (or next of kin), who can arrange for her to remarry. If a husband abuses his wife physically, he may suffer talionic punishment, or in some cases (slave wives), the wife may be freed from the marriage.

3. A husband cannot take his wife back after divorcing her if she has subsequently remarried.

Application of these principles to modern divorce and remarriage must take the following factors into account:

1. As recorded in the New Testament, Jesus and Paul raised the standard for marriage by pointing to the Genesis ideal and by restricting the grounds for dissolution of marriages (Matt 5:32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-9; Luke 16:18; 1 Cor 7:10-16). Nevertheless, the basic obligations of sexual fidelity, support for one's family, and refraining from abusive behavior are in harmony with the Genesis and New Testament ideals for marriage.

2. Some factors affecting divorce and remarriage in the Old Testament do not exist in western societies:

[46]However, 2 Sam 20:3 states that David did not have sexual relations with his concubines after Absalom had had sexual relations with them (16:21-22). David had been unjustly deprived of his concubines, so why didn't he take them back? Whatever political factors may have affected David's decision, the concubines had been defiled by Absalom to a greater degree than Michal had been by Paltiel because Absalom was David's son. Therefore, they had been defiled by incest (see Lev 18:8).

a. Death penalty for adultery and other sexual crimes. By New Testament times, adultery had ceased to be a capital offense and had become a ground for divorce.

b. Slavery. Hebrew women purchased as maidservants and then married to their masters were more vulnerable than free women and required specialized legal protection. Modern western society lacks such legal distinctions because the social distinctions do not exist.

c. Polygamy. As reflected in the law of Exod 21:10, taking a second wife could lead a husband to neglect his first wife.

d. Talionic punishment. The threat of talionic punishment could have been a more serious deterrent to wife abuse than the release of a wife from marriage. Since modern society lacks talionic punishment or anything of equivalent effectiveness, it could be argued that a woman's resort in the face of serious physical abuse should be that of a slave wife whose master husband destroyed her eye or tooth: freedom from the marriage. Of course, such an application of Old Testament law cannot be made without taking into account the New Testament teachings on this subject.

3. Some factors affecting divorce and remarriage in modern western societies did not exist in ancient Israelite society:

a. Regulation of marriages by state law. Whereas in ancient Israel a woman could have her marriage dissolved by returning to her father, who could arrange for her to remarry, modern society requires state appointed procedures for these transactions.

b. Relative legal equality between men and women. For example, whereas ancient Israelite men could expel their wives from their homes under certain circumstances through legal divorce procedures, but wives had no equivalent right, in modern society women as well as men can have this kind of right. Another example is the fact that today there is much greater similarity between the obligations of husbands and wives toward each other:

(1) In ancient Israel, the sexual fidelity standards for men and women were different. In keeping with the fact that men could legally have multiple sexual unions (polygamy and variations of it), a man, married or unmarried, found having sexual relations with a woman was put to death only if she was married (Deut 22:22). On the other hand, a married woman was put to death for adultery whether her paramour was married or unmarried. Furthermore, a husband could divorce his wife for indecent exposure (Deut 24:1), but there is no corresponding law to the effect that a wife could divorce her husband for the same offense. Today, we do not tolerate polygamy and, at least in theory, we do not condone a double sexual standard for men and women.

(2) Today, wives often bring outside income into their homes. In circumstances like these, it cannot be said that the husbands support their wives to the degree that Old Testament husbands supported their wives. Rather, the modern marriage partners support each other to varying degrees.

(3) In theory, at least, state laws are supposed to provide equal protection against assault for all citizens, including husbands and wives in cases of domestic violence committed by either party.

c. State welfare systems. In ancient Israel, support by a man was generally crucial to a woman's survival. If her husband did not support her, she could not collect a welfare check and remain with him. She would be forced to return to her father and/or remarry. Thus, maintenance of a wife was a condition for keeping her. Today, the existence of state welfare systems has reduced the level of responsibility incumbent upon husbands.

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The "Hard Sayings" of Jesus and Divorce: Not Commandments but Goals

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> Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" John 6:60 NKJV

If I had been around to present this article to Henry VIII when he was having heir problems, he would have made me Archbishop of Canterbury. I will argue below that Jesus' teaching on divorce is not, as most Christians have assumed, a new commandment, but is instead a righteous ideal at which we should aim, an ideal defining the nature of marriage as God sees it. I will do this not by a careful study of Jesus' divorce teaching,[1] but by comparing its nature with the nature of Jesus' other "hard sayings" that reveal the true meaning of righteousness. I will argue that this divorce teaching is the only "hard saying" churches generally take literally as a command meant to be codified in church policy. These comments will be interspersed with several pages of musings on the nature of the church as the body of Christ, the call to forgiveness, and the relationship between discipline and discipling.

Jesus tells us He didn't come to abolish the law (Matt 5:17). Instead, He raises the stakes, revealing the spiritual dimension of the law. He shows us righteousness as God sees it, then dares us to stay in the game. Murder? Jesus says being angry with your own brother is like murder in God's eyes (vs. 21–22). Adultery? Jesus says if you even look at a woman with lust in your heart, you've committed adultery, so far as God is concerned (vs. 27–28). Divorce? Only for adultery (vs. 31–32). Taking God's name in vain? Using any oaths at all breaks that commandment (vs. 33–37). Lawsuits? Give your accuser the coat off your back as well as anything else he asks for (v. 40). Love your neighbor? Love your enemy (v. 44)! Keep the commandments? Jesus says, be

[1] I have looked at this teaching in "1 Corinthians 7:10–16: Divorce of the Unbeliever or Reconciliation with the Unfaithful," *JATS*, 10/1-2 (1999): 41–62.

perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect (v. 48). Anxious about your future? Don't worry about it—God will provide (Matt 6:25; John 6:27). Honor your father and mother? Leave your parents and follow Jesus or you're not worthy of him (Matt 10:38). Charity? Sell what you have and give to the poor (Matt 19:21). Don't worship or bow down to idols? Jesus says don't even worship men by considering them your spiritual masters, calling them rabbi or father (Matt 23:8–11).

It's interesting that all churches take some of these "hard sayings"[2] more literally than others. Jesus' statements on divorce are dissected with care and followed to the letter in many denominations. Several churches forbid oaths in court on the basis of what Jesus says, but those that don't look askance at such literalism. A few, partly on the basis of Jesus' words, have self-insurance schemes where a congregation helps a family struck by disaster, but most affluent Christians are sufficiently anxious about their future that they have house insurance, life insurance, and pension funds. Many churches sue people who infringe on the church's rights or steal from the church, despite the words of Jesus and Paul (1 Cor 6:7). Many churches allow personal feuds between members to continue for years. In many churches gossip is the primary social activity. Few churches urge members to sell all their possessions and give to the poor. Many churches don't call their pastors "Father" or "Rabbi," but regard their pastors' interpretation of the Bible as God-revealed, no matter how bizarre it may be. Yet since Jesus makes all these statements with the same seriousness—and in many cases at the same time to the same audience—logic and consistency demands that we give them all similar emphasis, whatever that emphasis might be. It seems unsound to emphasize some while ignoring others.

Exaggeration is one of Jesus' favorite rhetorical techniques, but these hard sayings are not exaggerations.[3] Rather, Jesus is showing self-satisfied people

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[2] F. F. Bruce's book *The Hard Sayings of Jesus*, published in 1983, is now available in the useful omnibus edition *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, by Walter C. Kaiser Jr., Peter H. Davids, F. F. Bruce, and Manfred T. Brauch (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity, 1996. While not a technical term, the phrase "hard sayings" is often used to refer either to texts that, "because of differences in culture and time, are hard to understand without having their social and historical backgrounds explained," or texts "that are all too easily understood but that challenge the ways we think and act" (publisher's preface, 9–10).

[3] Robert H. Stein, in his *Difficult Sayings in the Gospels: Jesus' Use of Overstatement and Hyperbole* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), distinguishes between many types of exaggeration. An interesting example of exaggeration is Matt 22:21, where Jesus says, "'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's'" (NIV). We tend to assume Jesus means we should pay our taxes, but Jesus is facing a hostile audience of Pharisees who want to entrap him by getting him to admit that Jews should pay taxes to Caesar. Thus, He refuses to give a yes or no answer to their question about whether Jews should pay taxes to Caesar, because either answer would anger one group or another. Instead He asks whose portrait and inscription is on the denarius. [According to the *ISBE* entry on "Money," "The 'coin' (Gk. *Denarion*) used for tribute and requested by Jesus when the Pharisees asked him whether paying tribute to Caesar was lawful (Mt. 22:19 par.) would have been the silver denarius of the succeeding emperor, Tiberius (14–37). This coin displays a portrait of Tiberius on

the difference between keeping the commandments and being truly godly, truly good. This spells the end of complacency for us. Never again can we relax and think we're good enough to face God in His holiness without a Savior to stand as our advocate, even though the Father himself loves us (John 16:27). Never again can we imagine that in ourselves we can please God or do things that will impress him.[4]

There have been stages in my Christian experience when I've found these hard sayings radical, inspiring, and exciting. Trying to live up to Christ's example as His disciple can be exhilarating when it leads to transformation, as when lifting weights leads to bulging muscles. It is true that we are called to submit ourselves to the Holy Spirit and let the Spirit make us more Christ-like. At other times, though, I've found these sayings daunting, even depressing. How can I ever be what Christ asks me to be?

Gradually, however, I've reached a conclusion. In these hard sayings, Jesus reveals the truth. But He reveals this truth not because He thinks we can reach this level of holiness in our present sinful flesh, but to convince us we need a savior. He reveals perfection, giving His followers a target at which to aim, but without expecting many bull's-eyes. He reveals what is expected of a righteous person who wants to deserve the prize, but He knows we will fail to reach those expectations. To the extent we become like Jesus, we bring God glory, but we keep on falling short.

However, knowing that because of sin we can't do it ourselves, Jesus does it for us. And He teaches us, both through His own words and through those of His disciples who write the New Testament, that while only He is capable of being the champion who defeats sin and death, everyone willing to follow him can be a part of His championship team and so share His glory, even though they can't do flawlessly what He does.

Some Christians see the law of God as an intolerable burden, rather than as a delight (Ps 1:2; Rom 7:22). Yet when Jesus urges the rich young ruler to keep the commandments, He replies, "'All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?'" (Matt 19:20). Keeping the ten commandments is not easy, but as they were originally given, it is not all that difficult. What is impossible is meeting the standards Jesus raises for us. That's partly His intention. He wants us to trust in Him, even as we keep striving to reach the goal He sets for us. (We

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the obverse and a seated female figure on the reverse."] Essentially, Jesus says, "If a denarius has the name or inscription of Caesar on it, it must belong to Caesar, so give Caesar all your coins that bear his name or inscription." While Jesus might be making a profound comment on the vanity of worldly wealth and the need to devote ourselves to God, it seems more likely that He is using hyperbole to avoid being trapped and to confound his listeners, who are not about to give all their denarii to Caesar.

[4] Bear in mind that while Jesus reveals in these texts what it means to truly keep only these few laws, we should follow his example and extend this to every aspect of life. Every day, in every way, we all fall short of the glory of God, but we are called to aim at it.

must always remember that these standards are not arbitrary, but a revelation of true righteousness.)

Many believe they can relax now that they are no longer under the law, but have the law as their servant. They only have to follow Jesus' "new" commandments, loving God with all their hearts and loving their neighbors as themselves. But can they really imagine it is easier to love their neighbors as themselves than to not covet, or easier to love God with all their hearts than to not worship idols or take His name in vain? Astonishing!

Jesus reveals what the rich young ruler sensed: the ten commandments are not God's highest desire for us, but a bare minimum needed to educate and govern a nation of ex-slaves. Jesus says, "Look higher!"

Consider Isa 55:8–9, where Isaiah writes,

> "For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
> Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.
> "For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
> So are My ways higher than your ways,
> And my thoughts than your thoughts."

David Dorsey has suggested that scholars are wrong to see this as a typical king's boast. In context, it is instead God encouraging His people to give up their own ways and adopt His ways, to "Come to the waters," to "Come, buy and eat" (v. 1), to come up higher.[5] Jesus, in His ministry, shows us what God would like us to be and urges us toward a perfection that far transcends the commandments (while building on them).

Yet though pressing on toward the prize (Phil 3:14), still Paul cries out, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom 7:24). He wants to be a victor, but his flesh is weak; it doesn't obey him and lift him over the hurdles consistently. His victory is sure, though, "through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (v. 25), his champion and the head of his team.

Implications for Church Discipline

We are called to be perfect (Matt 5:48), even though we are certain to fall short of that goal.[6] That is the reason for these hard sayings—showing us what perfection is. Any church claiming to follow Christ needs to continually hold this high calling (Phil 3:14) before the people of God and train them to reach this mark. But in most cases we are well aware that we need to be cautious about basing church discipline on whether or not members reach this highest mark. *Exclusion from the body of Christ as discipline should be reserved for those who don't care, those who scoff at the church, those whose consistent lack of re-*

[5] Personal conversation, Evangelical School of Theology, 12 June 2001.

[6] Though that call is not, of course, an example of Jesus raising the bar to a height over which we cannot leap, because He is merely echoing God's plea in Lev 11:44–45, not calling for a higher standard. There is no higher standard.

morse for sin shows they may not be a spiritual part of the body of Christ, in any case. Even these people, however, when they repent and confess, must be welcomed home (cf. 1 Cor 5:1–5, 11 and 2 Cor 2:5–11).

But there are other kinds of discipline available than merely expelling people or removing them from church office. *A different approach is needed for those who, like the apostle Paul, sin knowingly, but helplessly, addictively, not wanting to, because of "this body of death" which makes them do what their spirit doesn't want to do (Rom 7:23–24).*[7] *We need to think of such discipline not as punishment but as* ***discipling****. The elders of the church might "discipline" erring members by arranging for more victorious members to take errant ones under their wings, spending time with them, guiding them, fostering their growth in Christ.*

Suspending church members for doing what they really don't want to do, even though they do it deliberately, does not help them. Instead, we are called to practice "the ministry of reconciliation," called to share with the fallen ones "the message of reconciliation," which is, "We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:18–21 NIV). That's good news! Christ has been righteous for us, won the battle for us, so now all of us who have joined His team share His righteousness. And as we ourselves are called to minister that reconciliation, it is through our love, our compassion, forgiveness, solicitude, inclusion, and gentle guidance that the fallen are lifted up again. If we fail to represent Jesus in this way to the fallen ones as Jesus represents us before the Father, then once again we ourselves fall short of God's glory, proving we are no better at heart than those we scorn.

Jesus says, "'If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, "I repent," forgive him'" (Luke 17:3–4).[8] Note two things. First, Jesus is speaking to the disciples (v. 1), the seed that will grow to become the church. Therefore He is speaking not just to individuals, but to the church as a whole. Second, we have to be careful about how we judge whether or not a person is truly repentant. If my brother does the same mean thing to me seven times in a day and each time repents and asks forgiveness, I may be tempted to say "You're not really sorry or you wouldn't keep doing that," and refuse to forgive him. *But Jesus' words suggest that we are not called to determine the quality of that repentance. Our work is to forgive the repentant. Once again, please note: the role of the church toward the repentant is to forgive them and lift them up; not to punish them, but to lovingly train them in righteousness. We seem to have*

[7] I believe this "helpless" sinning differs from the "rebellious" sinning in the Torah, for which one could be "cut off" from Israel, even though some of these "helpless" sins may have been punishable by death in the Israelite theocracy.

[8] This too is, of course, one of Jesus' hard sayings. Both as individuals and as the body of Christ, we continually fall short of this mark, yet we are called to aim at it.

determined that there are some sins that cannot be forgiven, or some sins that must always result in punishment, even if the sinner is repentant. This is in opposition to the teaching of Jesus.

We are not called to save ourselves. The laws of the Old Testament, I think, were not all that hard for ancient agriculturalists to keep. God designed the relationship to provide security and predictability. Where the Canaanite deities were arbitrary and demanding, the God of Israel was consistent and merciful. Essentially He asked His people to trust in His consistency and mercy and walk in His ways. It was not only possible for the average person to keep the law and be at peace with God as the feasts and seasons passed, but so easy and expected that those who refused to repent and return to God when they erred were considered rebellious, refusing pardon, and cut off from God's people.[9] (Remember that Paul's experience of those laws was colored by the grinding weight of the restrictive laws added in the inter-testamental period, which the average Jew could not keep perfectly.[10]) Jesus raises the crossbar from the level of the Mosaic law to the level of God's holiness. Then, having dashed everyone's hope of saving themselves, He becomes their savior by joining their team and breaking all records, having in himself the righteousness of God they cannot themselves attain.[11]

We need to be the church that points to heaven but ministers to humanity. In doing that we will be like Jesus. There is a necessary tension between the church's call to perfection and its call to kneel down and embrace the fallen. That tension needs to be visible in our tender care for sinners. Again, we must point to the peaks while ministering in the valleys. David writes, of God, "he remembers how we are formed; he knows that we are dust" (Ps 103:14 NIV). If God remembers we are dust, can we honestly believe Jesus expects us to perform as if we were not? If God remembers we are dust, can we ourselves be perfect if we refuse to stoop to lift the alcoholic in our church who has fallen for the hundredth time? What a paradox that God remembers we are dust, but the church acts as if we were spirit, beyond temptation and capable of true perfection in ourselves.[12]

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[9] Thus the psalmist could truthfully write, "Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long" (Ps 119:97 NIV). We shouldn't imagine that most people found the law terrifying. Many may have found it a deep comfort.

[10] Evidence of this can be found on any page of the *Mishnah*, much of which preserves religious practice from Paul's day.

[11] Paul's understanding is that Jesus joins Israel by birth as an Israelite, limits true Israel to the faithful, invites the whole world to be grafted into Abraham through Him, and looks forward to those Israelites pruned off (because they were not producing fruit or were spiritually dead) being grafted back in as soon as they are willing (Rom 11:11–24).

[12] I am not denying that being born again always results in the fruits of the Spirit ripening in our lives, nor that the Holy Spirit can give us victory over sins that have plagued us for years. However, Paul serves as evidence that the best of us still struggle. True, God calls us *toward* victory over sin, but inevitably our victory must be in our champion, Jesus, who did what we have failed to do.

Even Paul claims, "with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom 7:25). Some say Paul is remembering his situation before his conversion, but I doubt it. I think he has discovered that though regenerated and adopted as a son of God, he is still prey to temptation and still guilty of giving in to it, even though he knows doing so is sin. Can we expect more of ourselves? More important, can we expect more of the spiritually wounded and spiritually handicapped brothers and sisters around us? *Do we imagine it is **clean** feet Jesus asks us to wash?*

We sometimes act as though everyone in the church has been born again. We also act as though those who have been born again cannot harden their hearts. Jesus says divorce was given to the Israelites because of their hardness of heart (Mark 10:5), which is to say, because they refused to submit completely to God's will. Are our hearts so much softer than theirs? If so, then why does the author of Hebrews tell us hardness continues in the church "today" (Heb 3:8, 15; 4:7)? If so, why do we still find the sins of Israel in our own congregations and in our own hearts? If some hearts remain hard in today's church, then we should assume that divorce is also, alas, given to these people, as well. Would that our hearts were soft.

In our church government, we must point to the heights of God's plan for us but unceasingly lift up those who fall. What might this mean in practice? Let's look at several common problems in our churches and how seeing Jesus as our champion might affect our way of dealing with them.

Inconsistent Applications of the Hard Sayings of Jesus

My purpose in this essay is to show that we readily assume that most of the hard sayings of Jesus are not to be taken as new commandments, but as a revelation of what true holiness is in God's eyes and an encouragement for us to aim at being holy as God is holy, yet many churches see Jesus' divorce teaching in the same context as a commandment. In support of this, it would be useful to look at some of these hard sayings and what we do with them.

First, what about marriage and divorce? *We must hold up happy, submitted, and committed marriage as God's ideal and the goal at which we must aim. But we should admit there are those in the church with hard hearts. We should do what we can to soften those hearts. We should teach that in God's eyes divorce is never a good or even acceptable thing but a spiritual failure, even though it may end an abusive relationship. We should teach that in God's eyes remarriage is like adultery. However, we should also teach that a merely physical cohabitation of man and wife without the spiritual, mental, and physical oneness intended by the words "one flesh"*[13] *is also essentially adultery, because like*

[13] In Matt 19:4–5 (NKJV), Jesus says, speaking to the Pharisees, "'Haven't you read . . . that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?'" Actually, they had surely read these words, or similar words, but neither

adultery it is unfaithfulness to the marriage oath and falls short of God's ideal.[14] I suggest that to grit one's teeth and remain in this condition of unfaithfulness is in itself sinful.[15] *The unfaithfulness must end. It may be that in some cases divorce may bring an end to this sinful condition, though if the hardness of heart can be melted, the better solution is to bring both spouses to conversion.*[16]

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the Hebrew nor the Greek OT attributes them to the Creator (though perhaps some Jewish commentary of the time of Jesus attributes the words to God). They are instead authorial inserts in the creation story, added by Moses to explain how the story has affected mankind. Genesis 2:24 should be translated, "This is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife and they become one flesh." The verse is not saying a man does this because God commanded it or because God performed the first marriage ceremony. It is saying, rather, that a man seeks to become one flesh with his wife because he feels he is missing some of his flesh, and he seeks to replace what has been taken from him. (The direct antecedent to "This is why" is the forming of Eve from a piece taken from Adam, not God saying man shouldn't be alone.) This is a folk definition, much like the possibly fanciful folk etymologies occasionally given for the names of people and places in Genesis. Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., Professor of Old Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary, writes of this verse, in his book *From Exegesis to Exposition: A Practical Guide to Using Biblical Hebrew* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), "The popular view that takes the imperfect as obligatory ("therefore a man should leave his father and his mother") has no exegetical basis and is unwarranted" (91, n. 24). Most translations word v. 5 in such a way that it seems like Jesus is saying that God said "Therefore . . ." Actually, the words in Greek are *kai eipen*, "and he said." The New Living Translation correctly separates vs. 4 and 5 into two sentences (the first a question, the second not), making it clear that the "And he said" beginning v. 5 means "And Jesus said." The expression occurs many times in the gospels. Thus, Jesus is not revealing that God commanded that "Therefore . . ." a man and woman should become one flesh, but simply quoting Genesis. The English translations may say "Therefore" rather than "This is why," but we don't know exactly what Jesus said. If He was quoting the text in Hebrew, then "This is why" would be the best translation into English of those words. The translator's note for Gen 2:24 in the New English Translation (www.netbible.com) says the statement is "an editorial comment, not an extension of the quotation. The statement is describing what typically happens, not what will or should happen. It is saying, 'This is why we do things the way we do.' It links a contemporary (with the narrator) practice with the historical event being narrated. The historical event narrated in v. 23 provides the basis for the contemporary practice described in v. 24. That is why the imperfect verb forms are translated with the present tense rather than future."

[14] The verb *māʿal*, meaning to "behave or act contrary to one's duty; be unfaithful," is most often used for unfaithfulness to God, as in Lev 5:16, but it can also mean unfaithfulness to one's husband, as in Num 5:12. The latter text deals with the procedure for testing whether a wife has been sexually unfaithful. Of course, when we are unfaithful to God, any sexual sense of the word is no more than metaphorical. This suggests that it is inadequate for us to see the marital unfaithfulness that constitutes grounds for divorce as only sexual unfaithfulness. Any disloyalty to the vow of spiritual, physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual fidelity constitutes marital unfaithfulness. To say this is to do no more than Jesus does, seeking the spiritual completion rather than the letter of the law. See Robin Wakely's article on the word in *NIDOTTE*: 2:1020–1025.

[15] "So, as the Holy Spirit says: 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, . . .'" (Heb 3:7–8 NIV).

[16] A pastor recently came to me to ask if he could divorce his wife. He told me that long ago he broke off his courtship with the woman he loved in order to marry a woman he thought would be able to survive living with his very trying mother (a widow). As he put it, "I wanted an orange, but I married an apple. I still want an orange." This pastor's wife is considered a paragon of wifely virtue by his congregation. But he never tells his wife he loves her. He never thanks her for her work on his

Divorce is *never* the *first* sin in any marriage. *Thus, while to divorce is sin, to live together in the condition that makes people wish for divorce is also sin. The ideal solution for a husband and wife is for them to cease from sinning by reconciling and returning to faithfulness to the oath of marriage God considers holy. We can never counsel couples that divorce is acceptable in God's sight. However, after pointing to the high calling of God, we should remind those suffering in marriage or recently divorced that God forgives sin if we repent. Instead of pushing away those who divorce through a period of punishment, we should struggle to heal their anger and bitterness and comfort them. We should try to keep them coming to church and offer them God's (and our own and our church's) love and forgiveness and gradually help the Holy Spirit soften their hearts.*[17] *We should shelter the suffering children and serve as their surrogate fathers and mothers.* Almost inevitably, their parents' failure will leave these children among the "walking wounded." If it is "better to marry than to burn with passion" (1 Cor 7:9), then we should ask God to forgive the sin of a remarriage that is adulterous by God's standards, just as He has forgiven the sin of unfaithfulness to the marriage vow which is adulterous by His standards. Then we must do what we can to make the new marriage a successful one.

Remember, it is not the law that makes remarriage adultery, but Jesus raising the crossbar of the high jump by revealing how divorce and remarriage seem in God's eyes. Here, too, we need to count on Jesus as our faithful champion. Even though the woman He married was His church, He has always been faithful to her. We need to remember that Jesus did not mean, here, to abolish the law restricting divorce (Matt 5:17–18),[18] but to reveal the meaning of true holi-

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behalf. He never thanks her for the tasty supper. He never hugs her or prays with her. They haven't had sex in years. He even refuses to perform weddings because his own marriage is so unfulfilling. "My friend," I told him, "perhaps you have never committed physical adultery, but you have been unfaithful to your promise to love and honor your wife throughout your life. You have broken your contract with her. God called for you to be one flesh, but you want nothing to do with her. It seems to me that you are living in a state of constant sin. You are guilty of emotional abuse. I believe what you are doing is just as much a mockery of God's intentions as keeping a mistress or visiting prostitutes." My prescription was that he must never leave the house without hugging his wife and telling her he loves her. Whenever he notices she has done something around the house, he must thank her. He must apologize for making her life a misery. And he must take her to a Marriage Encounter weekend and do his best to rejuvenate the romance in his life. I don't know if he has taken my advice.

[17] Very often divorce signals that at least one partner has not been truly converted. It is troubling that so many baptized church members have not been converted. On the other hand, what better place for them to be than in the church?

[18] While many commentators have seen Deut 24:1–4 as limiting the grounds for divorce to a husband finding "something indecent" in his wife (this was a lesser offence than adultery, which was punished by death), I think the verses' structure reveals that the purpose of the passage is to prohibit a man's being remarried to the "indecent" woman if she has married another man after the divorce. Thus, divorce in Israelite culture is tacitly allowed though not approved, except for this exception, which is neither allowed nor approved. I think the idea behind this remarriage being an abomination is that if she is known to be indecent, a man would only want her back for indecent purposes, which

ness in marriage. Thus, perhaps we should be careful about making a spiritual ideal a matter of church policy. After all, we do not require all members to sell what they have and give to the poor, yet Jesus commands that, too.[19]

Second, what about lust? Lust may be like adultery in God's eyes, but in worldly terms the pain caused by physical adultery can be far worse. Instead of shunning those who lust, we need to pray for them, forgive them (time after time) as God does, and help them. Both scriptural example and the experience of fallen pastors we have known or heard of agree that the repentant adulterer is forgiven by God and given work in God's vineyard, even if perhaps restricted to a less dangerous part of the vineyard. If this is so, then is the church not also called to forgive and forgive again?

If a pastor commits adultery, it is in part, I believe, the responsibility of the congregation that allowed him to be in a situation where an act of adultery could occur. Did you let him counsel people behind closed doors? Did you let him go by himself on pastoral visits? Did you fail to offer him a group to which he could be accountable without his ordination and livelihood being threatened when he confessed his failures? Did you somehow assume he was not open to

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would be an abomination. Thus, I think Rabbi Hillel was essentially right in thinking the law allows divorce for virtually any reason, even though I think he was wrong to see the "indecent thing" as standing for that reason. Rabbi Shammai came closer to defining the "indecent thing" correctly. (Mishnah, *m. Gittin* 9:10, in Jacob Neusner's translation, reads: A. The House of Shammai say, "A man should divorce his wife only because he has found grounds for it in unchastity, / B. "since it is said, *Because he has found in her indecency in anything*." / C. And the House of Hillel say, "Even if she spoiled his dish, / D. "since it is said, *Because he has found in her indecency in anything*." / E. R. Aqiba says, "Even if he found someone prettier than she, / F. "since it is said, *And it shall be if she find no favor in his eyes* (Dt. 24:1).") We should also bear in mind how customs have changed since the time of Moses. No woman in any modern western bathing suit—no matter how modest we might consider it today—would be considered decent in Moses' day. Indeed, the dress of the average grandmother in church today would be thought indecent in Moses' day. For a thorough study, see Roy Gane, "Old Testament Principles Relating to Divorce and Remarriage," *JATS*, 12/2 (Autumn 2001).

[19] Some would say this command was only for the rich young ruler. Peter said he'd "left all" (Luke 18:28), but he still had a boat and a home in Capernaum. However, Jesus certainly emphasizes the danger of wealth and seeking after it (Luke 16:13, 25; Mark 10:25). Ron du Preez has written convincingly against polygamy, pointing out that God never commanded or even sanctioned it, even though he didn't outlaw it. There seem to be no examples of happy, contented polygamy in the Bible—not even God's marriage to Oholah and Oholibah in Ezek 23. He has also referred to divorce and remarriage as "serial polygamy." See his *Polygamy in the Bible*, Berrien Springs, Mich: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1993, and his "The God-Given Marital Mandate: Monogamous, Heterosexual, Intrafaith," *JATS*, 10/1–2 (Spring–Autumn 1999): 23–40. Certainly fidelity and monogamy were as much the creation ideal in Moses' day as in our own, yet God allowed what He hated (Mal 2:16). Experiential evidence, based on divorced people we know who are now submitted to his will, suggests that God continues to grudgingly tolerate the divorce He hates, even though it hurts him, because He knows our hearts are hard. Remember, even though He says "I hate divorce," this does not mean divorce is the only sin He hates.

temptation? There is a reason why Jesus sent out His disciples in pairs.[20] If a pastor is guilty even of child abuse and repents, remove the temptation and put the man to work. There is a great need for chaplains in hospices, retirement centers, and armed forces. We act as if a person tempted by one sin in particular must be guilty of all sins. We assume that if he is weak in one place, he must be weak in all places. We assume that if a pastor falls in one way he has nothing more to offer the church in any way. This is like thinking a man with a shriveled hand must also have a shriveled mind. Instead, we need to help a pastor guard his weak point so he can be strong everywhere else. Perhaps if church members ceased their idolatry, stopped worshiping their pastors and accepted them as humans, they could better accept and support those who need their help so they can in turn help others. In actual fact, pastors who don't face temptation themselves can't really understand what we're going through, but if they face it and are human, we must expect them to sometimes fall (see Heb 2:18, 4:15).

Third, what about the call to love our neighbors? We talk about the need for *agape* love, but unconditional love for enemies or even friends doesn't come easily—if ever. We must continue to talk about love, but we should also train the people of God to tolerate those who are different and those who hurt them, to see them as people in need of salvation, or indeed as brothers and sisters in Christ, if that is the case. However often we try to leap over the crossbar of love, we nearly always fall short of the mark. Until we can consistently make that leap, we will need a champion, a savior. That is to say, we will *always* need a champion on this earth. Whenever we respond to the fall of a brother or sister in Christ by pointing rather than comforting, we fall short of the mark. If we cringe at a silly hat in church, or a t-shirt instead of a tie, or a praise song instead of a great hymn, or a quavery voice singing a solo, or even if we sneer at someone who cringes at those things, we have not loved. Yes, we must teach the need to love. But we must forgive those who fail to love, just as we must love the ones they themselves fail to love. Do you know someone who avoids you because he is a racist? Don't call him a racist and shun him, but go to him and love him and teach him to love you. If you can't, then realize that you *both* need a champion to do what you can't do.

Fourth, what about stewardship, what we owe to the government, to God, to those in need, and even to God's creation groaning for relief (Rom 8:22)? Not

[20] Some would say it is not the place of the members to protect their pastor in this way, but if the pastor is also a part of the body of Christ, and not independent and above that body, then the pastor too is a part of the body to be cherished and protected. I think it would be quite appropriate for the elders or the church board to insist that the pastor is never to be alone with a woman who is not his wife, whether in his office or during a pastoral visit. There are a number of other things a board could do to protect the pastor, as well. The most exposed parts of the body are most in need of protection. I once heard Chuck Swindoll say that in his decades of ministry, he had never been alone with a woman not his wife, not even in a car. He said his ministry was given to him by God—it was too precious for him to jeopardize it by being in a position where someone could think evil of him. Would that more pastors realized their danger.

everyone is plagued by lust, or anger, or a bad marriage, but we all have to pay taxes and tithe. Is that why almost none of us argue that the church should discipline not only those who divorce, but those who don't live in poverty or at least give sacrificially? Scholars have provided sound arguments to show that Jesus doesn't mean for us to give away all our possessions, but only to be generous to those in need and to God and Caesar. Many church members who would vote to expel from the church someone who has committed a sexual sin are quite comfortable with their own cheating on taxes, failure to pay an honest tithe, or creatively redefining where to pay their tithe and how much to pay.[21] Here, instead of teaching as a requirement a saying meant to reveal God's highest desires for us, as we do with divorce or adultery, we fail to insist on even the biblical minimum. Thus we reveal the inconsistency with which we treat the hard sayings of Jesus.

Fifth, what about murder? Few are disciplined for having a bad temper. Few are warned to stop the gossip that is not only the bearing of false witness, but the reason for a good deal of anger. I know people in churches who won't talk to each other. Are they thus guilty of murder, yet unrebuked? Here is another example of a sin where we don't often point to God's highest desires for us. Is it because nearly all of us harbor anger in our hearts?

Sixth, Jesus commands us, "'[D]o not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. . . . Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself'" (Matt 6:25, 34 NIV). Is worry forbidden by Old Testament law? Yes, in a way. The rebellion of the Israelites in the desert—from the Red Sea, to the bitter water of Mara, to the golden calf episode, to the response to the spies who scouted out Canaan, and on—can be traced to their worry, their heard hearts and lack of faith. The Old Testament equivalent of "Do not worry" is "do not be afraid," as in Deut 1:21 or Gen 15:1. These words may not be specific laws, but nevertheless God often uses the phrase. "'Do not worry'" is as much Christ's command to us as any of the others, but what church disciplines members for worry? My own mother is devoted to God but admits that she's a "worry wart," and when my children are out on some school or church activity, I pray frequently for their safety, almost as if I don't believe God will care for them if I don't keep asking. Jesus says those who worry have "'little faith'" (v. 30). In that case, shouldn't we think twice before choosing elders or pastors who worry? I have house insurance, car insurance, life insurance, disability insurance, a pension fund, and a couple weeks' salary set aside "for a rainy day." Is this a sign that I am a worrier, a man of little faith? My wife keeps a careful budget, setting aside funds in various accounts for taxes, car repairs, house repairs, tuition, so when the bills arrive we won't panic. Even the church I attend is insured for a variety of catastrophes that will proba-

[21] It is certainly tempting to define one's increase as "after taxes." I tithe my gross income, but more than forty percent of that gross goes to various taxes.

bly never occur. I write this not to suggest that we should expel church members who worry, but to show we are far from responding consistently to Christ's call for the highest level of holiness in His followers.

The following table reveals in a graphic way the seriousness we accord to Jesus' apparent commands.

Jesus' Hard Sayings:	**Treated as a Goal**	**Treated as a Command**
Lust as Adultery	X	
Anger as Murder	X	
Love of Enemies	X	
False Witness/Gossip	X	
Stewardship	X	
Worry as Lack of Faith	X	
Idolizing Pastor (Rabbi/Father)	X	
Selling All and Giving	X	
Swearing and Oaths	X	
Lawsuits in Church	X	
Be Perfect Like the Father	X	
Leave All and Follow Christ	X	
No Treasures on Earth	X	
Don't Be Judgmental	X	
Divorce and Remarriage		X

In every case but one we understand that Jesus is pointing us to an ideal God wants us to attain. Only in the case of Jesus' teaching on divorce and remarriage do we treat Jesus' words as law and church policy. I am very happily married, and I think divorce is a tragedy. However, I think Christian churches need to reconsider whether their policies regarding divorce and remarriage are consistent with their policies regarding these other sins against God's goals for us. Even though these policies have been Christian traditions for centuries, I don't think they are biblically sound.

Conclusion

Yes, the body of Christ has been quite inconsistent in how it treats the hard sayings of Jesus. In some areas we require members to meet the highest mark set by Jesus when He revealed what perfection is in God's eyes. In others we excuse members from meeting even the much lower requirements of the Old Testament.

The consistent approach is to teach that in all of these hard sayings, Jesus is presenting the ultimate, the mark He himself reaches as our champion and wants us to aim at, not the mark we must require of the church. We will all fall short, daily, but so long as we remain on the championship team, God's highest vision

of holiness is not where we ourselves must be in order to be saved, but where our champion has already been, making us "more than conquerors" (Rom 8:37) if we are willing to be on His team.

When we understand this, we will be in a better position to support those who walk with a spiritual limp, helping them walk straight and tall. We will be more eager to forgive those who hurt us by being what they don't want to be, but can't help being. We will be better prepared to encourage those who have fallen or feel their sense of balance slipping away. We will be better able to nourish those who are hungry for the message that they are loved and forgiven, that their Father wants them to come home to the banquet already prepared for them. As we learn to accept the weaknesses of others and make use of what strengths they have, we will also find that others learn to help us with our own failings. Then, together, arm in arm, we can cheer the champion who has done great things and invited us all to join His championship team and look forward to the celebration to come.

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Recent Developments In Luther Research: Implications for the Adventist Understanding of Christ Our Righteousness

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On June 1, 1996, a seminar took place at St. Olaf College in Minnesota that introduced to the English speaking world a radical revision of the Lutheran understanding of Luther, constituting what appears to be a breakthrough in Luther research. The major papers were read by Finnish scholars from the Systematic Theology Department of the University of Helsinki, led by Professor Tuomo Mannermaa, and presented the results of intense research that began in the mid-seventies.[1]

The impetus for this research was provided by the ecumenical dialogue between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church, begun during the Archbishopric of Martti Simojoki in the early seventies. Simojoki charged the theological faculty at the University of Helsinki with the task of finding a point of contact on the basis of which the discussions might proceed.[2]

Of particular interest are the parallels between this new development in Luther research and the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of Christ our righteousness, which Arthur G. Daniels referred to as "the one sublime message set forth in the Sacred Scripture."[3] For Lutherans, the work of Mannermaa and his colleagues constitutes a revolutionary reinterpretation of Luther's theology,

[1] *Union With Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jensen, eds., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) is the published version of those lectures in the English language and includes responses by four American Luther scholars.

[2] Particularly in reference to the Orthodox doctrine of *theosis*, that is to say, participation in God.

[3] Arthur G. Daniels, *Christ Our Righteousness* (Takoma Park, Washington, D.C.: The Ministerial Association of Seventh-day Adventists, 1929), 15.

the implications of which remain to be seen.[4] For Seventh-day Adventists, it constitutes an affirmation of our understanding of Christ our righteousness as firmly anchored in the stream of the Reformation.

The Finnish Insights

Methodology. The Finnish scholars began with an analysis of the philosophical assumptions of traditional Luther studies, posing the questions: How does modern Luther scholarship understand the presence of Christ? and, What were the philosophical assumptions used in defining the nature of Christ's being present?

In seeking answers to these two questions, the Finnish scholars became aware of the significant influence of the philosopher Hermann Lotze (1817-1881) and the theologian Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889) on the thinking of subsequent Luther scholars and theologians especially with reference to understanding the nature of being. According to Lotze's ontology and epistemology, only the effect of things can be understood. As far as our knowledge of things is concerned, we can only "know" them by how they affect us, rather than by any sense of their entering into us. In other words, that which knowledge grasps in the object is not real: only the effects are real.

With respect to the God/man relationship, Ritschl followed Lotze's philosophy directly. Christ's presence for the believer is the effect of God's will. This means God acts upon us in terms of His will, which then causes our actions. The union created is not that of being, but rather of willing. His will effects our wills, and we then act accordingly. That is to say, "Christ in us means therefore that we ourselves live a moral life for Him."[5] Note that the emphasis is on "we ourselves." What this means is that union with Christ is not a reality in itself, but rather a union of divine and human wills. The Finns refer to this as transcendental effect orientation, which has determined the understanding of revelation, as well as the interpretation of Luther, for the past two centuries. Says Mannermaa, "On the basis of this tradition one can make hardly anything

[4] It is to be expected that criticism of Mannermaa's views will appear, especially from the Lutheran right as represented by churches like the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod and the Wisconsin Synod, for whom forensic justification is the primary focus. Such criticism did appear in the Finnish periodical *Concordia* (July-August, 1995): 8-12, in an article by H. Lehtonen entitled "Mannermaa: The Savior of Lutheranism?" (translated from the Finnish by Rodger N. Foltz). Lehtonen does not appreciate Mannermaa's critique of the *Formula of Concord*. For right wing Lutheranism the *Formula*, together with the other confessional documents in the *Book of Concord*, are valued because, rather than in-so-far-as, they represent the true exposition and understanding of Scripture. Right wing Lutheranism has also been suspicious of pietism and revival movements, which is reflected in Lehtonen's comment that "in the revival movements Mannermaa's Luther interpretation has found a responsive echo." Walter J. Kukkonen observed that the revival movements of Finland had a "keen interest in the works of Luther," and that "Modern Luther study in Finland has discovered the close affinity of the deeper insights of these movements to the central discoveries of Luther" (*The Lutheran Quarterly*, 10/1 [February 1958]: 38).

[5] Mannermaa quoting Risto Saarinen in *Union With Christ*, 8.

of those passages in Luther that speak of real participation in God."[6] Or of the apostle Paul, either.

Rejecting this philosophical presupposition and listening to Luther himself, the Finns concluded that Luther followed the Hebrew way of thinking in that the thing that is known is itself present in the one who knows. In Hebrew thought the attributes ("properties") of God— such as righteousness, wisdom, power, holiness, joy, peace, eternal life, and love—constitute His essence. Based on this way of thinking, Luther understood that because God and His Son are one, these attributes are present in Christ, and due to the indwelling Christ the believer is able to share those attributes. On this basis Luther is able to say, "Thus the righteousness of Christ becomes our righteousness through faith in Christ, and everything that is his, even he himself, becomes ours . . . and he who believes in Christ clings to Christ and is one with Christ and has the same righteousness with him."[7] The believer has no righteousness of his own, but is made righteous because of Christ's righteousness. Hence for Luther, this oneness with Christ, or union with Christ, constitutes being.

This being is never static, because God is always creating. Being is a continuous reception of God's gifts in which Christ is present and in which Christ Himself is given. Thus the believer is always being born and renewed. Luther understands this relationally: The Christian is "in Christ," understood not only forensically but really. The medium (or means) of spiritual existence "is not the event of 'forensic justification' but the divine person of Christ."[8] In other words, Christ is the spiritual existence of the believer.

With respect to methodology, the Finns did not begin where much of contemporary Lutheranism begins, with the *Formula of Concord*[9] or with subsequent philosophical assumptions concerning being, but with Luther himself, who began with Scripture. They did not ignore what they found to be Luther's ontology, but went beyond the traditional idea that faith is an act of the will, volitional obedience, with no ontological implications.

Justification. I remember quite vividly when the Lutheran World Federation, meeting in Helsinki in 1963, was unable to produce a satisfactory statement on justification because of the inability to answer the modern question, "Does

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[6] *Union With Christ*, 9.

[7] Quoted in *Union With Christ*, 6.

[8] Sammeli Juntunen, "Luther and Metaphysics" in *Union With Christ*, 153. Juntunen refers to this insight as "Luther before Lutheranism." If Juntunen and his colleagues are correct, Lutheranism has been Luther's worst enemy.

[9] Luther died in 1547. The *Formula of Concord* was completed in 1577, becoming the final section of the *Book of Concord*, which was published in June, 1580, the fiftieth anniversary of the first reading of the Augsburg Confession. The intent and purpose of the *Formula of Concord* was to settle the controversies over Reformation doctrine that had arisen following the death of Luther and secure a united Lutheran front against Roman Catholic pressure. The formulation and propagation of Lutheran doctrine and theology was now in the hands of the second generation of Lutheran Reformers, and the style of the *Formula* was decidedly scholastic.

God exist?" The so-called sixteenth century question, assumed to be the underlying and central question for Luther—"How can a sinner find a gracious God?"—is not being asked today. They had no answer for the modern question because they were still looking at Luther through *Formula of Concord* glasses and missing his emphasis on the indwelling Christ. The Finns have helped Lutherans understand that the existence of God can be known not because we have found Him to be gracious, but because He has found us and has come to us in the Person of Christ, who is present in faith and who is our righteousness. Carl Braaten wonders if it makes any sense for Lutherans to continue holding justification as the chief doctrine of the Christian faith "if they are so unclear and in fact in wide disagreement about its material content."[10]

The *Formula of Concord* states that the righteousness of Christ is "reckoned to us," that it is "reckoned to faith," that therefore sinners are "accounted righteous and holy by God," that they are "regarded as holy and righteous through faith," and that the "righteousness of faith before God consists solely in the gracious reckoning of Christ's righteousness to us."[11] The words "reckoned," "accounted," and "regarded" mean to consider or impute. Then, however, in the same section the *Formula* states that "a person must be righteous before he can do good works." This last is an ontological statement, not a forensic one. It is of course true that a person must *be* righteous in order to produce good works. Recall Luther's Hebrew ontology in which oneness with Christ, or union with Christ, constitutes being.

The *Formula* includes only a brief passing reference regarding the "indwelling of God's essential righteousness," stating negatively that it "is not the righteousness of faith of which St. Paul speaks and which he calls the righteousness of God, on account of which we are declared just before God." It is obvious that the writers of the *Formula* were stuck on the forensic nature of imputed righteousness, which was all they could see in the Pauline corpus, and were unable to articulate what the Finnish scholars refer to as Luther's understanding of "donated" righteousness (or *lahja vanhurskaus*—"gifted righteousness"), which is the righteousness of the indwelling Christ. That inability has plagued Lutheranism ever since, which is why there has been little appreciation for, and much opposition to, the kind of spiritual life instinctively fostered among Lutheran pietists. What the Finns refer to as "donated" or "gifted" righteousness, Adventists refer to as "imparted" righteousness.

For Lutheran pietists 1 Peter 1:4 was most significant: "For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust." For them to become "partakers of the divine nature" was not understood forensically but ontologically.

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[10] *Union With Christ*, 71.

[11] Solid Declaration, Article III.

The Presence of Christ in Faith. The key idea in the Finnish insight into Luther is that "in faith itself Christ is really present" (Mannermaa).[12] This represents a radical departure from the contemporary Lutheran concept of forensic justification, largely based on the *Formula of Concord*, in which Christ for us was separated from Christ in us. As we shall see, this insight into Luther articulates his belief that by faith the believer receives the righteousness of God. The believer is not only declared righteous (forensic) because of the work of Christ on Calvary, but receives Christ's righteousness by faith and thereby becomes righteous. The language of this insight into Luther, says Carl Braaten, "falls like

[12] While the Mannermaa school of Luther scholars has revised contemporary Luther research, the idea of the indwelling Christ, or Christ as present in faith, has been part of Finnish Lutheran Christianity for some time. The roots go back as far as the revivalist Paavo Ruotsalainen, who in 1799 was counseled by a blacksmith with the words, "One thing you lack and with it everything, the inward knowledge of Christ." Commenting on this event, Walter J. Kukkonen says: "Like Luther, Paavo now referred all matters of life and doctrine to Jesus Christ, not just to the 'Christ for us,' which can be a purely intellectual matter, but above all to the 'Christ in us,' the Christ who is the Christian's righteousness, the Christ for whose sake God justifies the ungodly" (*The Inward Knowledge of Christ* [Helsinki: Publications of the Luther-Agricola Society, 1977], 7). The concept can be found in more recent times as well. "Luther was not satisfied with a historical faith in Christ. The historical standpoint keeps Christ in the past. For Luther, to whom pastoral care and practical Christianity were always the main thing, this was not enough. It was most important that Christ be seen as one who is present. His words in the *Commentary on Galatians* are characteristic of his view: 'Faith justifies because Christ is present' (*Iustificat fides, quia Christus adest*). In faith and for faith Christ is really present" (Lennart Pinomaa, trans. from the Finnish by Walter J. Kukkonen, *Faith Victorious* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963], 59-60.). With respect to sanctification, Pinomaa articulates Luther's view by saying that "The struggle for holiness is carried on in faith and involves Christ, who is really present, and our total self" (72). The idea of the indwelling Christ, or union with Christ, is also present in the religious thought of Martti Simojoki, former archbishop of the Lutheran Church of Finland, whose spiritual roots were in the revival movement of the late 1700's called the Awakened and who appreciated the views of Ruotsalainen. See his devotional book *The Struggle for Wholeness*, trans. by Walter J. Kukkonen, (Tucson: Polaris, 1989), 38, 203. Kukkonen, writing about the theological factors that shaped the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: Suomi Synod, said "the saving act of God is an *actus purus*, independent of man's merits or efforts, but it is not merely a forensic event, for it involves the individual in his relationship to God and his fellow men. Sanctification, then, becomes the mirror which reflects justification, a sign of living faith. There is both the 'Christ for us' and the 'Christ in us.'" (*The Lutheran Quarterly*, 11/1 (February 1958): 43.) The idea of union with Christ is present in other Protestant theologians as well. Consider this: "If it be now asked, *Why* is it so vital to keep the conception of union with Christ in the centre? The answer is clear. For one thing, to assign to this fact any place other than the centre is to endanger the whole doctrine of atonement. The redemption achieved by Christ becomes something that operates mechanically or almost magically: it is altogether outside of us, independent of our attitude . . . It is certain that such an idea as justification, for instance, can only be gravely misleading, when it is not seen in the light of a union with Christ in which the sinner identifies himself with Christ in His attitude to sin. Similarly, the thoughts of sanctification, dissociated from union, loses all reality . . . Only when union with Christ is kept central is sanctification seen in its true nature, as the unfolding of Christ's own character within the believer's life; and only then can the essential relationship between religion and ethics be understood. In short, the whole meaning of the atonement is at stake" (James S. Stewart, *A Man In Christ: The Vital Elements of St. Paul's Religion*, [New York: Harper, n.d.], 152-153).

a thud on Lutheran ears accustomed to hearing from Luther chiefly what echoes their Lutheran tradition."[13] It will fall like a thud on some Adventist ears as well, and those of some of Adventism's critics.

Luther wrote, "Christ is God's grace, mercy, righteousness, truth, wisdom, power, comfort, and salvation, given to us by God without any merit on our part. Christ, I say, not as some express it in blind words, 'causally,' so that he grants righteousness and remains absent himself, for that would be dead. Yes, it is not given at all unless Christ himself is present, just as the radiance of the sun and the heat of fire are not present if there is no sun and no fire."[14] All of the attributes (properties) of God are present in the person of Christ. The Finnish scholars have recognized that central to Luther's thought is that God must become present in the believer through faith if He is to give him/her His gifts of life and salvation.

It is by His very nature that God becomes really present. Faith results in union with God because He becomes present in us the very moment He creates faith. He lives and works His will in us not as an idea, but as really present. On the basis of this understanding of the presence of Christ in faith, a believer can participate in God's essential goodness, which is love, and become loving. Redemption, therefore, does not happen only on the cross, but *in* believers in whom Christ dwells by faith. The Christ who is present in faith transforms the believer into His own likeness. In this way the believer participates in the attributes of Christ. The presence of Christ in faith, therefore, is the basis of sanctification. The inward knowledge, or knowing, of Christ has a sanctifying effect.[15] This

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[13] *Union With Christ*, viii.

[14] Quoted by Mannermaa in *Union With Christ*, 15-16. Calvin's thinking is similar to Luther's: "So long as we are without Christ and separate from Him, nothing which He did and suffered for the human race is of the least benefit to us. To communicate to us the blessings which He received from the Father, He must become ours and dwell within us" (*Institutes*, III.1.1).

[15] See Luther's *Three Treatises* (Philadelphia: Muhlenburg, 1960), in which he says that "to preach Christ means to feed the soul, make it righteous, set it free, and save it, provided it believes the preaching" (280), and that faith "unites the soul with Christ as a bride is united with her bridegroom" (286). He says "a man is abundantly and sufficiently justified inwardly, in his spirit, and so has all that he needs, except insofar as this faith and these riches must grow from day to day [sanctification] even to the future life [glorification]; yet he remains in this mortal life on earth" (294). He proposes to "examine more profoundly that grace which our inner man has in Christ" (288). In the section in which Luther speaks of the believer's good works, he says, "Surely we are named [Christians] after Christ, not because he is absent from us, but because he dwells in us . . ." (305). Luther's understanding is not the Roman Catholic teaching in which the sanctifying grace of God is *infused* into the believer by means of sacraments, and which then becomes meritorious and therefore the basis of justification. The error of Catholicism is not that the sinner is renewed inwardly by grace, but that such inward renewal gives the sinner merit before God. In all fairness it must be acknowledged that the emphasis in the *Formula of Concord* on the forensic aspect of justification was in reaction to the views of Andreas Osiander (1498-1552), who held that by virtue of Christ's divine nature the believer is justified by His sanctifying presence rather than by His saving merits. It is unfortunate that this rejection of Osiander's view, while necessary under the circumstances in sixteenth century Germany, ultimately resulted in the one-sided position of the *Formula* and of much

view has been historically denied by many Lutherans in general, with some exceptions, and the consequence has been the loss of theological characteristics that would help them understand the Seventh-day Adventist belief that obedience is a fruit of faith.

Furthermore, on the basis of these recent insights into Luther, it cannot be claimed that justification and sanctification are distinct theological categories but must be understood as equally significant aspects of the salvation process.

Grace and Gift. One of the Finnish scholars, professor Simo Peura, recognizes that "One of the most difficult problems to be solved in Lutheran theology concerns the relation between the forensic and the effective aspects of Justification. The question is crucial above all for Lutheran identity."[16] While the problem has been forced to their attention by ecumenical dialogue, this acknowledgement should be most welcome to Seventh-day Adventists. Peura says "The two aspects of justification are expressed in Luther's theology in his conceptions of grace (*gratia, favor*) and gift (*donum*). One indicates that a sinner is forensically declared righteous, and the other that he is made effectively righteous."[17]

Luther's understanding of the relationship between grace and gift is based on Romans 5:15-17, especially verse 17, which reads: "For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ." In this text we see that the grace of God and the gift are identical, righteousness given to believers through Christ. Righteousness replaces sin in the believer, and thus he/she is purified.

Following the *Formula of Concord*, orthodox Lutherans have insisted that justification involves primarily imputed righteousness, the declaration of the forgiveness of sin. That belief is reflected in the liturgical order for confession and absolution, when the minister says to the congregation: "Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sin. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."[18] What is not included in the traditional Lutheran doctrine, as understood by many contemporary Lutheran theologians, is the renewal of the believer, and the removal of sin. When the *Formula* speaks of gift, it means correct knowledge of Christ and the assurance based on the knowledge that God considers believers righteous be-

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subsequent Lutheran theology. The *Formula* failed to address the significance of either Luther's or Paul's emphasis on the indwelling Christ and union with Christ.

[16] Simo Peura, "Christ as Favor and Gift (*donum*): The Challenge of Luther's Understanding of Justification" in *Union With Christ*, 42.

[17] Ibid, 42. In footnote #1 on page 42, Peura, commenting on the ecumenical dialogue with Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians, observes that "We Lutherans will encounter great difficulties if we try to represent only the forensic aspect of Justification."

[18] *Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1978), 56, 77, 98.

cause of Christ's obedience. Excluded from gift are everything that Luther included in it: regeneration, renewal, and, above all, Christ's presence in the believer. This exclusion was based on the philosophical assumption that God's being is separated from His effects. Therefore, with reference to the doctrine of justification, much of post-*Formula* Lutheran theology failed to consider the ontological dimension. All the justified believer can claim by faith is that he understands he has a new (legal) position, or standing, before God. What happens to the believer happens only in his mind.

In contrast to this, professor Peura's study of Luther's thought leads him to say:

> Justification is not only a change of self-understanding, a new relation to God, or a new ethos of love. God changes the sinner ontologically in the sense that he or she participates in God and in his divine nature, being made righteous . . . This interpretation is based on the thesis that both grace and gift are a righteousness given in Christ to a Christian. This donation presupposes that Christ is really present and that he indwells the believer. Christ on the one hand is the grace that is given to the sinner that protects him against the wrath of God (the forensic aspect), and on the other hand he is the gift that renews and makes the sinner righteous (the effective aspect). All this is possible only if Christ is united with the sinner through the sinner's faith.[19]

Based on this understanding of Luther, it can no longer be said that his central teaching was justification by faith. Faith *in* Christ does not itself justify; rather it is Christ who gives faith and who is *present in faith* who justifies the sinner. In other words, when the sinner is united to Christ in faith, he receives the forgiveness of sin and Christ's righteousness as a divine gift of grace (Romans 5:15-17). Furthermore, there is no justification outside of personal faith and union with Christ. For Luther, then, union with Christ is essential for salvation. As Peura says, "Thus the basic starting point of Luther's interpretation of Romans 5:15 (*gratia Dei et donum in gratia*) is as follows: Christ himself is grace and gift. Christ himself is the grace that covers a sinner and hides him from God's wrath, and Christ himself is the gift that renews the sinner internally and makes him righteous. This occurs, then, when Christ unites himself with a sinner."[20]

Conclusion

Whereas the Finnish scholars discovered that union with Christ is central to Luther's doctrine of justification, Seventh-day Adventists, together with Luther, discovered it in Scripture. The Adventist discovery is affirmed by Ellen G. White. Therefore, neither Lutheran nor Adventist theologians can afford to dis-

[19] *Union With Christ*, 48.
[20]. *Union With Christ*, 53.

count or ignore the significant contribution of Ellen G. White with regard to Christ our righteousness.

According to Daniels, the "one sublime message" is Christ our righteousness. Why is it so sublime? Ellen G. White wrote, speaking of the disciples, "After the Saviour's ascension, the sense of the divine presence, full of love and light, was still with them. It was a personal presence. . . . The light and love and power of an indwelling Christ shone out through them, so that men, beholding, marveled."[21]

Ellen G. White writes in a way similar to Luther. On the surface there appears to be no evidence of what is classically referred to as a "systematic" theology. For many trained theologians this absence has led to the discounting of Ellen G. White as a theological thinker to be taken seriously. She is considered primarily as a devotional writer and a valued counselor, rather than as a theological thinker.

Many Luther scholars have become bored with Luther, assuming that he has nothing more to say and that a continued poring over his works will produce nothing new. The Finnish scholars have brought excitement back into Luther research, and he is once again an open book! Perhaps the same needs to happen to Seventh-day Adventists relative to Ellen G. White, learning anew to appreciate her as a theological thinker. We need to rediscover, as the Finnish Luther scholars have, that the old stuff is still the best stuff (that is to say the classic literature)!

Luther insists that union with Christ is *effected* in baptism, the precondition being the preaching of the Word. For Luther baptism becomes valid when the Word, Christ, joins with water.[22] For Seventh-day Adventists baptism signifies that which has already been effected by grace through faith, namely union with Christ, illustrating and demonstrating that fact. The Adventist view is more Christological than sacramental. Still, there are similarities between the two understandings of baptism.

Ellen G. White says that a person baptized "receives the imprint of God by baptism" and that we should always remember that "upon them the Lord has placed His signature, declaring them to be His sons and daughters."[23] Thus, in her view, the primary actor in baptism is God, not the one being baptized or the minister baptizing. However, while God takes the initiative in baptism, instead of effecting union with Christ, baptism confirms and affirms what has already been given by grace and received by faith, namely, Christ our righteousness.[24]

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[21] Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 65.

[22] WA 37:627-72.

[23] *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1953), 6:1075.

[24] This is also the reason why Adventists hold to adult baptism instead of infant baptism. This view of Ellen G. White concerning God's initiative in baptism, which is not quite the same as the traditional believers baptism, has never been seriously considered by Seventh-day Adventist theolo-

It is only on the basis that the believer has by faith received Christ and, thereby, His righteousness, that the church is able to expect the baptized to exhibit evidence of the Christlike life. Christ, by indwelling the believer, takes the place of the life of sin. If baptism were only a human act, lack of evidence of the new birth would be natural and expected. But because baptism is also, and primarily, an act of God, such evidence of transformation is not only possible but is to be expected.

Here we see that the Adventist understanding of baptism as it relates to union with Christ, and the recent Finnish insights into Luther, are quite similar. However, that the baptized dies in regard to sin, and that a newborn Christian is raised up from the watery grave, is most adequately illustrated by immersion, which liturgically demonstrates its meaning.

Because of the Finnish Luther research, Geoffrey J. Paxton (Anglican) will have to revise his analysis of what he has termed the crisis among Adventists over the doctrine of justification.[25] Furthermore, Desmond Ford will have to reconsider his endorsement of Paxton's analysis as well.[26]

Paxton claims that when Luther presented his lectures on Romans (1515), he was "still the evangelical Catholic," but by the time he presented his lectures on Galatians (1535), he was "the Protestant Reformer."[27] However, Reinhold Seeberg devastates Paxton's reasoning when he writes:

> The differences between the 'first form' and the later forms of Luther's theology are commonly very much exaggerated. If we consider the technical terminology, there is indeed a manifest difference; but if we have in view the actual content and logical results of his ideas, we can scarcely reach any other conclusion than that Luther had before A. D. 1517 already grasped the conceptions and attained the points of view which gave character to his life-work. . . . it is most important of all to observe that he, at the very beginning of his career, makes practical application of his new idea of faith; for the leverage of Luther's reformatory principle lies, not in justification, nor in a new theory of grace, but in the conviction that faith is the *form* of true religion.[28]

If we lean in the direction of the traditional Lutheran doctrine of forensic justification, we will find ourselves in the unfortunate position of being tempted to abandon the one sublime truth upon which all else depends: Christ our righteousness. Salvation by grace through faith involves both that which Christ has done for us on Calvary, and that which He does in us by virtue of His indwelling

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gians. Her view is far more theocentric/Christocentric than anthropocentric. (See C. Raymond Holmes, *Sing A New Song!: Worship Renewal for Adventists Today* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews UP, 1984), 60-69.)

[25] *The Shaking of Adventism*, (Grand Rapids: Baker), 1977.

[26] "The Truth of Paxton's Thesis," *Spectrum*, 9/3.

[27] *The Shaking of Adventism*, 37.

[28] *History of Doctrine,* III.I.I, (Grand Rapids: Baker), 223,

presence. Paul said that the believer's "hope of glory" is "Christ in you" (Col. 1:27).

Furthermore, with respect to the debate over the relationship between justification and sanctification, neither Paxton nor Ford recognized that sanctification does not take place outside the believer.

While post-*Formula* Lutheranism employed forensic justification in opposition to the Catholic concept of grace infused in the believer by means of sacraments and the ministry of priests, Luther himself focused on the indwelling Christ and union with Christ, identifying justification with the presence of Christ in faith. For Luther, and for Seventh-day Adventists, the righteousness which Christ imparts to the believer by virtue of His indwelling presence is always an alien righteousness. The sinner can never claim righteousness on the basis of his/her own merits, only on the merits of Christ.

Carl Braaten concludes that "In the future Luther-scholarship around the world will have to be in dialogue with the Finnish picture of Luther . . ."[29] Seventh-day Adventist Luther scholars, as well as Adventist participants in theological discussions with Lutherans, will also have to be conversant with the new Finnish insights.

While we welcome these new Finnish insights which confirm our own understanding of Christ our righteousness and affirm that we are definitely in the Reformation stream when it comes to justification, we do not see, in the same sense Braaten does, that they hold promise "for visible church unity."[30] He, as Executive Director of the Center for Catholic and Evangelical Theology and a prominent contemporary ecumenist, is of course speaking of Lutheran/Catholic unity. However, the fact that this new Luther research was motivated by ecumenical concerns does not lessen the significance of the discoveries, which have challenged a century of scholarly opinion concerning a foundational doctrine of Protestant theology.

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[29] *Union With Christ*, 75.
[30] Ibid.

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The Challenge of Leadership Formation

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It took place about a month after graduation. I was a very young minister attending a youth ministry retreat in Northern California with Tim Hansel as the speaker. He told a story to highlight the challenge teachers and others in formation vocations have with our young collegiates. A college professor was lecturing to his class in a sizable amphitheater-type classroom. In the course of the lecture he wrote on the blackboard the word "apathy." A young male on the last row, leaning so far back he was nearly horizontal, his legs up on the seat in front of him, attempted to read the word: "Ah—pay—thee. Ahpaythee." Elbowing his slumbering seatmate to the left he asked; "Hey, what's that?" His young friend, rubbing his eyes, looked at the board and read: "Ah—pay—thee." After a long silence he finally declared: "Oh, who cares!"

For those charged with the frightful yet joyous responsibility of forming young men and women to become the spiritual leaders of the church, the question is this: Will what we have to offer them change anything in them? Or will they say of the things of God, "Who cares?"

I'm not speaking of knowledge or skills but of character. For if the change they experience under our watch is going from darkness to being conversant with Barth's arguments, if the change is going from stiffness on the platform to glibness behind a pulpit, if the change is from saying "church" in English to saying "*ekklesia*" in Greek, we have not accomplished much that is worthwhile. If their lives have not conformed to the loving will of the Master, we have failed at our greatest task—that of character transformation.

But first, a bit of history and analysis.

Formation Lacking

The history of theological education in the Christian Church shows a variety of paradigms have been used for leadership formation. The *ascetic* paradigm, with its emphasis on mystical religion, gave way to the *scholastic* paradigm of

the 12th and 13th centuries. The 16th century Reformation brought about a focus on Scripture and preaching. Two tracks can be identified as a result of this focus. One, taking deepest root in North America, was a *mentoring* paradigm, emphasizing relational interchanges between a would-be pastor and his more experienced pastor-teacher. The other, rising up in the German universities and eventually influencing American seminaries of the late 1900s, was an *encyclopedic* paradigm: the fourfold and now traditional structure of systematic, biblical, historical, and practical theology. Today's paradigm is known in the literature of theological education as the *professional* paradigm, the dominant paradigm of the 20th century.[1]

At every historical juncture, a goal never quite achieved was the spiritual or character formation of the future minister. The current paradigm reveals the same.

During the past century, four major studies were conducted on the state of theological education vis-a-vis the state of ministry.[2]

The first study, by Robert Kelly, looked at 161 theological schools in America and Canada. The report included many aspects of theological education, but it also provided the first hint that something was amiss in the training of the inner person of the would-be parson. It indicated that the growth of Bible schools with enrollments as high as the seminaries "is an indication that the seminaries have not occupied the field of 'theological' education. The churches are demanding new types of workers."[3] What did Kelly mean by new types of workers? As Virginia Brereton so clearly pointed out in the definitive work on the rise of Bible colleges,[4] the churches longed for ministers whose exposure to

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[1]For a further historical view of the different paradigms consult my own *A Biblical Paradigm for Ministerial Training* (D.Min. Diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1997), 192-227.

[2]The first study was by Robert L. Kelly, *Theological Education in America: A Study of One Hundred Sixty-One Theological Schools in the United States and Canada* (New York: Doran, 1924). This study was commissioned by the Institute of Social and Religious Research.

The second was by Mark A. May, William Adams Brown, Frank K. Shuttleworth, et al., 4 vols. (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1934). This study was co-sponsored by said institute and the Conference of Theological Seminaries in the United States and Canada.

The third study was reported in two distinct volumes by H. Richard Niebuhr, Daniel Day Williams, and James M. Gustafson, *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry: Reflections on the Aims of Theological Education* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), and *The Advancement of Theological Education* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957). A third and historical volume was written in conjunction with the study, with H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams as editors: *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives* (New York: Harper & Row, 1956). The study was co-sponsored by the American Association of Theological Schools (AATS) and the Carnegie Corporation.

The last study was by David S. Schuller, Merton P. Strommen and Milo L. Brekke, eds., *Ministry in America* (San Francisco: Harper & Row , 1980). Previous partial reports were published as *Readiness for Ministry*, 1973-75. The project was co-sponsored by The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) and by Search Institute.

[3]Kelly, 229.

[4]Virginia Brereton, *Training God's Army: The American Bible School, 1880-1940* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990).

the Word actually made a difference in them, resulting in greater piety and evangelistic conviction. The irony today is that most of those once unaccredited Bible colleges are now well-respected evangelical seminaries just as unable to transform their charges' inner life as the seminaries they once criticized!

Ten years later, the Brown-May report found a proliferation of professional courses aimed at staying even with other professions, such as medicine and law.[5] But it also recognized the paradigm's inability to directly affect the inner life of the candidate for ministry. For example, regarding students' spiritual development, the study admitted great concern:

> These [students] are, for the most part at least, looking forward to the ministry, and the specialty of the minister is religion. Unless the seminary succeeds in keeping the religious [spiritual] life of its students unimpaired, it has failed at the place where failure is most disastrous . . . many of our seminaries do not seem to be taking this responsibility with due seriousness.[6]

The Niebuhr study, done in the post-war years' enrollment boom, saw the role of the modern spiritual leader as the "pastoral director" of the congregation. The study provided insightful evaluation and deft analysis, but was at a loss to know what could be done about the inner spiritual growth of the spiritual leader.

The most ambitious report to the present, the *Readiness for Ministry* study done in the 1970s,[7] became the spark that ignited the current trend of self-examination in theological education. Glenn Miller noted with alarm that the research

> . . . marked the beginning of a season of discontent in American theological education. No notable weakness in *Readiness* dissatisfied the critics. The worry was whether professionalism produced [spiritual] leaders. In and outside theological education, thoughtful people noted that the churches did not have effective people at their head.[8]

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[5]"If the ministry is to hold its own with the leaders of the other professions, it is essential that the graduates of the best theological schools should be subjected to a discipline not less rigorous." Brown, "Ministerial Education in America: Summary and Interpretation," in *The Education of American Ministers*, 1:4-6.

[6]Ibid., 155.

[7]The massive study involved 12,000 people, designed 444 descriptions of ministry generating 64 clusters of ministry items, which, in turn, resulted in 11 major factor areas of ministry organization. It conducted an in-depth survey of forty-seven denominations, divided into seventeen theological families, in the United States and Canada, including Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox traditions. The survey results came from 4,995 lay people and clergy. Of these, 444 were theology professors, 441 senior seminary students, 1,917 seminary graduates who were active in ministry, 322 denominational administrators, and 1,871 randomly selected lay people from the forty-seven denominations (*Ministry in America*, 16-22).

[8]Glenn T. Miller, "The Virtuous Leader: Teaching Leadership in Theological Schools," in *Faith & Mission*, 9:1 (Fall 1991): 27.

The study showed that in spite of continued concentration on ministry skills, the preponderance of what was considered valuable for the pastor's effectiveness in ministry were *not*, in fact, ministry *skills*, but character values. For example, over half of the top twelve most valued ministry descriptions—out of 444—were character-based, such as "keeps his/her own word and fulfills promises," "acknowledges his/her own need for continued growth in faith," "serves others willingly with or without public acclaim," and "maintains personal integrity despite pressures to compromise." Although skills, compassion, and other factors are important in ministry, this watershed study clearly showed that the solidity of a pastoral candidate's Christian character is in the sight of God and people ranked above faith tradition, clerical training, or ecclesiastical priorities.[9]

In the wake of the report, a seminal work was published by Edward Farley, now of Vanderbilt, called *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education*, and the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) sponsored major works in the field of theological education. What had happened? Whereas until now, all discussion on theological education for spiritual leadership had mostly to do with pragmatic issues of curriculum, resourcing, governance, and development, now the entire center had shifted to *aims and purposes* of theological leadership training. This shift has caused a revolution in the field, producing hundreds of articles and a host of well-articulated, book-length proposals on what is *theological* about theological training.

But no proposal yet has a handle on how to bring about the spiritual formation of the leader. No one knows! They either take it for granted, consider it outside of educational boundaries, or view it as of such a personal nature that they leave it alone. And yet, all seem to realize this is key for leadership formation, and something ought to be done about it. Evangelical seminaries have acknowledged poor marks when it comes to the spiritual development of their students. One independent report said:

> We generally agree that the spiritual development of the pastor is extremely important . . . But we have been unable or unwilling to give to the development of the character and spirituality of [our] students nearly the time and attention that we have given to the intellectual skills necessary for careful handling of the Scriptures.[10]

I remember interviewing the coordinator of the Spiritual Formation component at the S.D.A. Theological Seminary at Andrews University in 1996. He considered the seminary's efforts at spiritual formation a complete failure, noting that students were very resistant to accountability in spiritual direction. It

[9]Schuller, *Ministry*, 94-99, 160-165,176-177, 196-205, 222-223.

[10]Quoted in David W. Kling, "New Divinity Schools of the Prophets," in D.G. Hart and R. Albert Mohler, Jr., eds., *Theological Education in the Evangelical Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 147.

was not working. Dean Alan Jones has said it well: "In some ways seminary training is too practical. Students are forced to acquire too many 'skills for ministry' without 'the one thing needful,' a maturing sense of self and a hunger for God."[11]

The lack of power in spiritual leadership, the inability to influence a world careening to self-destruction, is even perceived by those whose interest in religion is minimal at best. Two years ago, John Piper, at an ETS meeting, quoted Charles Meissner on Albert Einstein's view of preachers and their relevance. Einstein had profound respect and awe for the design of the universe. Meissner considered Einstein more truly religious than many preachers, certainly than shallow, thoughtless, and powerless ones. Meissner said: "He must have looked at what preachers said about God and felt that they were blaspheming. He had seen much more majesty than they had ever imagined. They [the preachers] were just not talking about the real thing."[12]

Elisha: The Real Thing

The real thing. Do you think students would want to see "the real thing"? Do you think they would like to learn at the feet of someone who has bowed so low before God as to have touched the heavens? You know they would because you and I would! Few lives can have more impact on would-be spiritual leaders than a teacher's well-lived life, soaked with the living Spirit of the loving God of the universe.

I'll never forget the first time I really read the summary of the impact made by a great teacher in Israel, Elisha of Abel-meholah.

> And Elisha died, and they buried him. Now the bands of the Moabites would invade the land in the spring of the year. And as they were burying a man, behold, they saw a marauding band; and they cast the man into the grave of Elisha. And when the man touched the bones of Elisha he revived and stood up on his feet. 2 Kings 13:20-21

This is a unique incident in Scripture, paralleled only by the Jerusalem resurrections at the death of our Lord (Matt 27:52).

Elisha's life was a well-lived life. For years before he led the "sons of the prophets," he served a great prophet. He was known as the one "who used to pour water on the hands of Elijah" (2 Kgs 3:11). Even this hints at his character. Ellen White says of Elisha that he had the "characteristics of a ruler" but "the meekness of one who would serve" (2BC 1035). That he had energy and was steadfast (Ed 58), but was mild (5T 44) and had integrity (PK 218). She repeats time and again his chief characteristic: Elisha was meek and had a gentle spirit

[11]Dean Alan Jones, "Are We Lovers Anymore: Spiritual Formation in the Seminaries," in *Theological Education*, 24:1 (1987): 11.

[12]Quoted by John Piper, "Training the Next Generation of Evangelical Pastors and Missionaries," paper presented at the Evangelical Theological Society conference in Orlando, November 19-21, 1998.

(Ed 58), he was meek and had a quiet spirit (SD 93), he was mild and had a kindly spirit (PK 235), he had a quiet and gentle spirit (PK 218). He had what we could term a "heart impressed by the Spirit" (PK 220). Does this remind you of the Master whose only self-description, found in Matthew 11:29, tells us that He is "gentle and humble in heart"? Do you think students could profit from mentors who have a humble spirit and whose hearts are "impressed by the Spirit"?

It is interesting to note that at the time of Samuel the schools of the prophets were known as the "band" or "company" of the prophets, but at the time of Elisha they were known as the "sons" of the prophets. The "bands" became the "sons." The Semitic idiom "son of" carries a much deeper sense of imitation than the English expression, which mainly deals with identification.[13] The sons of the prophets functioned in a spirit of close community with their mentors, especially in the time of Elisha. When the school at Jericho needed bigger quarters, Elisha felled trees for construction alongside the students (2 Kgs 6:1-4). When he was at the Gilgal campus he shared instruction and meals with them (2 Kgs 4:38). This is even demonstrated linguistically. R. Payne Smith had noted that when the sons of the prophets are found "sitting before" Elisha (2 Kgs 4:38) and "living before" him (2 Kgs 6:1), the verb and preposition are the same. The verb *yashad* is translated in its more literal sense in the first passage and denotes an academic activity. In the second text it denotes a domestic activity, a daily routine.[14] Michael Wilkins points out that this was "a master-disciple relationship in mutual commitment to service of God."[15] That relationship was so valuable that when a financial crisis arose on the part of a student's wife, she was led to seek Elisha's help (2 Kgs 4:1). Why would she do that when at the time such requests were normally made of the next of kin? For the same reason God had those "sons" be so close to their teacher: so they could see that God was alive and well in Israel.

Note what Ellen White writes about these schools:

> In these 'schools of the prophets' young men were educated by those who were not only [1] well versed in divine truth, but [and this is her point] who themselves [2] maintained close communion with God and [3] **had received the special endowment of His Spirit**. These educators enjoyed the respect and confidence of the people both for learning and piety. **The power of the Holy Spirit was often strikingly manifest in their assemblies, and the exercise of the prophetic gift was not infrequent**.[16]

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[13]Joseph Grassi, *The Teacher in the Primitive Church and the Teacher Today* (Santa Clara, CA: U of Santa Clara P, 1973), 27.

[14]R. Payne Smith, "The Schools of the Prophets After the Time of Samuel," in *The Expositor* 3/6 (June 1876): 409.

[15]Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: Discipleship in the Steps of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 64.

[16]*Signs of the Times*, July 20, 1882; emphasis added.

This is the real thing, a Christlike character yielding Christlike power. The times of the ministry of Elijah and Elisha were dark, and apostasy was omnipresent in Israel. How else could God stay the final decline of His people in the hands of the uncircumcised except by nurturing a group of youth, leading them to be so close to those who knew Him best that absolute trust in the mighty hand of Jehovah was not for them an academic exercise but a living reality, seen day after day after day?[17] Those teachers "had received the endowment of His Spirit." The servant of God noted that "the power of the Holy Spirit was often strikingly manifest in their assemblies."

Can they see God in you?

Seeing God

The challenge of leadership formation for this new millennium and for always has never been about the knowledge we have to impart to our students, or the skills we have to do the job of imparting, as fundamental as these things may remain to be. The challenge of leadership formation has to do with whether our students can see God in us, in you. The infinite, loving, powerful, wise, and transforming God of the heavens in mere us, in you. Can they see it? Can they see this in the way you conduct your classes? Can they hear it in your tone of voice? Can they see the passion you have for souls in darkness? Can they see the absolute, awesome respect you have in the handling of His Word? Can they see God when you walk in the hallway? Can they hear God when you pray in the classroom? Can they see God when you parse? When you defend the grade you've given a wearisome student? When they see you shopping in the Mall and playing with your children? Can they see that the Lord God is without a doubt the most important Person in your life, even more important than you? In other words, can they see that you see God? Students long to climb a mountain conquered by a mentor who, already at the top, can see the wonders of the living God from such a vantage point. They want to join him or her at the summit.

Take an eighteen-year-old who has just graduated from academy. When she takes your Bible class, what do you think she is after? Oh, some are after the almighty "A" and some after the easy "religion A." But deep down, there is in many the secret longing to be stunned by God in the classroom. They may appear nonchalant, they may pretend not to care, they may look like all that matters in their world is money and fun. But they too, in the words of C. S. Lewis, want to be surprised by joy. They want to believe what they have heard and not

[17]Note the statement made by Ellen White regarding Jezebel's plans and how God used the schools of the prophets to withstand them: "With her seductive arts, Jezebel made Jehoshaphat her friend. She arranged a marriage between her daughter Athalia and Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat. She knew that her daughter, brought up under her guidance and as unscrupulous as herself, would carry out her designs. But did she? No; *the sons of the prophets, who had been educated in the schools which Samuel established, were steadfast for truth and righteousness*" (MS 116, 1899, emphasis supplied).

seen: that God is alive in regular people. That what the Bible says is actually true, not only because it is merely written there but because it is lived by regular folks.

Take a twenty-year-old junior, a sixth-generation Adventist, in your Theology, your Homiletics, or your New Testament class. What do you think he is after? He is more anxious than the freshmen. He has logged two plus years already, and time is running out. He is more conscious of his character flaws, his weak points triggered by an incessant enemy. He has seen things and tasted things that originate in the throne room of heaven. But *consistency* in these matters has been elusive. He longs to know if there are any Elishas left in the land. He would like to witness a miracle-working life, but he'll happily settle for knowing a genuinely Christlike soul in whom God lives unrivaled.

Take a thirty-year-old senior, a second-career man with a wife and two children, a man who decided to embrace the three-angels' messages only a few years ago. He has accepted a conference's call to pastor and is taking your Church Ministry course or your seminary's Church Administration course. What do you think he is after? Oh, yes, he is after every single bit of pragmatic wisdom you can give him—after all, ministry now has context. But what does he really want? He wants the assurance that with Christ all things are possible. All things, indeed! And he wants to know if you, of all people, have found that truth to be *yours* experientially.

As John Piper intimated, the problem we face in our schools is a problem of our own hearts. As we have become expert professionals in our fields, as we have rubbed shoulders with the best and the brightest, as we have read some of the most amazing body of literature humans can produce, we have, many of us, become *false* teachers. Is my statement scandalous, or is the scandal to be found in our condition? We have not abandoned the faith, certainly not in public, but some of us have grown cold and distant ourselves from the God who gave so much joy in private and produced such Christlike results in public. David Watson used to quote Dr. Carl Bates' sad, yet accurate comment: "If God were to take the Holy Spirit out of our midst today, about 95 per cent of what we are doing . . . would go on, and we would not know the difference."[18] Even Karl Barth, in his farewell lecture in Basel nearly forty years ago, recognized the poverty of the spirit found in the teachers and shapers of spiritual leaders:

> Everything is in order, but everything is also in the greatest disorder. The mill is turning, but it is empty as it turns. All the sails are hoisted, but no wind fills them to drive the ship. The fountain adorned with many spouts is there, but no water comes [out] . . . There is no doubt piety, but not the faith which, kindled by God, catches fire. What appears to take place there does not really take place. For what happens is that God, who is supposedly involved in all theological work, maintains silence about what is thought and said in theology *about*

[18]Quoted in David Watson, *I Believe in the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 166.

> him (rather than *of* him as its source and basis). It does happen that the real relation of God to theology and theologians must be described by a variation of the famous passage in Amos 5: 'I hate, I despise your lectures and seminars, your sermons, addresses, and Bible studies, and I take no delight in your discussions, meetings and conventions. For when you display your hermeneutic, dogmatic, ethical, and pastoral bits of wisdom before one another and before me, I have no pleasure in them: I disdain these offerings of your fatted calves. Take away from me the hue and cry that you old men raise with your thick books and you young men with your dissertations! I will not listen to the melody of your reviews that you compose in your theological magazines, monthlies, and quarterlies.[19]

This from a man who spent his life studying and influencing, one of the greatest theologians of the 20th century. And this is his conclusion at the end of his career. Can the same be said of leader shapers like you and me? In true Pauline fashion: May it never be!

Conclusion

The challenge of leadership formation in the new millennium has little to do with adequate knowledge or consummate skill, it has nothing to do with finances or resources, but it has all to do with whether you and me, their mentors and teachers, have a mere proper acquaintance with the Almighty or are ravished by the presence of the Lover of our souls. If, in fact, the latter is true, like Elisha, our bones will make others live. And just as Elisha cried on the shores of the Jordan, "Where is the God of Elijah?" before parting the waters that would give way to the beginning of his ministry in full view of his students, our students cry out, "Where is the God of Elisha?" They cry out in a time not only of dark worldliness and demonic enslaving to lesser things, but also of theological flaccidity, of powerless belief, and of relative certainties. They ask the same question the Israelites, buffeted by Moabite raiders in a post-Elisha period, asked: "Where is the God of Elisha?" Where is the God who can make axe heads swim, poisoned waters give life, and little boys rise again from death? And God, in His great mercy, will answer. Through the lifeless bones of His servant came life to answer the anguished cry, as if to say, "Elisha, my servant, is dead, but I, the Lord, am not. Believe in the God of Elisha and you too will be saved."

May those given us in trust to be formed and shaped understand the same message when they engage with us: Believe in your teachers' God and you too will be delivered. Believe in the Master they represent and you too will see your enemies defeated. For the challenge of spiritual leadership formation is not in what we know, nor in what we do, but in what we have become in Christ our Lord and Savior. May God help us to always be His only so our students will be His truly.

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[19]Quoted in H. G. D. Wolff, *Joel and Amos* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 267-268.

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Hebrew Thought: Its Implications for Christian Education

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The centrality of the Word of God in the Christian educational endeavor is a *sine qua non*. However, there are some misconceptions in understanding the Bible.[1] Some of its concepts and statements are "both attributed to and viewed from a western perspective."[2] This is especially true in Asia. Since Christianity came to Asia from the West, there is a tendency to look at the Bible as a Western book.[3] Such a perspective arises when one overlooks the original setting of the Scriptures, which is basically Near Eastern.

By saying that the original setting of the Bible is Near Eastern, I mean the predominant biblical thought is Hebraic. Our Christian Bible expresses a certain concept of reality that is essentially Hebraic. Hebrew thoughts, concepts, and culture are evident throughout the Bible.[4] A renewed understanding of Hebrew thought offers a number of insights applicable to a Christian philosophy of edu-

[1] R. K. Harrison notes, "Since modern occidental methods of historical interpretation may present decided problems when imposed upon oriental cultures, particularly those of antiquity, it is probably wise to consider the historical outlook and methods of compilation of the Near Eastern cultures on their own terms also, lest the historiographical attempts of antiquity unwittingly be assessed in terms of the scientific methods of more recent times, with equally unfortunate results." *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 295.

[2] Zdravko Stefanovic, "For the Asian First and Then for the Westerners," *Asia Journal of Theology* 4 (1990): 413.

[3] "A common error of most Bible readers is to put into the Scriptures Western manners and customs instead of interpreting them from the Eastern point of view." Merrill T. Gilbertson, *The Way It Was In Bible Times* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1959), 2.

[4] See for example Stefanovic, 412-13, where some of the examples in the OT and NT which are Eastern or Asian in concept and practice are enumerated. See also Ferdinand O. Regalado, "The Old Testament as One of the Resources for Doing Theology in Asia," *Asia Adventist Seminary Studies* 2 (1999): 41-50, for the same treatment, although restricted to the OT only and its implications for "doing theology in Asia."

cation. In this essay, we shall see what implications the Hebrews, with their wholistic outlook, their concrete and dynamic thinking, and their concept of group or community, may have for us.

The Wholistic Thought of the Hebrews

The Hebrew word *ʿabōdâ* supports the idea that the Hebrew people view their life as a dynamic unity. Interestingly, this word is translated as both "work"[5] and "worship."[6] Thus for the Hebrews, study *is* worship. Abraham Heschel, in a similar vein, poignantly noted: "Genuine reverence for the sanctity of study is bound to invoke in the pupils the awareness that study is not an ordeal but an act of edification; that the school is a sanctuary, not a factory; that study is a form of worship."[7] The idea of "studying as a form of worship" is a great motivation in learning. Such motivation in learning would make a Christian scholar different from a non-Christian scholar. The Christian scholar is different in the sense that there is no room for "intellectual dishonesty" and mediocrity because she "believes that in all that she does intellectually, socially, or artistically, she is handling God's creation and that is sacred."[8] Today, learning and education are viewed as purely secular pursuits. The Hebrews view such pursuits differently. Indeed, there are neither secular occupations nor sacred ones; Hebrews view their "God-given vocation—whether it be that of farmer, herdsman, fisherman, tax collector, teacher or scribe—as a means of bringing glory to God by the very privilege of work itself."[9]

The wholistic thought of the Hebrews is also seen in their sacred view of life. For them everything is theocentric or God-centered. There is no distinction between the secular and religious area of life. This aspect of Hebrew thought is clearly stated in the words of the psalmist: "I have set the LORD always before me" (Ps 16:8).[10] Thus, to modern Jews, "blessings are recited over some of the most mundane items, such as upon seeing lightning, hearing thunder, and even after using the washroom."[11] The totality of existence embraces the whole way of life. This kind of wholistic thinking can be seen in the Bible. In the midst of

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[5] There are many instances where *ʿabōdâ* is translated as "work." See, e.g., Gen 29:27; Exod 1:14; Lev 23:7-8; Num 28:18, 25-26; Ps 104:23; 1 Chron 27:26.

[6] See Walter C. Kaiser, "*ʿabad*," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce Waltke (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 2:639.

[7] Abraham J. Heschel, *The Insecurity of Freedom* (New York: Schoken, 1972), 42.

[8] Arthur F. Holmes, *The Idea of a Christian College*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 48.

[9] Marvin R. Wilson, "Hebrew Thought in the Life of the Church," in *The Living and Active Word of God: Studies in Honor of Samuel J. Schultz*, ed. Morris Inch and Ronald Youngblood (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 131.

[10] All scriptural references cited in this paper are from the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.

[11] Yechiel Eckstein, *What Christians Should Know About the Jews and Judaism* (Waco: Word, 1984), 70.

his tragic experience, Job still blesses the name of the Lord, whether God gives or takes away (Job 1:21). It is with the same Hebraic frame of mind that Joseph, before he dies, utters these words to his brothers who have betrayed him: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good"(Gen 50:20). We see here that even in some mysterious reversals of life, God is still recognized as the one who providentially overrules such circumstances. Romans 8:28 adds the same thought: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Finding the divine in the commonplace characterizes the wholistic thought of the Hebrews. Paul reminds us, in Hebraic idiom, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31). He expresses a similar thought on another occasion, saying, "Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col 3:17). For Paul, therefore, every aspect of life, including study, is to be viewed as, in a sense, worship.

The wholistic thought of the Hebrews covers all aspects of life. They see all of it in relation to God. The purpose of their celebration of different festivals is primarily spiritual or God-centered. "To the Israelite the seasons were the work of the creator for the benefit of man. They manifested the beneficence of God towards His creatures. By these feasts, man not only acknowledged God as his Provider but recorded the Lord's unbounded and free favour to a chosen people whom he delivered, by personal intervention in this world."[12]

Both their civil New Year (which starts at the month of Tishri) and religious New Year (which starts at the month of Nisan) are viewed as theological. The civil New Year festival, or *Rosh Hashanah*, signalled by a blowing of trumpets, was treated as religious due to the concept that "God had created an orderly world"[13] by the appearance of a new moon on that month. Although the religious New Year was based on the barley harvest, it was seen from a theocentric perspective, a reminder of "God's constant provision for them,"[14] the abundant harvest being a gift of God.

Related to this wholistic thought is the emphasis on the totality of a person's being. The body itself is materially different from, but not essentially separate from, the soul. The individual is viewed as a dynamic unity. The Hebrew word for "soul" (*nepeš*), which is commonly understood by many today as something a person has, is in fact referring to the whole person and implies "all the functions of man, spiritual, mental, emotional, as well as physical."[15] Thus, Deut 6:5

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[12] D. Freeman, "Feasts," in *New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd ed., ed. J. D. Douglas et al (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1982), 374.

[13] Pat Alexander, ed., *The Lion Encyclopedia of the Bible*, new rev. ed. (Tring, Herts: Lion, 1986), 122.

[14] David and Pat Alexander, eds., *The Lion Handbook of the Bible* (Tring, Herts: Lion, 1973), 180.

[15] Jacques B. Doukhan, *Hebrew for Theologians: A Textbook for the Study of Biblical Hebrew in Relation to Hebrew Thinking* (Lanham, MD: UP of America, 1993), 210.

enjoins every human being to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." It is a call to serve and love God passionately, with one's whole being. What significance would such a passage have for us as Christian educators? One reality is that we should treat our students wholly, not only as intellectual persons but also as emotional, physical, and spiritual beings. In fact, the Hebrews "were interested in producing what Jewish psychiatrists and educators today call a *mensch* (a Yiddish word for one who has his *total life* put together in an exemplary way)."[16]

Greek thought, on the other hand, is dualistic in its view of persons: human beings are viewed in dualistic terms of soul and body. We can see such influence in most of our modern education. Thus, the strengthening of the mind alone is emphasized to the neglect of the physical and the spiritual needs of students. At times the situation is reversed, with spirituality emphasized rather extremely, as in some kinds of ascetic or monastic spirituality. Looking at the earthly life of Jesus, we see that He exemplified the true meaning of spirituality. His life was not spent only in remote places, but between the mountain and the multitude—a combination of a solitary and social life.

Part of the wholistic thinking of the Hebrews is clearly seen in their view of illness. For them, sickness is linked to sin. Disease is the result of man's disobedience to God. Thus, many biblical texts describe obedience to God and His laws as conditions of good health. Let me cite some selected texts.

> If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you. (Exod 15:26)
>
> If you do not carefully follow all the words of this law, which are written in this book, and do not revere this glorious and awesome name—the LORD your God—the LORD will send fearful plagues on you and your descendants, harsh and prolonged disasters, and severe and lingering illnesses. He will bring upon you all the diseases of Egypt that you dreaded, and they will cling to you. The LORD will also bring on you every kind of sickness and disaster not recorded in this Book of the Law, until you are destroyed. (Deut 28:58-61)
>
> If you pay attention to these laws and are careful to follow them, then the LORD your God will keep his covenant of love with you, as he swore to your forefathers. . . . He will not inflict on you the horrible diseases you knew in Egypt, but he will inflict them on all who hate you. (Deut 7:12, 15)

Christ also points to the spiritual dimension of health and disease. After healing the woman who has been crippled for many years, and after reproving the synagogue ruler who questions his healing on the Sabbath day, Jesus speaks

[16] Wilson, "Hebrew Thought," 131; emphasis mine.

of "this woman whom Satan has bound for eighteen years" (Luke 13:16). D. H. Trapnell, who discusses disease as one of the causes of suffering, makes a good point in his analysis of the case of Job's suffering.

> The book of Job shows that the real issue is man's relationship to God rather than his attitude to his own suffering. It is the principal OT refutation of the view, put forward with great skill by Job's "comforters," that there is an inevitable link between individual sin and individual suffering. . . . It is important to realize that the biblical picture is not a mere dualism. Rather, suffering is presented in the light of eternity and in relation to a God who is sovereign, but who is nevertheless forbearing in his dealings with the world because of his love for men (2 Pet 3:9). Conscious of the sorrow and pain round about them, the NT writers look forward to the final consummation when suffering shall be no more (Rom 8:18; Rev 21:4).[17]

Reflecting on such wholistic thinking of the Hebrews, one could derive significant implications for Christian education. There is a noticeable tendency to dichotomize or compartmentalize the whole educational program and experience, even in a Christian setting. The secular and the spiritual activities are being separated, conducted and operated in their own spheres. John Wesley Taylor V illustrates this point well:

> Those that operate under the "spiritual" designator include a brief devotional at the beginning of the day, the "Bible" class, chapel period, the Week of Prayer, and church services on weekends. Once these are over, however, we must "get on with business." And we carry on the academic enterprise with a decidedly secular orientation.[18]

After stressing the danger of such a dichotomy in a Christian institution, Taylor forcefully states, "we must think Christianly about the totality of life and learning"[19] in the whole educational programs and experiences.

Concrete and Dynamic Thinking of the Hebrew People

The structure of the Hebrew sentence gives us an idea of the manner in which the Hebrews think. The word order of the English language is different from that of Hebrew. The structure of the English language is analytic,[20] meaning that the sense of the sentence is determined through its word order. It places the noun or the subject before the verb (the action word). For example, "the king judged." However, the word order of the Hebrew language "is normally reversed. That is, the verb most often comes first in the clause, then the noun;

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[17] D. H. Trapnell, "Health, Disease and Healing," in *New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd ed., 464.

[18] John Wesley Taylor V, "A Biblical Foundation for the Integration of Faith and Learning," a paper presented at the 27th International Seminar on the Integration of Faith and Learning, Mission College, Muak Lek, Thailand, 3-15 December 2000, 14.

[19] Ibid., 15.

[20] See Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation: A Textbook of Hermeneutics*, 3d rev ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1956), 5.

thus, 'He judged, (namely) the king.' In Hebrew grammar, the position of emphasis is usually the beginning of the clause."[21] This kind of emphasis on the verb suggests that the Hebrews are action-centered people. Moreover, the root of all Hebrew words is derived from the verb.[22] They seldom used adjectives in their sentences,[23] indicating that their thinking is concrete rather than abstract. They are not like their Greek counterparts, who are philosophical and abstract in thinking. A person's or student's intelligence is usually measured by the ability to do abstract and philosophical reasoning. The role of a teacher is transferring intellectual knowledge. For the Hebrews, however, truth is something to do and not only to think, something to live out, to apply, and not just theorize. This is why the Hebrew Bible is more a record of action, the record of God's salvific act in history, than a "summary exposition of a theological system."[24] Its emphasis is more on events and people, and not so much on abstract ideas or concepts. So in Christian education, truth or ideas should be not only a theory or philosophy, but something lived out and done. Ultimately, what is most important is the godly and Christian life of a teacher who effects changes in the students' lives.

The root of the Hebrew word is one of the indications of their frame of mind. For example, "the root word *dbr* means 'to speak' and 'to act.' The word is the act."[25] This is clearly seen in Isa 55:11, where God acts as he speaks: "So is my word [Heb. *dābār*] that goes out from my mouth...[it] will accomplish [*ʿāsāh*] what I desire."[26] Furthermore, this Hebrew word means both "event" and "word."[27] So the event (or the action) of the person is understood as his or her word.[28] Any word must have the corresponding concrete action. We will better understand then the words in Prov 14:23 that "mere talk [literally in Hebrew "words of lip"] leads only to poverty." It emphasizes also that words are not cheap to the Hebrews. This thought reinforces that

> [T]he Jews were pragmatists. They were never interested in making education a game of storing up abstract concepts or theoretical principles. Education had to be useful in meeting the challenges and needs of this world. To know something was to experience it rather than merely to intellectualize it. In short, to "know" was to "do" and learning was life. The whole person was engaged in what John, a NT Jewish writer, calls "doing the truth" (1 John 1:16).[29]

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[21] Wilson, "Hebrew Thought," 137.

[22] Doukhan, 192.

[23] Robert L. Cate, *How to Interpret the Bible* (Nashville: Broadman, 1983), 67, 68.

[24] Ibid., 42.

[25] Doukhan, 195.

[26] See also Psalm 33:6, 9; 12:1ff; 148:5; Gen 24:66; 1 Kings 11:41.

[27] Ibid., 201.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 131.

Being an action-oriented people, the Hebrews are concrete in their thinking. They use few abstract terms. The Bible gives us many examples to illustrate this point. "'Look' is 'lift up the eyes' (Gen 22:4); 'be angry' is 'burn in one's nostrils' (Exod 4:14); 'disclose something to another' or 'reveal' is 'unstop someone's ears' (Ruth 4:4); 'no compassion' is 'hard-heartedness' (1 Sam 6:6); 'stubborn' is 'stiff-necked' (2 Chron 30:8; cf. Acts 7:51); 'get ready' is 'gird up the loins' (Jer 1:17); and 'to be determined to go' is 'set one's face to go' (Jer 42:15, 17; cf. Luke 9:51),"[30] to mention a few. Such concrete ways of describing ideas and concepts signifies that "the Hebrews were mainly a doing and feeling people."[31]

Another example of the concreteness of the Hebrew thinking is the Hebrew word *ʾhb* [or *ʾāhav*], which we translate as "love." The word love is often associated with emotion or feeling. Today, it is a common understanding that "to love" means "to feel love." But an interesting study by Abraham Malamat[32] of the Hebrew nuances of the word love makes this emotive and abstract concept of love concrete. According to him, *ʾāhav* may also mean to be useful or beneficial or helpful. Hence, he translated the love commandment in Lev 19:18 as follows: "You should be beneficial or helpful to your neighbor as you would be to yourself." Then he concludes, "the Bible is not commanding us to *feel* something—love—but to *do* something—to be useful or beneficial to help your neighbor."[33] The concrete and dynamic thinking of the Hebrew people implies that they are pragmatic. They want not only to think about truth but to experience it, and knowing the truth means doing and living it. Is there a message in all this for Christian education?

Significantly, the Hebrew seat of intelligence is in the ears.[34] In Psalm 78:1, it says: "Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth" (KJV). You will find many examples in the Bible where the term ears is used both in the transmission and acquisition of knowledge, concepts, and ideas.[35] Intelligence for them is the ability to listen.[36] Moreover, this concept supports the idea that knowledge to the Hebrew people is not intrinsic but something coming from outside—something to be received.[37] It is devoid of any

[30] Ibid., 137.

[31] Ibid.

[32] See his shorter article, "'Love Your Neighbor as Yourself': What it Really Means," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 16 (July/August 1990): 50-51, which is an adaptation of his article with full scholarly apparatus in the *Festschrift Rolf Rentdorff*, ed. E. Blum (Nuekirchen-Vleryu).

[33] Ibid., 51; emphasis his.

[34] Doukhan, 194.

[35] See also e.g., Job 13:1, Exod 17:14, 1 Sam 9:15, Rev 2:7; 3:22.

[36] Doukhan, 194.

[37] See for example Ps 119:125, 144; Job 32:8.

form of that humanism—where human beings are considered as the measure of all things—which characterizes many secular universities and colleges today.[38]

We can see then the significant role of "revelation" in Hebrew education. The revelation of God is the source of all wisdom and knowledge. The discovery of true knowledge depends on divine revelation.[39]

This same principle can be applied to Christian education. We need to reiterate the importance of the Word of God and biblical revelation in the quest of wisdom and truth. If we will not do this, Prov 29:18 reminds us that "where there is no revelation, people perish." After all, the goal of education is to have a practical knowledge of God for salvation.

As we have pointed out throughout this paper, there is a considerable difference between the Hebrews and the Greeks in their view of life. Norman Snaith correctly summarizes this difference, as seen in the acquisition of knowledge and its source.

> The object and aim of the Hebrew system is *daʿath elohim* (Knowledge of God). The object and aim of the Greek system is *gnothi seauton* (Know thyself). Between these two there is the widest possible difference. There is no compromise between the two on anything like equal terms. They are poles apart in attitude and method. The Hebrew system starts with God. The only true wisdom is Knowledge of God. "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom." The corollary is that man can never know himself, what he is and his relation to the world, unless first he learns of God and is submissive to God's sovereign will. The Greek system, on the contrary, starts from the knowledge of man, and seeks to rise to an understanding of the ways and Nature of God through the knowledge of what is called "man's higher nature." According to the Bible, man has no higher nature except he be born of the Spirit.
>
> We find this approach of the Greeks nowhere in the Bible. The whole Bible, the New Testament as well as the Old Testament, is based on the Hebrew attitude and approach.[40]

Hebraic Concept of Group or Community

The Hebraic concept of community is reflected in their idea of "corporate personality."[41] This term denotes that "the individual was always thought of in

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[38] The prevailing "humanism" and other "isms" in secular universities has been emphasized by Eta Linnemann, *Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology?* trans. Robert W. Yarbrough (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 23-36, in the chapter entitled "The Anti-Christian Roots of the University."

[39] See [P. Gerard Damsteegt], *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . : A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines* (Washington, DC: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988), 18.

[40] Norman H. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* (New York: Schocken, 1964), 184-85.

[41] H. Wheeler Robinson used the expression "corporate personality." "Hebrew Psychology," *The People and the Book*, ed. A. S. Peake, 353-82; idem, "The Hebrew Conception of the Corporate

the collective (family, tribe, nation) and the collective in the individual. This corporate solidarity was further reinforced by the fact that the entire community (past ancestors and future members) was viewed as one personality."[42] This idea of corporate personality is stressed even in the modern Jewish community, where at the celebration of the "Passover each Jew is obligated to regard himself as if he personally had come out of Egypt, not simply his ancestors."[43] In the NT times, the idea of "one family" is underscored by Jesus, who teaches his disciples to pray to "Our Father in heaven" (Matt 6:9), signifying that the Father in heaven is not just the Father of an individual but the Father of the community. Today, "most Jewish prayer employs the plural 'we,' not 'I.' It expresses the cry of the whole community."[44]

Relative to this Hebraic notion of group or community is the idea of social unity and brotherhood. This is reflected in the idea of *mišpāḥâ* (clan or family). This term covers the whole clan, including uncles, aunts, and even remote cousins. Each *mišpāḥâ* sees itself as part of a single worldwide Jewish family.[45] Johannes Pedersen notes that "the city-community is a *mišpāḥâ*, and consequently the fellow-citizen becomes a brother."[46] So the question being asked of Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" was "not so easy to answer in ancient Israel because the neighbor, the fellow citizen, is the one with whom one lives in community."[47]

Levirate custom points out the Near Eastern concept of family or community. The term levirate is "derived from Latin *levir*, meaning 'husband brother'."[48] This is a custom of the Israelites that "when a married man died without a child, his brother was expected to take his wife,"[49] and "the children of the marriage counted as the first children of the first husband."[50] This kind of regulation might be strange to our modern society, but this was established with the permission of God (Gen 38:8-10; Deut 5:5-10) to protect the lineage of a family and to emphasize the sacredness of life. In the Mishnah we read, "He who destroys a single life is considered as if he had destroyed the whole world, and he who saves a single life is considered as having saved the whole world"

Personality," *Werden und Wesen des Alten Testaments*, ed. J. Hempel ('Beihefte zur ZAW,' 66), 49-62. Quoted in Thorleif Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek* (New York: Norton, 1960), 70, n. 1.

[42] Wilson, "Hebrew Thought," 133-34.

[43] I. Breuer, *Concepts of Judaism*, ed. J. S. Levinger (Jerusalem: Israel UP, 1974), 296, quoted in Wilson, "Hebrew Thought," 134. See also Exod 13:3-16.

[44] Wilson, "Hebrew Thought," 133.

[45] Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 188.

[46] Johannes Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture* (London: Oxford UP, 1926; Copenhagen: Branner og Korch, 1926), 1:59.

[47] Ibid., 60.

[48] J. S. Wright and J. A. Thompson, "Marriage," in *New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd ed., 743.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

(*m. Sanh*. 4:5).[51] Moreover, the purpose of this seemingly anomalous law "was to prevent the family from dying out."[52] "This institution accordingly had an ethical foundation. The relative who married the widow did not profit financially."[53] So the *levir* is actually sacrificing himself if he would agree to be one, for the sake of preserving the family. We can see that to the Hebrews, sacrificing oneself is not that important as long as it is for the betterment of the whole family.

Connected with the Hebrew concept of group and community is the idea of mutual responsibility and accountability. This is visible in the kinsman-redeemer practice of the biblical Hebrews. All Israelites, through this practice, "are mutually accountable for one another and mutually participate in the life of one another."[54] In Leviticus 25, this practice is fully illustrated. It describes how property and personal freedom can be redeemed.

Land that was sold in time of need could be repurchased by the original owner or by a relative of his (Lev 25:25-27). If a man became poor and had to sell himself into slavery, he or a relative had the right to purchase his freedom (Lev 25:48-53).[55] A good and true kinsman-redeemer is responsible for such repurchase and restitution if the original owner could not afford.[56]

How does this concept of solidarity apply to the philosophy of Christian education? Portland Adventist Academy in Oregon incorporated this *brother's keeper* concept as one of the principles of its character development program. This concept suggests "that individuals are connected and are accountable to everyone whose lives they touch." Greg Madson, chaplain of that Academy, testifies that on many occasions "students, taking the principle of brother's keeper seriously, have sought his help for friends who are involved in self-destructive behavior."[57] Moreover, the concept of solidarity and mutual respon-

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[51] Quoted in Wilson, "Hebrew Thought," 134. In Jacob Neusner's *The Mishnah: A New Translation* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1988), the comment restricts this to destroying or saving an "Israelite."

[52] Paul Heinisch, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. William G. Heidt (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1955), 204.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Wilson, "Hebrew Thought," 134.

[55] See Herbert Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch* (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 24. Another practice, recorded in Num 35, emphasizing mutual responsibility is the "blood-revenge"(or "redeemer of blood") system. Since many Middle Eastern people are living in some remote desert place, far from any civil government, this kind of justice system is practiced. This is one way of surviving in a harsh desert society, where most people barely live. "All males are obliged to defend and avenge each other, just as they are all liable to suffer revenge for the misdeeds of one. For an individual does not exist in his own right, but only as the extension of his clan" (Clinton Bailey, "How Desert Culture Helps Us Understand the Bible: Bedouin Law Explains Reaction to Rape of Dinah," *Bible Review* 7 [August 1991]: 20).

[56] R. Laird Harris, "*gā'al*," *TWOT*, 1:144.

[57] Greg Madson, "The Christ-Centered, Character-Driven School," *Journal of Adventist Education*, 62 (October/November 1999): 38.

sibility implies that our pursuit of learning is not an individual work but a collective and corporate one. The true meaning of education can only be found by the members of the community in their relationship to each other.

However, there is too much emphasis on rugged individualism[58] in our modern society, where the sense of accountability is losing and excessive self-interest is reigning. Christian institutions are facing the same danger of individualism. Remember that the biblical concept of "the priesthood of the believers means that each Christian functions as a priest not only unto God, but also unto his neighbor."[59]

It is interesting to note that teachers in Old Testament times regarded their pupils as their sons (Heb. *bānîm*). Archaeologists have discovered ancient schoolrooms which give us an idea of how instruction was carried out and about the relationships between teachers and students. For example, in the place called Mari of the Sumerian civilization, "school staff included the professor, often called 'the school father,' with pupils called the 'school sons,' an assistant who prepared the daily exercises, specialist teachers, and others responsible for discipline were called 'big brother.'"[60] Here we will notice that even in the ancient Near Eastern school setting, there is a prevailing concept of "family" which may have influenced the Hebrew people or vice versa. "In the Hebrew Bible, teachers (priests) are called 'father' (Judg 17:10; 18:19), and the relationship between teacher and student (e.g., Elijah and Elisha) is expressed by 'father' and 'son' (2 Kgs 2:3, 12). In addition, in the opening chapters of the book of Proverbs, the sage regularly addresses his student as 'my son.'"[61] This emphasis on "relationships" in education challenges today's growing technological type of education, where students can get a degree on-line without attending any formal classes and without any contact at all with the teacher—just with the computer at home or in the work place.[62] Applying this Hebrew concept of "family" suggests that healthy relational contact between students and teachers is still profoundly important because the teacher can be an effective living textbook. After all, "it is

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[58] According to Lourdes Morales-Gudmundsson, American individualism was born out of "Protestant understanding of individual responsibility in personal salvation." She continues, "Americans admire the self-reliant, self-made person who overcomes obstacles to achieve success. Success, in turn, is measured by the individual's ability to earn money (ideally by dint of hard, honest labor, and clever money management) or to acquire high levels of education." "Building Community out of Diversity," *Journal of Adventist Education*, 60 (October/November 1997): 15.

[59] Wilson, "Hebrew Thought," 135.

[60] Alexander, *Encyclopedia*, 245.

[61] Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 280.

[62] I have nothing against the "on-line learning" or "distributed learning" program per se, although I have some reservations where there is *no contact at all* between on-line students and on-line teachers.

the personality of the teacher which is the text that the pupils read; the text they will never forget."[63]

Since Israel had no system of formal schooling in its earliest years, learning commonly took place at home. Home was the center of education and the main source of learning. The father and mother in the home played an important role in the instruction of their children, not only about practical things in life, but most importantly about God.[64] "Abraham is to instruct not only his children, but his entire household in the way of the Lord (Gen 18:19). At an early age, children were trained in the everyday duties of the family, such as the pasturing of sheep (e.g., 1 Sam 16:11) and the work of the fields (2 Kings 4:18). Girls learned household crafts, such as baking (2 Sam 13:8), spinning, and weaving (Exod 35:25-26)."[65] Knowledge then was transmitted from person to person, from parents to children and on. Children were trained by their parents' example in the home. But because of the crushing experiences that the nation of Israel had gone through, "home life had been disrupted and parents themselves often needed instruction. To remedy this situation schools were established with scribes as teachers."[66] Nevertheless, we cannot deny the fact that the home is still an ideal center of learning.[67] Consider the positive result of Hannah's teaching her son Samuel during his formative years (1 Sam 1:21-23). Look also at the kind of home education that Jesus received. Although he did not attend rabbinical school (John 7:15), "his character and ethics as a man on earth were far superior to anything the schools might have given Him."[68]

Conclusion

Clearly then, the Biblical Hebraic wholistic thinking, its dynamic and concrete thought, and its concept of "community" offer many profound insights for Christian education. If we want the Christian educational process to remain authentically biblical, we must never lose sight of these significant implications of Hebrew thought for the formulation of the philosophy, methodology, or cur-

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[63] Abraham J. Heschel, "The Spirit of Jewish Education," *Jewish Education* 24/2 (Fall 1953): 19. Quoted in Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 280.

[64] See, e.g., Exod 10:2; 12:26-27.

[65] Kaster, 30.

[66] "The Jews of the First Christian Century," in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, ed. Francis D. Nichol (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1956-1980), 5:58.

[67] The home as an ideal center of learning and training for children was changed, according to Steve Farrar, because of the Industrial Revolution, especially in America. He notes, "When factories became the source of income, men had to leave home, thus greatly diminishing their ability to influence their sons. . . . Work now separated father from son, when for generations they had worked together in the master/apprentice relationship. Men stopped raising their boys because they weren't present to lead their boys. And as the years have gone by, that all-important male role model has eroded even further"(Steve Farrar, *Point Man: How a Man Can Lead His Family* [N.p.: Multnomah Books, 1990], 40).

[68] "The Jews of the First Christian Century," *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 5:59.

riculum of Christian education. I think it is appropriate to quote the words of Marvin Wilson to conclude this paper: "Truth must be incarnate in each member of the community. Quality education from a Biblical point of view is concerned with integrating learning with faith and living. This is the Hebrew model, and it is the lifelong task to which each Christian must continually address himself."[69]

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[69] Wilson, "Hebrew Thought," 131.

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Is There Room for Systematics in Adventist Theology?

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When I arrived at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University in 1979, I purposed to study systematics under the guidance of Adventist systematicians. Shortly thereafter I took a course in Eschatology with Dr. Hans K. LaRondelle. To my satisfaction I discovered that Dr. LaRondelle was developing, in that class, the kind of systematic theology I had expected.

Some months later I visited with Dr. LaRondelle in his office. On that occasion he assured me, to my surprise and confusion, that he considered himself a biblical rather than a systematic theologian. Later I discovered that when Adventists considered opening a seminary, one clear concern was to stay with biblical theology, because "a shift from biblical to systematic theology would have a liberalizing influence on Adventist religion teachers."[1]

In my opinion these examples are not isolated incidents; rather, they describe what I perceive as a deep-rooted mind-set within the Adventist Church not only in North America, but also around the world.[2] Consequently, it might

[1]Keld J. Reynolds, "The Church under Stress 1931-1960," in *Adventism in America: A History*, ed. Gary Land (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 199. This concern seems to have influenced the way theology was taught in the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. At least according to Richard W. Schwarz's view, in those early days of Seminary history, "an emphasis on biblical theology rather than the systematic theology of the general Protestant seminaries . . . gave a distinctive stamp to Adventist seminary education" (*Light Bearers to the Remnant: Denominational History Textbook for Seventh-day Adventist College Classes* [Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1979], 489).

[2]I am not aware of the existence of any statistical study on this issue that would confirm or disprove my suspicion. However, it is not difficult to think of examples of this tendency. For instance, according to Mario Veloso's view, "the Adventist Church places more emphasis in biblical than systematic theology" (*El Hombre, una Persona Viviente*, [Brasilia: SALT, 1980], 9). Veloso, however, suggests that since Adventism has not developed a systematic theology, its study should be included within the area of historical theology (9-10).

be worthwhile to consider whether systematics should have a place in Adventist theology. In this essay my purpose is to advance a preliminary answer in order to steer scholarly discussion on this disciplinary issue.

First, I will address the general perspective from which we will approach the issue. Next, we will discuss the relevancy of the question for Adventism. After taking a general look into the nature of the issue—systematic theology as discipline—we will examine the reluctance of Adventism to engage in systematic theology, the tendency to the status quo, and the extrapolation from everyday life convictions into the realm of systematics as factors limiting the development of the discipline in Adventist schools. Subsequently, we will distinguish exegetical and biblical theologies from the viewpoint systematic theology, both methodologically and teleologically. Finally, we will explore the need for systematic theology in Adventism and the basis on which systematic theology could become actively involved in Adventist theology.

Personal Perspective

My point of view has been shaped by thirty-five years of contact with Adventist scholarship. My sense is that while Adventist scholarship has developed strongly in such areas as chronology, archaeology, history of antiquity, history of the church and its theology (mainly in the areas of Protestantism and Adventism), exegesis, and biblical theology,[3] I do not see among Adventists the same

[3]Grant R. Osborne describes biblical theology as a scholarly discipline in the following terms: "Biblical theology constitutes the first step away from the exegesis of individual passages and toward the delineation of their significance for the church today. At this level we collect and arrange the themes that unite the passages and can be traced through a book or author as a whole. This is done in three steps: first, we study the theological themes in terms of individual books, then we explore the theology of an author, and finally we trace the progress of revelation that unites a testament and even the Bible as a whole. . . . In this way biblical theology collates the results of exegesis and provides the data for the systematic theologian to contextualize in developing theological dogma for the church today" (*The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991], 263). Gerhard Hasel points out that "biblical theology must be understood to be a historical-theological discipline. This is to say that the biblical theologian engaged in doing either Old or New Testament theology must claim as his task both to discover and describe what the text meant and also to explicate what it means for today" (*Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, rev. ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977], 129). It follows that the task of systematic theology cannot be defined as ascertaining the meaning of Scripture for today. How the exegetical task of determining what the text means today differs from the systematic task of "contextualization of biblical theology" is not explained by Osborne (ibid., 309-310). What is apparent is that according to this disciplinary scenario the task proper to systematics is communication rather than discovery of biblical truth. Human philosophies, then, are considered to be only the external vehicle of communication by way of contextualizing. In my opinion, to consider that philosophy plays only a neutral function in communication is to have a distorted view of what actually occurs in the task of both biblical and systematic theologies as scholarly disciplines.

concern for solid scholarly development in systematic theology.[4] On the contrary, it seems to me that a sizeable number of Adventist scholars are at ease in arriving at doctrinal conclusions working from within the limitations proper to the methods of their disciplines (not only from exegetical and biblical theologies but also from practical theology). Conversely, it also seems to me that most systematicians, at least the few I know personally, will hardly dare to arrive at scholarly conclusions in chronology, archaeology, history, exegesis, and biblical theology by utilizing the scholarly methods of systematic theology.

If this perception is true, it is not difficult to comprehend why scholars holding these methodological convictions find it neither relevant nor necessary to open a disciplinary room for systematics. In other words, if we can arrive at the doctrinal statements and teachings of Christianity by using the scholarly methods proper to exegetical and biblical theologies, why should we bother developing an additional scholarly discipline whose aim, the formulation of doctrines, is already achieved by these other disciplines?

Is the Question Relevant?

The role of systematics in theology is not a relevant issue for most Adventists today. The reason is not difficult to ascertain. On one hand, few lay persons have any idea what systematics is all about. On the other hand, most theologians know very well what systematics is in the context of Christian theology. They know that because systematics follows philosophical categories, it is incompatible with the *sola Scriptura* principle and with the content and spirit of the Adventist faith. It is not surprising, then, that most Adventist theologians have not seen systematics in a positive light. Furthermore, it is possible to perceive why

[4]Even though several names could be mentioned as representatives of a growing task force of Adventist theologians working within the academic discipline of systematics, publications in terms of specialized books are not numerous. By way of example, Edward Heppenstall and Richard Rice could be mentioned. Edward Heppenstall has written on several topics, for instance, *The Man Who is God: A Study of the Person and Nature of Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man* (Washington: Review and Herald, 1977); *Our High Priest: Jesus Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary* (Washington: Review and Herald, 1972); and *Salvation Unlimited: Perspectives in Righteousness by Faith* (Washington: Review and Herald, 1974). Among Richard Rice's publications three are more directly related to the subject and issue of systematics. They are: *God's Foreknowledge & Man's Free Will* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1985); *The Reign of God: An Introduction to Christian Theology From a Seventh-Day Adventist Perspective* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews UP, 1985; 2nd rev. ed., 1997); and *Reason and the Contours of Faith* (Riverside, CA: La Sierra UP, 1991). The latter work includes the most specific treatment of theology from a methodological disciplinary perspective written so far by an Adventist author. Unfortunately, Rice finds it difficult to adhere to the *sola Scriptura* principle. Gerhard Hasel has criticized Rice's approach on this account ("Scripture and Theology," *JATS* 4/2 [Autumn 1993]: 68-72). Norman R. Gulley has also contributed to the analysis of methodological issues ("The Influence of Philosophical and Scientific World Views on the Development of Theology," *JATS* 4/2 [1993]: 137-160) and is presently writing a systematic theology.

the conviction that revealed truth can be attained only through exegetical and biblical theologies has developed in Adventist theological circles.[5]

Is biblical theology able to take care of all theological tasks required for the discovery of biblical truth? If the answer is yes, then the discipline of systematics is not necessary and the question remains forever irrelevant. However, if biblical theology is not able to handle all theological issues, some disciplinary room could open for systematics and the question will find its relevancy.

The few aspects we will examine will not be sufficient to make a solid case in favor of making room for systematics in Adventist theology. They will serve, however, to open the question for scholarly discussion.

The Disciplinary Nature of the Question

The question, "Is there room for systematics in Adventist theology?" assumes two major factors. The first factor, starting at the beginnings of Christian history, is the existence of a scholarly track for searching out theological truth in Christian theology. The second factor arose with the development of modern theology during the eighteenth century. During the modern period the scholarly pursuit of theological truth became specialized and divided into several independent disciplines, each pursuing a specific goal and working within the limits of a specific methodology.[6] When the study of Scripture is undertaken exclusively within the parameters of the local church, we are not pursuing truth within the scholarly track but the everyday-life track. In the practical track of congregational life, the question regarding the respective roles of systematics and biblical theology does not arise. Our question, however, becomes unavoidable when the community of faith searches for theological truth within the scholarly track.

This is not the place to discuss whether Adventism should pursue the discovery of Christian truth within the scholarly track, or should remain only a lay movement uninvolved in the world of scholarship. The fact remains, however,

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[5]Within Adventism, Gerhard Hasel has given specific technical formulation to the issue of biblical theology as a scholarly discipline. He has dealt with this issue in his *Old Testament Theology* and in *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978). Hasel has updated and expanded his views in a recent series of articles (see Gerhard Hasel, "The Nature of Biblical Theology: Recent Trends and Issues," *AUSS* 32 (1994): 203-215; "Recent Models of Biblical Theology: Three Major Perspectives," *AUSS* 33 (1995): 55-75; and, "Proposals for a Canonical Biblical Theology," *AUSS* 34 (1995): 23-33).

[6]The recognition that Christian theology involves several interrelated yet independent scholarly disciplines is a recent development in the history of Christianity. For instance, during the Middle Ages the most prominent interdisciplinary relation was not within theological disciplines but between theology and philosophy. Wolfhart Pannenberg points out that before modern times, "apart from the separation of canon law—the fundamental distinction was that between biblical interpretation and systematic theology. The beginnings of this distinction go back to the Middle Ages, though the development into autonomous disciplines did not reach any completion before the late eighteenth century. All the other theological disciplines have acquired their autonomy in modern times" (*Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, trans. Francis McDonagh [Philadelphia: Westminister, 1976], 351).

that Adventists have been actively involved in the scholarly track of theology, at least since they began to create universities and graduate programs in theology some four decades ago.

The distinction between systematic and biblical theologies is a recent phenomenon in the history of Christian theology. For about seventeen centuries Christian theology was pursued within the confines of systematic (dogmatic) theology.[7] During that period there was no biblical theology as independent discipline, as we have it today in Adventist seminaries. Biblical theology came to challenge the universal reign of systematic theology when it became an independent theological discipline around the middle of the eighteenth century.[8] From the very beginning, biblical theology experienced its identity and task as essentially connected to the criticism of dogmatic theology,[9] thus setting the immediate context from which the question "Is there room for systematics in Adventist theology?" arises.

As ancient Greek philosophy gave birth to a number of independent scientific disciplines, so systematic or dogmatic theology gave birth to a number of theological disciplines, of which biblical theology was the first, followed, among others, by fundamental theology, practical theology, and missiology. This ensemble of new independent theological disciplines is technically designated as the theological encyclopedia. As theological reflection, the theological encyclopedia examines the way in which the various disciplines involved in theological studies interrelate in the unified task of discovering truth. The theo-

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[7]Within the Protestant theological tradition the label systematic theology began to be applied to theology possibly during the seventeenth century following the initiative of Bartholomäus Keckermann. For an introduction to the history of systematic theology see Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, 404-410; and Frank Hasel, "Algunas Reflexiones sobre la relación entre la teología sistemática y la teología bíblica," *Theologika* 11, no. 1 (1996): 109-111. However, ever since the times of Origen (c.185-253/54) Christian theology has been conceived and formulated under the disciplinary structure we call today systematic theology. For instance, one of the greatest systematicians of all times, Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274), spoke of "sacred doctrine" instead of the modern label "systematic theology" (*Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 3 vols. [New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1947], Ia 1).

[8]In the historical process that gave rise to biblical theology as an independent discipline, Ebeling sees a decisive turning point taking place with the publication of *Gedanken von der Beschaffenheit und dem Vorzug der biblisch-dogmatischen Theologie vor der alten und neuen scholastischen* [Reflexions on the Nature of Biblical Dogmatic Theology and on Its Superiority to Scholasticism Old and New] (1758), by Anton Friedrich Büsching (*Word and Faith*, 87). By this step biblical theology moved from being a subsidiary discipline of dogmatics to becoming "a rival of the prevailing dogmatics [scholastic theology]" (ibid.). Biblical theology "set itself up as a completely independent study, namely, as a critical historical discipline alongside dogmatics" in 1787 with a programmatic lecture by Johann Philipp Gabler (ibid, 88; Thiselton, "Biblical Theology and Hermeneutics," 520). Gerhard Hasel gives a slightly earlier date for the independence of biblical theology from dogmatics. "As early as 1745 'biblical theology' is clearly separated from dogmatic (systematic) theology and the former is conceived of as being the foundation of the latter" (*Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, 18).

[9]Ebeling, *Word and Faith*, 88-91.

logical encyclopedia also has an educational side when it deals with the organization of the theological curriculum.[10]

Adventist seminaries engaged in the scholarly pursuit of Christian truth are *de facto* assuming the divisions of disciplines emerging from the modern creation of independent disciplines. Failure to address this disciplinary issue may be detrimental to the theological, spiritual, and missionary experience of the people of God. The multiplication of Adventist seminaries and universities around the world, accompanying the numerical growth of the Church, attests to the prominence Adventists give the scholarly track in the pursuit of truth.

Whether there is room for systematic theology within Adventist theology, then, belongs to the broader question of how the various theological disciplines should interrelate as they attempt to formulate the teachings of Christian theology.

Reluctance to Engage in Systematic Theology as Scholarly Discipline

In my opinion, an important cause for Adventist distrust in systematics is the generally held conviction that systematic theology can only distort the true results of biblical exegesis. This conviction springs from Adventism's high view of Scripture and the philosophical methodology of systematic theology. On one hand, the ground of Adventist theology consists in faithfulness to Scripture as expressed in the *sola, tota,* and *prima Scriptura* principles.[11] On the other hand, the essence of systematics resides in the application of a "system" to the theological data. Without a "system" the existence of "systematics" is impossible.[12]

So far, in Christian theology the "system" upon which a systematic theologian develops his or her work has been taken, explicitly or implicitly, from some

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[10]Pannenberg explains that "a conception of theology in general ought to be able to show to what extent its internal organization into the disciplines of exegesis, church history, dogmatics and practical theology can be defended as necessary or at least rational, or to what extent the existing divisions of theology should be critically re-examined in the light of the concept of theology, particularly as regards their mutual relations and their understanding of method. This . . . aspect of the self-appraisal of theology within the framework of philosophy of science is the subject matter of the theological encyclopedia" (*Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, 5-6). See also Gerhard Ebeling, (*The Study of Theology*, trans. Duane A. Priebe [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978], 8).

[11]Gerhard Hasel, "*Scripture and Theology*," 86.

[12]Catholic theologian Avery Dulles underlines this broadly accepted disciplinary fact. "It is impossible to carry through the project of systematic theology without explicit commitment to particular philosophical options" (*The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System* [New York: Crossroad, 1992], 119). Hasel also agrees with this fact as he recognizes that the systematic theologian or dogmatician "has and always will have to fulfil his own task in that he endeavours to use current philosophies as the basis for his primary categories or themes. For the systematic theologian it is indeed appropriate to operate with philosophical categories, because his foundations are on a base different from that of the biblical theologian" (*Old Testament Theology*, 130). In my opinion, in this statement Hasel is not describing the way in which systematics should be conducted in Adventism but rather the actual way in which Catholicism and Protestantism have developed their approaches to systematics in the scholarly arena.

sort of human philosophy.[13] Because of these disciplinary and historical facts, Adventists have been, and continue to be, in practice, suspicious of systematics.[14] I believe that a hermeneutic of suspicion toward systematics, on account of the philosophical nature of its "system," is appropriate. Most Adventist theologians will not consciously or explicitly work on the basis of a philosophical system. This hermeneutic of suspicion should be permanently applied not only within the field of systematic theology but also within the fields of biblical and practical theologies. We must follow the biblical dictum to "Prove all things," not least when we are studying the work of theologians.

I find, however, some Adventist writers who, in spite of their explicit claim to build on Scripture alone, are nevertheless being implicitly influenced by extra-biblical philosophical notions. How can this be? A likely cause of this unfortunate situation could be that frequently Adventists have the tendency to forget that Christian theology, in both its classical and liberal forms, has been built on the ground of human philosophies. Thus, many ideas striking one as biblical can, on reflection, be traced back to a human philosophical origin.

Many Adventists work under the illusion that philosophical ideas do not influence biblical or practical theologies. Unfortunately, we also run into philosophical teachings in the very foundation and methodology of biblical and practical theologies. When interacting with the extraordinary wealth of available theological ideas, theologians working in these areas will benefit from applying a hermeneutic of suspicion sensitive to the frequently hidden philosophical systems operative within them.

Should we conclude from these facts that the reluctance to accept systematic theology as a contributor to the discovery and formulation of biblical truths is justified? In my opinion, I think that it is. But does the philosophical nature of a system required by systematics mean that there is no room for an Adventist systematics faithful to the *sola Scriptura* principle? I do not think so. However,

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[13]Dulles recognizes that "hitherto Catholic theology has relied principally on the axioms and categories of Greek philosophy, filtered, in some cases, through Roman or Arabic thinkers. After early experiments with Stoicism, the fathers came to prefer some variety of Platonism. Although Aristotle had long been an influence, his philosophy did not become dominant until the High Middle Ages. Thomas Aquinas, the greatest of Catholic theologians, constructed his system on the basis of a Platonized form of Aristotelianism" (ibid.). This is the case also for Protestant theology (See John Sanders, "Historical Considerations," in *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God*, by Clark Pinnock, et al. [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994], 59-100); Norman L. Geisler, *Thomas Aquinas: An Evangelical Appraisal* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991], 21-23); and Richard A. Muller, *The Study of Theology: From Biblical Interpretation to Contemporary Formulation* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991], 85- 86).

[14]Veloso, in my opinion, has correctly identified that Adventism's main objection to systematic theology as a proper theological discipline is centered on the fact that systematics always draws its "system" from human philosophical ideas (6-7). Such a procedure violates the *sola Scriptura* principle. Consequently, "Adventist theologians have developed their theological reflection by the side [al margen] of philosophical systems, and following an approach that rather separates them from such systems" (7).

from these considerations, it seems reasonable to conclude that if Adventist scholars should decide to make room for systematics, the issue of a system *vis-a-vis* the *sola Scriptura* principle becomes unavoidable. Bypassing this foundational issue cannot but place Adventist theology under the influence of some sort of human philosophy. Moreover, to not make room for systematics entails that biblical and practical theologies will forever remain open to the stealthy influence of various philosophical systems.

Inertia and Extrapolations from the Everyday-life Track

Contentment with the present way in which theological business is approached in the scholarly arena may be the most formidable obstacle to making room for systematics. In other words, if we are doing fine, why should we change? The sheer inertia of the status quo conspires against systematics in Adventist theology. Most Adventist scholars and pastors have been forced to be specialists and generalists simultaneously. Before the creation of Adventist universities, most Adventists scholars were generalists. Ever since the denomination founded its first two universities in the early sixties, more and more Adventist scholars have been trained as specialists in a specific scholarly discipline (Ph.D.s). Most scholars work within their own specialties but live and teach in a world not neatly divided into scholarly disciplines. Moreover, the absence of an interdisciplinary methodology in Adventist scholarly theology has forced most scholars to deal with all kinds of theological questions in areas in which they have not been trained. Thus, Adventist scholars continually cross over disciplinary lines and answer questions in areas in which they are not qualified. After years of intense wrestling with theological questions, most Adventist theologians have developed their own views on the entire realm of theology which they do not want criticized by an independent discipline.

In other words, the search for truth in the everyday-life track forces us to deal with a variety of issues that within the scholarly track belong to different areas of specialty. It is as if a cardiologist decided to remove a patient's tonsils—a general knowledge of the anatomy may allow a successful surgery, but with much greater risk to the patient. Within the everyday-life track all of us are exegetes, systematicians, and pastors. Because the scholarly training of most theologians limits their proficiency to one area, the temptation to extrapolate from the everyday-life track into the scholarly track becomes real. This extrapolation might have been justified and even required when Adventism, forty years ago, moved into the scholarly track. However, in its scholarly development Adventism has arrived at a point in which extrapolations from the everyday-track directly into scholarly conclusions should be carefully avoided. This extrapolation may be a factor beclouding the perception of the need for systematics in Adventism. After all, each theologian has his or her own scholarly views regarding Christian doctrines, the specific subject matter of systematic theology.

Methodological and Teleological Differentiation

Another factor contributing to this situation may be the lack of a common understanding of what we mean by biblical and systematic theologies. I am sure that many readers may find the point I am trying to make in this article somehow elusive, due mainly to their implicit understanding of the meaning of biblical theologies. In other words, I am convinced that Adventists define biblical theology in various ways. For some Adventists, biblical theology is equal to exegesis; for others, the exposition of biblical teachings supported by the exegetical method; even, for others, systematic theology.[15] This variety of opinions is not the result of explicit scholarly disagreement on the issue, but of implicit forgetfulness. Besides, these specific views progress from a very limited understanding of the whole picture (exegesis) to a very broad view with limited understanding of the minutiae (systematic theology). Moreover, each view uses different methodologies. Since each one of these uses may be justified, we need to formulate a working definition of biblical theology, leaving the scholarly discussion on its nature and methodology for a later time.

For the limited purpose of this article I will differentiate between biblical and systematic theologies from the methodological and teleological viewpoints. Two scholarly enterprises are different when they have different goals (subject-matter or object of investigation) and methodologies to achieve them. If the interpretation of Scripture and the task of scholarly discovery of Christian truth (goal) require only the application of the exegetical method, it follows that there is no room for systematics.

The question we are asking, "Is there room for systematics in Adventist theology?" is, after all, a methodological question. In order to answer the proposed question, then, we need to briefly consider the basic features that characterize the exegetical and systematic methodologies.

Distinguishing between Exegetical and Systematic Methodologies

Probably the most serious argument against the need to make room for systematics in Adventist theology is the scholarly conviction that biblical theology and its methodology are sufficient to conceive and formulate the entire range of Adventist theology. According to this view, systematics is taught in our semi-

[15]Gerhard Hasel recognizes that "the name 'biblical theology' is equivocal. It can refer to a theology that is biblical in the sense that it is rooted in the Bible, is in harmony with the Bible, or is drawn from the Bible. It can also refer to a theology that is biblical in the sense that it presents the theology which the Bible contains or simply a theology of the Bible. The former conception takes biblical theology as part of the realm of theological studies, whereas the latter conception sees biblical theology as part of biblical studies. We suggest that a biblical theology is the theology of the Bible as Scripture. Accordingly, its content is determined by the canonical form of Scripture and not by philosophical or theological models of Judeo-Christian or other thought, of whatever culture or setting." (*Proposals for a Canonical Biblical Theology*, 28) As we can see, in this statement Hasel did make room for a theology other than biblical theology.

naries not in order to discover and reach biblical truth, but for the same general reasons that we teach other disciplines—for instance, history of theology—that is, to make pastors aware of the world of ideas they will find in their ministries. This conviction does not leave room for systematics in Adventist theology. To ascertain the merits of this position, we need to distinguish between exegetical, biblical, and systematic theologies.

Exegetical and Biblical theologies.

My purpose in this section is not a detailed comparison between biblical and systematic theologies, but a brief examination of the belief that biblical theology as an independent scholarly discipline is able to produce the doctrines or teachings of Christianity. This examination will be conducted from a methodological viewpoint. In the task of formulating the beliefs and doctrines of the Church, is the exegetical methodology of biblical theology sufficient, or should a systematic methodology be called to complement it? I will answer this question by differentiating between biblical and systematic methodologies. This differentiation provides the disciplinary context from which the question of the role of systematics in Adventist theology may arise.

I will characterize the methodology of each scholarly discipline by reference to two of their distinctive features, namely, the object of study or subject matter, and one distinctive procedure of each discipline. I will state the two identifying features for each scholarly discipline first, and then I will explain the way in which they help us perceive the inner soul of each discipline. We may briefly say that, on the one hand, the subject matter exegetical and biblical theologies attempt to clarify is the text of Scripture, and the salient procedure they utilize in searching for the meaning of their object is "analysis." On the other hand, the subject matter of systematics is reality or life, while the salient procedure it utilizes in searching for the meaning of its object is "synthesis."

Let us begin by considering the basic feature of exegetical and biblical theologies with which Adventist theologians are most familiar. The ultimate goal of these disciplines is to bring forth the meanings of the biblical text in their specificity and as a whole. There is a difference between exegetical and biblical theologies. Exegetical theology searches for the meaning of biblical texts, while biblical theology searches for the theology of Scripture by book, groups of books, and Scripture as a whole.[16] The way exegetical and biblical theologies

[16]Jon Paulien describes the goal of exegetical theology in the following words: "In practical terms, biblical exegesis (NT and OT) seeks to answer the question, 'What was the biblical wrier trying to say?' What was Paul trying to say when he wrote a letter to the Roman church back in the first century. What issues was he trying to address? What language and arguments did he chose [sic] to use? As a basic process, exegesis is appropriate to any written work, even student papers. It is the process of seeking to understand a writer's conscious intention for a particular work" ("Three Ways to Approach the Bible: Disciplinary Distinctions" [Berrien Springs, MI: Unpublished paper, 1997], 3-4). Gerhard Hasel describes the goal of biblical theology in two steps. "The first step consists of a

proceed in attempting to clarify their object of study—the meanings of the text of Scripture—is primarily analytical. The analytical way considers the part before the whole. The analysis of the biblical text requires great skill, scholarship, and experience. The Bible is a whole which the exegete divides until all parts lay bare before his or her eyes. After the scriptural whole is divided into its components (book, chapter, text, sentence, and words) and each part is studied in great detail, exegetes and biblical scholars have to put the parts back together again, which requires synthesis. Biblical theologians believe that through this process of analysis and synthesis the true meaning of Scripture may be discovered.

When the parts are put back together, exegetes and biblical theologians are not using the analytical but the synthetical procedure. Before applying the analytical procedure, exegetical and biblical theologians have no presupposed idea of the whole. Their conception of the whole is built up by bringing the pieces back together again. The movement of synthesis remains faithful to exegetical methodology whether the whole that is brought forth is a sentence, paragraph, chapter, or book. From this brief description it becomes apparent that exegesis and biblical theology make a strong contribution in the understanding of the biblical texts. Their strength lies on the side of the parts rather than on the side of the whole.

As biblical theology attempts to bring forth the whole range of Old and New Testament teachings, the synthetical methodology required crosses over to the realm of ideas within which systematics works.[17] The question then arises whether such a synthesis can be accomplished within the constrains of exegetical methodology. I am not questioning the right biblical theologians have to report on the whole Scripture, yet I wonder about the methodology they use to achieve such a goal. It is my contention that to fully achieve the integration of all biblical teachings, notions, and ideas, the synthetic methodology of systematic theology is necessary. I am not suggesting that bringing together the testi-

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presentation of the theologies of the various OT and NT books or groups of writings so that each biblical witness stands next to the others in all its richness and variety. This procedure allows ample opportunity for every aspect of biblical thought to emerge and be heard. In principle these book-by-book and group-by-group theologies provide the opportunity of recognizing both differences and similarities, continuity, growth, and enlargements, revealing the full richness of the divine self-disclosure. The second step is equally important. It consists of a multitrack treatment of the longitudinal themes, motifs, and concepts that have emerged from the book-by-book and group-by-group presentations. On the basis of the longitudinal thematic perspectives, the totality of the unity of the Bible can be perceived without forcing a single unilinear approach upon the Bible itself" ("Proposal for a Canonical Biblical Theology," 33).

[17]Most biblical theologians work within the limits of either Old or New Testaments. Some attempt to bring the two together into a single theological movement. Some attempts claiming to be an account of biblical theology or Old and New Testament theologies clearly move within a systematic methodology. See, for instance, Millar Burrows, *An Outline of Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1946); and Heinrich Ewald, *Old and New Testament Theology*, trans. Thomas Goadby (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1888).

mony of the whole Bible is a task only systematicians can accomplish. What I am claiming is that when biblical theologians attempt to bring the whole Bible together they necessarily switch to a systematic methodology. The characteristics and methodology of biblical theology are necessarily self-limiting, which thus makes necessary the development of systematic theology.

Systematic Theology.

In this subsection I will speak of the way a systematics that is faithful to scripture should work and not to the traditional way in which systematics operates. The characterization of the subject matter and synthetical procedure of systematics in this section assumes the existence of a biblical philosophical basis of which I will speak in the last section of this article.

Since the methodology of systematic theology is less known in Adventist circles, I will start by clarifying what systematic methodology is not. The methodology of systematic theology should not be equated primarily with an orderly and didactic presentation of teachings.[18] As exegetical and biblical theologians are motivated to discover the meaning of the parts of which Scripture is made up, systematic theologians are motivated to discover the meaning of Christian doctrines as a whole. Moreover, we should note that in biblical theology the "whole" is different from the "whole" in systematics, mainly by reason of its referent.

In biblical theology the "whole" refers to the text of Scripture, while in systematics the "whole" refers to the manifold reality about which Scripture speaks, namely life. Thus, the characteristics, limitations, and articulation of exegetical and biblical theologies are subject to the textual nature of their objects, while the characteristics, limitations, and articulation of systematic theology are subject to the structure and interpretation of the reality the biblical texts speak about. To put it briefly, exegetical and biblical methodologies are textually oriented, while systematic methodologies are ideas and issues oriented to life.

The basic procedure in systematic methodology is synthesis. However, systematics also starts with analysis. The analysis in systematics is directed not

[18]We should not confuse an orderly and thematic presentation with the *ordo disciplinae* (order of the discipline). The *ordo disciplinae* refers to the inner logic that ties together the broad sections of systematic theology. Of course systematics involves an orderly presentation of doctrines. Thus, Gerhard Hasel is correct in saying that "'theology' in the sense of systematic/dogmatic theology means . . . the construction of a theological system of beliefs regarding God and man, sin and salvation, the view of the world from the perspective of the divine, the present church and the future kingdom to come. This definition of 'theology' implies the explication of the Christian message in a systematized, coherent, constructive, and orderly way" ("*Scripture and Theology*," 55). However, "the explication of the Christian message in a systematized, coherent, constructive, and orderly way" is a task that can be achieved by biblical theology. If the proper task of systematics can be performed by biblical theology, it is difficult to see why Adventist academic theology should concern itself with systematics.

to the text, but to the ideas of the text about reality. Thus, the analytics of concepts and notions is applied following not the linguistic structure of written texts but the dynamic structure of real life. Systematics, thus, attempts to interpret the whole of reality (nature, history, God's salvific activities, and the like) by discovering the inner logic and contents of biblical thought. As a result, systematics conceives and formulates Christian teachings that, in turn, provide the framework and content of Christian ministry and mission.[19]

While the ideological dynamics of systematics links it, structurally and methodologically, to philosophy, the textual dynamics of exegetical and biblical theologies links them to linguistics and to textual and literary criticism. After the notions, events, and teachings of Scripture are analyzed from the perspective of their referents in life,[20] systematics proceeds to bring them together or, in other words, "synthesize" or "articulate" the entire counsel of Scripture. In this way the entire richness of biblical teachings and thought can be brought forth to illuminate the whole of human and divine life. Synthesis is the process through which the various parts are connected to form a whole. The methodology of systematics, then, proceeds not only by analyzing the parts (individual notions, ideas, or teachings) but also by connecting or articulating the parts. Since we have seen that in exegesis and biblical theology there is also a process of synthesis after analysis is completed the question arises as to whether there is any difference between the application of synthesis in biblical and systematic theologies.

By way of example I will deal here with only one basic difference. Biblical theologians use synthesis mainly to put together the parts of a text already analyzed (verse, chapter, book), and at times, the basic teachings of Old and New Testaments. Biblical theology may also attempt to use synthesis to put together the teachings of both testaments in their historical-theological continuity.[21] In so

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[19]Walter C. Kaiser Jr. is an example of a biblical scholar who does not consider systematic theology capable of authentically mediating from the task of biblical theology to the task of preaching. Kaiser does not even consider systematics for the task of preparing the content of biblical preaching. When he asks whether homiletics or biblical theology should be primarily responsible for "preparing a biblical text for preaching," the answer, with which I agree, is biblical theology (*Toward Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981], 21, 22). The responsibility in preparing the biblical content of preaching falls primarily on systematics. However, I do not blame Kaiser and biblical theologians thinking in that way because the systematic theology they know is not grounded on biblical categories. As underlined in the next section, the systematics I envision, on the contrary, is grounded on the biblical system and its categories.

[20]This gives rise to systematic exegesis, that is, the analysis of the meaning of texts from the viewpoint of their referents in life. This exegesis is still faithful to the text, but is more focused on the broad analytical exploration of all possible meanings of the text that should take place in biblical exegesis. The exploration and relation of these two exegetical approaches will have to wait for a more opportune time.

[21]I am not aware that any such attempt has been made by a biblical scholar, but theoretically it might be conceived. Gerhard Hasel thinks such an enterprise does belong to the realm of biblical

doing, biblical theology brings out the meanings and teachings that are expressly formulated in Scripture.[22] Thus, the nature and limitations of their synthesis or articulation of the parts of Scripture follow the rules that apply to the interpretation of texts.

Systematic theologians use synthesis constructively to put together the entire range of scriptural ideas as they refer to reality as a whole. In so doing systematic theology brings out meanings and teachings about reality not explicitly expressed in the words of Scripture. Thus, the nature and limitations of the synthesis or articulation of the parts follow rules by which ideas are articulated. To put it simply, by analysis biblical theology brings out biblical ideas from their dormant state in the text, and by synthesis it attempts to present a full descriptive report of the entirety of biblical teachings and to use biblical thought to understand the always changing landscape of life. This report is not just the description of human history, but of teachings and ideas revealed by God.[23] Systematic theologians use the ideas and teachings that biblical theology formulates to interpret real life as a whole.

Systematics also uses analysis, but applies it to the reality it interprets. Once the complexity of the reality to be interpreted is grasped in the specificity of its parts, Adventist systematics may proceed to retrieve from Scripture the ideas

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theology. However, he seems to suggest that a biblical theology of both testaments is still in the future. In an article published posthumously, Hasel explains: "Biblical theology must reflect on OT and NT theology in a dynamic way that overcomes the present juxtaposition. Since the two Testaments produce *one* Bible, it is difficult to look at OT theology in a totally isolated way, as if the NT did not exist"(*Proposals for a Canonical Biblical Theology*, 25). He recognizes a reciprocal relation between testaments, according to which history flows from OT to NT, and life flows from NT to OT. Hasel adds, "when this reciprocal relationship between the Testaments is understood, with the entire Bible as the proper context of the biblical-theological enterprise, we are able to grasp the full potential of biblical theology" (ibid., 23-26).

[22]Two notable attempts at this very difficult task are Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), and more recently, Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992). Both attempts historically describe the contents of Scripture as seen through the lenses of exegetical theology. Childs includes methodological issues relevant to the task, a summary of the theological contents of Scripture, more or less following the canonical order, and a theological reflection on the Christian Bible thematically organized following broad biblical motifs that appear in both testaments. These themes are also presented descriptively, summarizing the results of scholarship in the fields of the Old and New Testaments. I think these attempts properly belong to the field of biblical theology and do not replace, but prepare the way for systematic theology.

[23]Reacting against the modernist model of biblical theology, Gerhard Hasel proposes a canonical biblical model for biblical theology. His model correctly claims that biblical theology "is not a purely historical or descriptive enterprise" ("Proposals for a Canonical Biblical Theology," 24) and that the time is ripe "for constructive biblical theology" (ibid., 33). What Hasel envisions is a biblical theology that, bringing forth the understanding of God's cognitive revelation, would make a difference in the development of Christian theology and life. Hasel's model stands in stark contrast to the modernistic model that only describes bits and pieces of "human testimony" and ends up having historical relevancy only for the scholar interested in the study of the history of religions.

and teachings that apply to the reality to be interpreted. As biblical ideas are brought together not by following their textual, but conceptual or teaching logic, further understanding of the meaning of the text and the truths they express come into view.

Thus, systematics attempts to clarify the totality of real life (history and nature) by using biblical thought and teachings. Moreover, since the whole of reality is always broader than the whole covered by the Bible, systematicians are bound to need all the ideas and teachings of Scripture (John 21:25). In other words, systematics does not summarize or "harmonize" the manifoldness of Scripture, but uses every nuance to interpret its broader and more complex subject matter. By retrieving and applying biblical ideas and teachings to the task of interpreting the totality of real life from a biblical perspective, systematicians are able to perceive the inner logic of biblical thinking, as it were, from within its inner intellectual operation.

The question arises of how the systematic understanding of the inner logic of Scripture relates to biblical theology's attempt to bring forth the ultimate unity of all biblical texts. This is not the place to enter into such a detailed and advanced study. I believe that both are possible within the scholarly constraints of each discipline and that they should correct and complement each other. I suspect that the systematic approach to the whole becomes the ground on which the attempt of biblical theology to bring forth the whole intelligibility of scriptural thought becomes possible. I remain unconvinced that Gerhard Hasel's proposal for a "canonical biblical theology" that would bring "the totality of the unity of the Bible" into view[24] may be possible within the scholarly limitations of the analytically and textually oriented methodology of biblical theology without the help of either systematic or fundamental theologies. My suspicion is based, among other things, on the fact that even Hasel's proposal requires a center which he describes not in a textual, but in a systematic category, namely, the triune God.[25]

Arguably, the attempt to discover the inner logic of scriptural thought in its entirety necessarily requires a systematic methodology through which a synthesis or articulation not of texts, but of ideas, notions, and teachings may be se-

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[24]Ibid., 33.

[25]Hasel conceives that to bring together the entire range of biblical teachings in their inner scriptural harmony, we need to identify the "center" of theology. Only in reference to the proper center can the inner harmony of Scripture be brought forth without superimposing on Scripture an alien category. He addresses the issue of the center of theology in various writings. Presenting his proposal for a "canonical biblical theology," Hasel writes: "I would like to reformulate my understanding of the 'center' by defining the center of both Testaments as the triune God who revealed Himself in the OT in multiple ways and who has manifested Himself in the NT in the incarnation of Jesus Christ as the God-man" (ibid., 32). To me this looks like the implicit recognition that the task he conceives as part of biblical theology can only be accomplished within the realm of systematic theology. I may yet be persuaded, however, that such an enterprise is possible within the limitations proper to biblical theology.

cured without trampling on the results of biblical exegesis and theology. Moreover, biblical theology's broadest goal, the articulation of the entire range of scriptural teachings, requires the application of a systematic methodology. On this basis, I think it becomes clear that, in Adventism, biblical theology not only can make room for systematics, but should welcome it as an ally, and vice versa. The uniqueness, complementarity, and mutual correctiveness that takes place between biblical and systematic theologies should be considered as part of the general interdisciplinary matrix of Christian theology.

Perceiving the Need for Systematic Theology in Adventism

Let us, now, turn to the question of whether Adventist theology needs systematics. The necessity of an Adventist systematic theology will be considered in reference, first, to the nature of some Adventist doctrines, then, to the ongoing process of theological fragmentation, and finally, to the nature of the task of pastors and evangelists.

There is no doubt that the Sanctuary doctrine has played a central role in the origination of Adventism. Generally, Adventists have recognized that the Sanctuary doctrine is unique and foundational to their identity and mission. However, the discovery of the Sanctuary doctrine requires both exegetical and systematic tools. Through the analytical exegesis of biblical literature on the Sanctuary it becomes clear that Scripture teaches about the Sanctuary both in the Old and New Testaments. Biblical exegesis points to the existence of a divine redemptive activity in both the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries. Moreover, Adventist biblical theologians are able to forward a prophetic interpretation of Daniel 8:14 which calls for an investigative judgment beginning in 1844. I am convinced that exegetical and biblical theologies can produce these teachings within the scope of their own methodologies. But these ideas of themselves do not result into the doctrine of the sanctuary.

First of all, we know that from the perspective of exegesis and biblical theologies, other interpretations of the same texts are also possible. The interpretation of biblical texts is not an exact or unambiguous science. Texts can be interpreted in various ways. From the perspective of exegesis, it is at times difficult to decide the meaning of texts. By this I am not saying that exegesis and biblical theology cannot support the traditional Adventist teaching on the Sanctuary. I am suggesting, rather, that our position is an interpretation of the text that conflicts with other interpretations that are, exegetically speaking, equally valid.

To say that an interpretation is exegetically "valid" does not necessarily mean that such an interpretation is true. In the scholarly context an interpretation is "valid" when the interpreter has followed all the required procedures prescribed by the discipline in which the interpretation takes place. Beyond its validity, the truth of an interpretation requires that what it says correspond with reality. But while we wait for, say, the correspondence in life of the biblical teachings on the second coming of Christ, we must attempt to sort out from

among many exegetically valid interpretations of the text the one that expresses the true meaning of the biblical text. At this point a limitation of biblical exegesis becomes apparent and systematic theology can be of assistance. As systematics deals with the referent of the text, one is able to scan the entire surface of Scripture, bringing, searching, and retrieving ideas that connect with the issue or referent even when textual connectivity is not warranted. Whereas the exegetical methodology of biblical theology is prepared to find and justify textual connections, the methodology of systematic theology is prepared to find and justify thought connections. It is at this level that nonbiblical philosophy, explicitly or implicitly, helps exegesis make a statement about the true interpretation of the texts.

For instance, Genesis 1:1 says: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (NAB). In this sentence only the notions of heavens and earth are familiar to humans. The notions of "beginning," "God," and "creation" are not. Each notion in this text has a referent in reality. But what is that referent. To decide the meaning of the ideas of beginning, God, and creation we need to move beyond Genesis, beyond the Old Testament, into the New Testament, and beyond the literary or textual connectivity required by the textual nature of exegesis into thought connectivity. The methodology of systematic theology is specifically designed to discover and justify these sorts of connections. Traditionally, theologians have allowed philosophy or science to decide the meaning of these notions (beginning, God, creation). An Adventist systematic theology will decide the meaning of these notions from the wealth of revealed wisdom that we find in Scripture.

Returning to the Sanctuary, we know, for instance, that the Adventist doctrine of the Sanctuary includes the interpretation of Daniel 8:14 which calls for a pre-advent investigative judgment that begins in 1844 and takes place in heaven. Additionally, Adventists believe that this work of investigation involves the direct activity of the Trinity and is essentially related to the work of salvation. The sanctuary doctrine involves much more than these few general aspects, yet they are enough to help us understand why the Adventist formulation of the Sanctuary doctrine requires the application of the methodology of systematic theology.

Adventism has extensively discussed the matter of time, but failed to give the same importance to the matter of place. Let us focus for a minute not on the date, but on the place of the investigative judgment. Since I have dealt with this issue elsewhere, here a brief reference will suffice.[26] Following the text, biblical theology usually seems pleased with stating that the heavenly investigative judgment is the correct interpretation of Daniel 8:14. Starting from this conclusion of biblical theology, systematic theology approaches the biblical doctrine of the investigative judgment not as literary text, but as a complex of ideas which

[26]See Fernando L. Canale, "Philosophical Foundations and the Biblical Sanctuary," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 36/2 (1998): 183-206.

say something about a reality. This perspective immediately leads the systematician to analyze the doctrine from the viewpoint of its referents. Let us consider, for instance, the referent about place, namely heaven.

Systematic methodology requires the identification of all biblical texts and notions that bear on the biblical understanding of heaven. This is not equal to a simple gathering of biblical statements on heaven. The application of the methodology of systematic theology to the understanding of the Sanctuary leads by referential connection to heaven, which, in order to be clarified, leads also by referential connection to the understanding of the nature of God, who is supposed to act in heaven. It leads to the Trinitarian nature of God, who is directly involved in the investigative process. It leads to the nature of salvation, and so on. Each issue systematically connected with the understanding of the Sanctuary doctrine is to be retrieved and connected by systematic theology, in reference to the entire scope of biblical revelation. This methodology also calls for the collection and comparison of existing interpretations on the same issue in the history of Christian theology.

This probe generates interesting findings adding to the interpretation and understanding of the Sanctuary doctrine. When the results of the biblical understanding, exegeted and systematized, are compared with the understanding developed throughout the history of doctrinal formulations, we discover that Scripture conceives heaven as a place within creation, while classical, modern, and postmodern theologians believe that heaven is not a place, but a spiritual relation to God, Who has neither space nor time. Regarding salvation, something similar takes place. While Scripture seems to present various and consecutive actions of God, who works out salvation through a historical process, most Christians believe that salvation is the eternal work of God, consequently making any historical process of salvation either in heaven or earth impossible. This stark difference directly results from the almost generalized traditional conviction that the real referents of biblical teachings should be interpreted from the perspective of nonbiblical philosophical thinking. Conversely, Adventist systematic theology defines the referents of biblical teachings from the notions explicitly or implicitly espoused by biblical writers.

When the referent of the idea of salvation is investigated with the same systematic methodology, similar results come into view. Salvation is conceived as one complete eternal act of God. This act is understood as God's eternal justification, primarily revealed in the divine act on the cross. Again, this is a very complex issue. When the Adventist teaching of an investigative judgment is probed from the viewpoint of its salvific referent, the idea of judgment must be necessarily connected with the notion of justification by faith. Moreover, when the salvific referent of the Sanctuary doctrine is interpreted in the Protestant-Evangelical tradition of justification by faith, a serious conflict arises. Simply put, the conflict is the following. If salvation is the eternal act of God's sovereign predestination, revealed at the cross and experienced as justification by

faith, the notion of a process of investigation of the saints becomes not only meaningless but contradictory. Sooner or later one of the two teachings needs to be modified. Evangelical theologians modified the Sanctuary doctrine by reducing it to a literary expression that uplifts the central doctrine of justification by faith alone. Besides, the very idea of judgment contradicts the Evangelical notion of the assurance of salvation.

This systematic analysis of ideas helps us understand why conservative Protestant theologians cannot find the Adventist teaching on the sanctuary in Scripture. The parting of the ways between Adventist and Evangelical theologians on the sanctuary doctrine is not the result of different exegetical methodologies, but of different systematic methodologies. We differ not in the way we study the text, but in the way we connect the various parts of the biblical text and the overwhelming diversity of its referents. Systematic methodology also explains why Evangelical Adventists cannot perceive the doctrine of the Sanctuary in the Bible. Their view of salvation precludes them from accepting that biblical references to the Sanctuary may describe a real salvific activity of God other than justification by faith. Once this systematic position is explicitly or implicitly adopted, it systematically rules the interpretation of biblical texts in exegesis and biblical theologies.

For instance, even though Desmond Ford argues exegetically, his adoption of the classical Protestant view on the Sanctuary and rejection of the historicist method of prophetic interpretation ultimately rests on a systematic—not biblical or exegetical—methodology. Ford implicitly recognizes the role of the systematic methodology as he explains that "when the gospel of grace is understood, then that truth coordinates all other truths, including such apparently esoteric matters as prophecy and the human nature of our Lord."[27] This brief example shows that we cannot ignore the role of systematic methodology either in the overall process of discovering biblical truth, or in the application of exegetical and biblical methodologies.

The methodology of systematic theology is also active in the conception and formulation of Adventist teachings, for instance our position on some health issues, entertainment, ecclesiology, eschatology, and worship. Adventists need to recognize that they do not arrive at some of their doctrinal positions by way of exegetical methodology alone, but also by connecting biblical data, thus utilizing patterns and rules that are not allowed in exegetical and biblical theologies. In this way the discovery of biblical truth is advanced. The fact that systematic tools and procedures are involved in the discovery of biblical truth does not render them "less biblical" than those that can be accessed by way of exegetical procedures.

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[27]Desmond and Gillian Ford, *The Adventist Crisis of Spiritual Identity* (Newcastle, CA: Desmond Ford Publications, 1982), 80; see also Desmond Ford, *Daniel 8:14 The Day of Atonement and the Investigative Judgement* [Casselberry, FL: Euangelion Press, 1980], i).

The need for an Adventist systematic theology can also be perceived as we survey the present status of Adventist theology. Since the sixties Adventist theology has been undergoing a slow but steady process of theological fragmentation. In essence, historical, evangelical, and progressive Adventisms are attempts at grasping the Christian message systematically. Inadvertently, however, such attempts draw the principles for inner coherence and articulation from theologies that, in turn, base their theological understanding on nonbiblical philosophical ideas. They could greatly benefit from a consistent and critical application of the hermeneutics of suspicion I have recommended earlier.

Finally, pastors and evangelists, by the nature of their tasks, which consist in applying the total coherence of the biblical message into the everyday experience of believers and nonbelievers, function more as systematicians than exegetes or biblical theologians. The mission of the Church, then, also points to the need that systematics should be actively involved in the discovery of biblical truths.[28]

In concluding this section, it seems reasonable to suggest that the systematic nature of several doctrines held by Adventism, the systematic motivation of the theological fragmentation presently developing within Adventism, and the systematic nature of the proper task of pastors and evangelists point to the need that systematic theology should be integrated as a necessary component of the Adventist theological encyclopedia.

The Basis for Making Room for Systematics in Adventist Theology

Systematics has always been conducted on the basis of a humanly-originated philosophical system. Conversely, faithfulness to its scriptural ground has consistently prevented Adventist theology from intentionally utilizing humanly-originated philosophical systems. The only way Adventism could make room for systematics is by reinterpreting the system on which systematics works on the basis of Scripture. If Adventism were to make room for systematics without reinterpreting the system on a biblical basis, it would destroy the very reason of its existence.

If, on the basis of the argument of need briefly explored in the preceding section, we rush to open the disciplinary room for systematics in Adventist theology, by-passing the preliminary task of dealing with the issue of philosophy from critical and biblical perspectives, the most important reason for a negative answer to our question would have been ignored. Accepting systematics within Adventist theology while ignoring the preliminary task of addressing and answering, in a biblical way, the question of the system, will prove to be more detrimental to Adventism than denying systematics, for the time being, a place among the other theological disciplines. A hermeneutics of suspicion, then, is

[28]On the important relationship that exists between the interpretation of the theological encyclopedia and the training of pastors, see Richard Muller, vii-xvii.

not enough. The only ground on which there is room systematics in Adventist theology is the discovery and technical formulation of the biblical system. This point cannot be overemphasized. I am convinced that if Adventist theology opens its doors to a systematic theology whose operative principles are derived from any sort of human philosophy, very soon Adventism will become a subspecies of Evangelicalism, losing in the process not only its identity and uniqueness, but also the reason for its existence and mission.

Since Adventist theology stands or falls on the *sola Scriptura* principle, it seems clear that systematics can find disciplinary room within Adventist theology only under the condition that its system be drawn from Scripture itself. The redefinition of the system hangs on the question of whether a biblical philosophy is possible.

This can only be answered by exploring the biblical system of thought. I envision the opening of a disciplinary room for systematics in Adventist theology only on the twin bases of the existence and technical retrieval of the biblical system. Until such a step is accomplished, I believe it is advisable that Adventist theologians conduct their theological enterprise within the scholarly quarters of exegetical and biblical theologies and by following the hermeneutic of suspicion whenever the application of the methodology of systematic theology becomes indispensable. This statement should not be interpreted as a call for or encouragement of the status quo, but rather as an invitation to be critical and to use caution in the way in which we build on the foundation of Christ, the prophets, and the apostles (1 Cor 3:10-15; Eph 2:20).

At this point I can only state that, in my opinion, there is such a thing as a biblical philosophy and a biblical system.[29] In Scripture, of course, neither the system nor the answers to classical philosophical issues are formulated in the technical language of the scholarly world. In spite of the everyday language in which they are expressed, there is certainly a biblical system—and a biblical answer to the classical questions raised by human philosophy. Both the system and the answers to the classical issues raised by human philosophy provide the

[29]This is not only my opinion, but Ellen G. White's conviction. She states clearly that Scripture "unfolds a simple and complete system of theology and philosophy" (*FE*, 129). Scripture "contains philosophy the most profound; poetry the sweetest and the most sublime, the most impassioned and the most pathetic. Immeasurably superior in value to the productions of any human author are the Bible writings, even when thus considered; but of infinitely wider scope, of infinitely greater value, are they when viewed in their relation to the grand central thought. Viewed in the light of this thought, every topic has a new significance. In the most simply stated truths are involved principles that are as high as heaven and that compass eternity" (*CG*, 505). Again she advises us to "study your Bible. Study not the philosophy contained in many books, but study the philosophy of the Word of the living God" (*TMK*, 201). Specifically, E. G. White points out that "the Bible reveals the true philosophy of history" (*Ed*, 173). I have briefly expressed my position on this scholarly issue in *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews UP, 1987), 285-409, and in "Revelation and Inspiration: Method for a New Approach," *AUSS* 31 (1993): 181-186.

foundation not only for the discipline of systematics, but also for the entire Adventist theological encyclopedia.

Conclusion

The answer to the question regarding whether "there is room for systematics in Adventist theology" seems to require a positive answer. Systematic theology, however, is not to be conceived as being primarily an orderly and didactic exposition of Christian teachings, but rather as the disciplined attempt to grasp and formulate the inner and outer coherence of the total range of revealed data given to us in Scripture.

The actual development of an Adventist systematics requires a preliminary task, namely, the identification of the system and philosophical ideas on the basis of which biblical revelation was originally conceived. This task is to be accomplished within the area of fundamental theology. It seems, then, that in this, like many other issues belonging to the foundations of theology as an academic discipline, Adventism should not follow the facile route of uncritically assuming or adopting ready-to-use solutions available in the theological supermarket.

Making room for systematics as a necessary discipline within the Adventist theological encyclopedia implies a very important methodological conclusion: No theological discipline is self-sufficient for the scholarly task of discovering, understanding, formulating, and implementing the revealed truths of Christianity. In other words, Christian theology can only accomplish its goals by way of a team-effort, which should include not only the intellectual tasks performed at the seminary, but also the tasks performed by the entire Church at the local and universal levels.

It is through such a collegial effort of teaming up the various resources and disciplines of the seminary, university, administration, and local congregations that the unity of Christ in the Spirit will find a powerful way of expression in the secularized context in which Adventism has been asked to live and minister.

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"Even If Noah, Daniel, and Job" (Ezekiel 14:14, 20)—Why These Three?[1]

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I have an addiction. Studying theology. In fact, last year when my husband Dick asked me what I'd like to do for our anniversary, I said "let's spend the evening reading theology books together!" You see, besides everything else wonderful about my husband, Dick is an incredible person to bounce theological ideas off of. He has spent much time wrestling through such issues, and I benefit richly. In fact, I've told him many times that it is a good thing that Andrews University doesn't charge me tuition for all the free classes he's given me!

He was the first of several who taught me it is important to carefully analyze any theological materials and determine the presuppositions of each writer. This is a critical work. Not everything in print is good theology—by that I mean, that which corresponds with the theological perspective in Scripture. The consistent position of the SDA church since its founding is correct—that though there are many writers within the canon, and though each one of these is of course writing from a different perspective, they are united in their worldview or basic presuppositions.

This is one of the reasons studying Scripture is such an extraordinary experience. The Bible is a unified whole. We don't need to critically sort out the underlying theological grid of each biblical writer. We know already where they stand. Instead, we can work to synthesize the OT and the NT in order to determine true biblical theology. I appreciate the way Ellen White has stated it:

> The truths of the Bible are as pearls hidden. They must be searched, dug out by painstaking effort. Those who take only a surface view of the Scriptures will, with their superficial knowledge, which they think is very deep, talk of the contradictions of the Bible, and question the authority of the Scriptures. But those whose hearts are in

[1] The following was Dr. Davidson's inaugural address as the new President of the Adventist Theological Society, given in Toronto, June 2000.

> harmony with truth and duty will search the Scriptures with a heart prepared to receive divine impressions. The illuminated soul sees a spiritual unity, one grand golden thread running through the whole, but it requires patience, thought, and prayer to trace out the precious golden thread.[2]

This wrestling with the Word is the privilege of every Christian—tracing the grand themes and theological structures; making our picture of God ever more complete. When doing this kind of study we will find phrases used hundreds of times that always makes tingles go up my spine: Statements such as "Thus says the Lord" or "This is the word of the Lord." We can actually hear God Himself speak! There are passages where such phrases tumble out one on top of the other in quick succession when a divine message gets intense—making it impossible for the reader to forget, because of the repetitions, the real voice speaking. For one example, listen to Jeremiah. Note the effusion of reminders of Who is really speaking:

> The **word** that came to Jeremiah **from the LORD**, saying, "Stand in the gate of the LORD's house, and proclaim there this **word**, and say, 'Hear the **word of the LORD**, all you of Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the LORD!'" **Thus says the LORD of hosts**, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. (Jer 7:1-3)

In this particular passage, God speaks through Jeremiah to reprimand His people for their pseudo-religiosity. And throughout, even after the concentrated reminder of 'the word of the Lord' in the first verses, we are still prompted six more times in this address that it is God who is speaking (Jer 7:13, 19, 20, 21, 30, 32 with "says the LORD" or 'thus says the LORD")! It becomes impossible to forget the source of this pointed message.

These repetitions are not "sloppy editing" on the part of Jeremiah. Nor is God stuttering. As biblical linguists have become more sensitive to the Hebrew language, they have finally begun to understand that the recurrent repetitions found throughout the Hebrew Bible are signals of emphasis that the writer intends to make. This has been an important perception for correct biblical interpretation.

Moreover, none of the Bible writers ever express any reservation about the source or their certainty of God's revelation to them. And with the oft-repeated

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[2] Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:20. She continues: "Many, very many, are questioning the verity and truth of the Scriptures. Human reasoning and the imaginings of the human heart are undermining the inspiration of the Word of God, and that which should be received as granted, is surrounded with a cloud of mysticism. Nothing stands out in clear and distinct lines, upon rock bottom. This is one of the marked signs of the last days. This Holy Book has withstood the assaults of Satan, who has united with evil men to make everything of divine character shrouded in clouds and darkness. But the Lord has preserved this Holy book by His own miraculous power in its present shape—a chart or guidebook to the human family to show them the way to heaven" (1:15).

electrifying phrase, 'Thus says the Lord,' the real author of the communication was nailed down with certainty.

Even more importantly, unlike much modern speaking and writing, God's words are always truthful and straight-forward. At the present time we face, both in the media and the printed word, something far different. Back in 1946, George Orwell published his now-famous essay, "Politics and the English Language," in which he noted, "The great enemy of clear language is insincerity." Orwell went on to claim that instead of being "an instrument for expressing thought," language was now used "for concealing or preventing thought."[3] Orwell has only been proven more correct since then! You are well aware of how much public speech is designed to make lies sound truthful by using a language of deception that masquerades as openness. Much public communication today is as false, deceptive, and misleading as the language found on many used-car lots—where employees there are no longer called "car salesmen," but now are described as "transportation counselors". More and more language is being used with no intention of speaking truthfully.

This is not a matter of subjects and verbs agreeing. It is a matter of words and facts agreeing. For example, it is now presumed acceptable that government reports can be "economical with the truth." Public corporations report laying off workers as "work re-engineering." City officials force people out of their homes so the buildings can be demolished for "urban *renewal*." Modern military jargon speaks of "killing" as "neutralizing" and deadly wars as "conflicts." Lies told by politicians now are termed "strategic misrepresentations" or "reality augmentation." Tax increases are "disguised" as "revenue enhancement."

Nor is the National Cattlemen's Association exempt. It has advised its members to "beef up" their image to the public by using more positive terms. At a time when the people are becoming more health-conscious, cattle ranchers are avoiding terms such as "fat cattle." Instead, well-fed steer are now referred to as "market ready" cattle. Growth hormones and other chemical additives should not even be mentioned. And never speak of "slaughtering" beef. Better to say "processing" of meat.

Local utility reports turn ordinary sewage sludge into "regulated organic nutrients" that do not stink but rather "exceed the odor threshold." Labeling nuclear waste "valuable, important nuclear materials" and a nuclear waste dump "monitored retrievable storage" buffers the critical issues of dealing with dangerous nuclear waste. Even toy companies, to avoid import tariffs mandated for dolls, name them "action figures." In a world such as this it becomes ever more appealing to read the clear word of the Lord.[4]

For, by contrast, when the God of heaven communicates there is no "double speak." God's words are free from any duplicity. When reading Scripture, one

[3] Cited by William Lutz in *The New Doublespeak: Why No One Knows What Anyone's Saying Anymore* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996, xi.

[4] These examples gleaned from Lutz.

doesn't go away wondering whether God is motivated by any "hidden agendas," as seen too often in politics today, and even in the church. God has always spoken truthfully. And He has faithfully acted on His word, even though it has proved very costly for Him.

This is not to say that it is always easy to understood what God is saying. I acknowledge that careful study is always necessary to correctly interpret Scripture. Though there is absolute theological correspondence among all biblical writers, mental wrestling is necessary to interpret Scripture correctly. There are still difficult problems to solve: interpreting prophecy; explaining the "spirits in prison" in 1 Pet 3:19-20, etc. There are also certain enigmatic statements of God that require reflection. I'm thinking this time of Ezekiel 14, where during a time of judgment for Judah, two times in one chapter God draws attention to three people. He says:

> ""Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness," **says the Lord GOD** [v. 14] . . . [and again] 'even though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live,' **says the Lord GOD**, 'they would deliver neither son nor daughter; they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness [v. 20].'" Ezekiel 14:14, 20.

And notice that even here we are reminded more than once that God Himself is speaking!

Why did God single out these three? Why Noah, Daniel, and Job? In this divine list of OT worthies, why wasn't Abraham included, with his wrenching experience of being commanded by God to sacrifice his beloved son? Abraham is even called God's "friend forever." (1 Chr. 20:7) Why wasn't David mentioned, the one God calls "a man after His own heart?" (1 Sam. 13:14) And what about Moses, who received the Ten Commandments directly from God? God describes Himself talking face to face with Moses. And then there is Elijah, with his amazing courage on Mount Carmel, well aware that the wrath of the king and the sentiment of the people at that time of extreme famine would cause his instant death should the priests of Baal be able to sneak a spark of fire on their sacrificial altar in the attempt to vindicate Baal worship. And besides, the account of Noah's life ends so pathetically. Why these three: Noah, Daniel, and Job?

I have come to the conclusion that there are some critical issues involved in the lives of Noah, Job, and Daniel that are of import for Seventh-day Adventists of the 21st century. Let us consider each one of these briefly.

Noah

The first thing one recalls about Noah is that he was commanded by God to build a huge ship on dry land because of a coming world-wide flood. Gen 6 indicates that Noah went right to work. Apparently he did not stop to ask, "What will everyone think of me if I do this?" Instead, he believed just what God had

told him, and he commenced his work immediately. The text in Genesis also states that the inhabitants of Noah's world were exceedingly wicked, implying that the largest part of the antediluvian world would likely react negatively to what Noah was doing.

And indeed, Ellen White informs us that, as might be expected, the crowds made fun of Noah. They ridiculed the idea of rain. They looked at the lofty trees and the wonderful things God had made in nature and said, "It is impossible that God shall destroy these things." [Surely the Creator wouldn't wipe out His own creation!] They considered Noah insane. They laughed at him and mocked him. They regarded Noah as "a wild fanatic." The impressions of their senses made a greater impression on the inhabitants of the pre-Flood world than the message from heaven. Yet Noah kept on building the ark according to God's directions. "Even the philosophers and scientists of the time reasoned that it was impossible for [it to rain and for] the earth to be destroyed by water."[5]

> Great men, worldly, honored, and wise men said, 'The threatenings of God are for the purpose of intimidating, and will never be [fulfilled] verified. You need not be alarmed. Such an event as the destruction of the world by the God who made it, and the punishment of the beings He has created, will never take place. Be at peace; fear not. Noah is a wild fanatic.' [And] The world made merry at the folly of the deluded old man.[6]

If Noah had been like many today who insist that all that is important is that "Jesus loves me [us]," and that all one has to do is "love the Lord" in some nominal sense, the ark would have never been built.[7] But in the face of intense ridicule, we find Noah proclaiming a judgment message—and demonstrating genuine faith, a faith that is obedient. He testified by what he did that he believed God's word. He could have determined that he would be considered crazy to build such a ship on dry land and refused his commission, as Jonah did much later. But Noah believed just what God had said, even though he had never seen it rain.

Yes, the people then considered him insane. But for 120 years he still kept building the ark according to God's directions.[8] Amid the prevailing corruption

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[5] Drawn from *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 96, 103; and *Christ Triumphant*, 55.

[6] *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 99.

[7] "There will be every influence that will lead us to make light of God's requirements. But if we are prepared to meet the Son of man when He shall come in the clouds of heaven, we must be getting ready for it now.... We want a living faith and a living religion. We want that our faith shall be made perfect by our works. And of those who are crying, 'Only believe, only believe, and you shall be saved,' we want to inquire, 'What shall we believe? What is the testing faith for this time?' *Christ Triumphant*, 60 (Ms 86, 1886).

[8] Ellen White also tells us that Noah was no arrogant preacher of doom: "When the last message of Noah was given to that degenerate age, as he stood before the people giving his warning, they turned from him to ridicule him. They had listened to the prayers of Noah that had ascended

that had brought God to the decision to destroy the world, Noah took God at His word and labored to stay the tide of moral evil. Not only do we find Noah in God's OT "hall of fame," but also in Heb. 11:7:

> By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Even the Genesis text instructs us that Noah "was a just man, perfect/blameless in his generations" and that "Noah walked with God"—just as it was said earlier of Enoch. (Gen 5:24).

Ellen White instructs us that the times when Noah preached are not so different from the times when we, now, are called to pronounce another judgment message. She writes:

> In Noah's day philosophers declared that it was impossible for the world to be destroyed by water; so now there are men of science who endeavor to show that the world cannot be destroyed by fire—that this would be inconsistent with the laws of nature. . . . But Noah stood like a rock amid the tempest. Surrounded by popular contempt and ridicule, he distinguished himself by his holy integrity and unwavering faithfulness. A power attended his words, for it was the voice of God to man through His servant.[9]

Yes, there are distinct correlations between the issues Noah faced in obeying God in his day and what we face today:

1) Obeying God's call to declare His judgment on a resistant, sinful world;

2) Doing this in the face of modern philosophers who insist that God is loving and would never really punish.

3. Doing this despite modern science's repudiation of fiat creation and its Creator God.

God declares Noah righteous through four biblical penmen, in Genesis, Ezekiel, 2 Peter, and Hebrews, and in our day God will again declare "blameless" those who obey His commission.[10]

Job

There are many issues involved in the experience of Job. His faithfulness in suffering comes to mind first, of course. The harsh reality of unjust suffering has regularly been held up as an argument against the God of Heaven, and has often

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day after day in their behalf, and with his heart drawn out for them he delivered his very last message to them" (*Christ Triumphant*, 55 [Ms 86, 1886]).

[9] *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 99, 103.

[10] For an important study of the word "blameless" as applied to Noah and Job and its import for the final remnant, see Lael Caesar's "Job as Paradigm for the Eschaton," *JATS*, 11/1–2 (2000): 148–162.

been the reason for unbelief. And no single book in Scripture focuses on suffering as poignantly as does the Book of Job.

Job, an upright, "blameless," and God-fearing man, living a respected, happy, and prosperous life, is suddenly plunged into utter wretchedness. Even his wife urges him to 'curse God and die' (2:9). Will Job reject God? This is a the paramount issue that confronts us as we consider Job. What will Job's response be to the unknown-to-him challenge that Satan has hurled against God.

We, the readers of the book, know Job is innocent. God has declared him so. This is disclosed in the prologue. But without being privy to this knowledge, and in the midst of intense suffering, Job expresses his profound faith in God:

> I know that my Redeemer lives,
> and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.
> And after my skin has been destroyed,
> yet in my flesh I will see God. (19:25, 26)

There are additional issues beyond that of suffering that we must not overlook in the book of Job. It is particularly important to note that Job is not of the "covenant line," though the details mentioned of his life likely place him in the time of the patriarchs. (For example, the types of animal herds he had are exactly those described of Abraham and the other patriarchs. Job's offering sacrifices corresponds to that of the patriarchs. There is no mention of the Exodus in the book of Job, which, subsequent to its occurrence, is mentioned by almost every other Bible writer. Ellen White also informs us that Moses wrote the book of Job while in Midian.[11]

This constrains us to recognize, in the oldest book of the Bible, that Job is a "worthy gentile." Thus, God, through Moses' pen, is careful to record two strands of His family line: the covenant line in the Pentateuch and the existence of faithful believers outside the Abrahamic covenant in the book of Job.

Within this dating schema, we see striking evidence that God, from the very beginning of recorded history, wanted the two sides of the Great Controversy clearly delineated. The Great Battle between Christ and Satan is not a late development in the minds of the Israelites. Very early Satan's existence is clearly defined, so there will be no confusion or ignorance about him. God's great providence includes the recording of the life of Job very early in the history of this world so Satan's adversarial role will be clearly portrayed.

We also observe, starting in chapter one and continuing throughout the rest of the book, that Job is a deeply spiritual and religious man. We read in his book that he regularly offers sacrifices for himself and his family; he is sensitive to the needs of the poor; he is sought out for his wise counsel—and yet he is outside the divinely chosen covenant line of Abraham through which the Messiah has been promised.

[11] *Education*, 159.

This is very significant to me. This is crucial to Seventh-day Adventists in the year 2000. We believe, through a study of Old and New Testament prophecies, that we are called to proclaim God's last message of salvation to a dying world. We believe we are the last remnant of that long line of God's chosen people that started with Abraham. It makes my own heart burn when I trace this glorious legacy! This is a stirring thought, and we should review it often to keep our hearts afire with who we are and where we are in salvation history.

However, the book of Job reminds us of an important perspective that must accompany our mission and our understanding of what it means to be a Seventh-day Adventist. Yes, God has preserved a chosen people and has called us to an important mission. But the life of Job reminds us that He has faithful children outside our church. And if the life of Job is lived in the patriarchal period (as the text itself seems to clearly affirm), when God so pointedly singles out Abraham, He is also careful to record through Moses His special affirmation of a devout believer outside the Old Testament Messianic line. And thus we are reminded through Job that God has faithful children outside our faith. Yes, God chose Abraham to be the Father of Nations, but He says of Job (twice) something He never says about any of the patriarchs (though He comes close with Noah): "Then the LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?'" (1:8 and 2:3). And then later, through Ezekiel, He again twice declares the righteousness of Job. Job becomes one of many other subsequent reminders that God's sphere of influence is much wider than we might imagine!

And for one who considers herself a "militant Adventist," I find I need to remind myself again and again, through the witness of Job's noble life, that God has always had devout followers both inside *and* outside the remnant stream. We mustn't be so stuffy as to think that we alone are God's special people and know all that can be known about God! (I think, for example, of my experience of the spirituality of students on the campus of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where I earned by doctorate. I think of Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ, who fasts forty days a year, during which time he memorizes Scripture. I think of Jesus, commenting on the centurion's faith: "I have not found so great a faith in Israel" (Matt 8:10; the Gospels all portray Christ commending the faith of non-Israelites.) I am distressed sometimes by the arrogance of some Seventh-day Adventists as they relate to Christians outside our faith.

The teasing irony of God's response to Job friends teaches us this. *They, and we, need to be reminded that we are not the center of reality.* We Seventh-day Adventists are certain of our role in Salvation History. Yet God's four-chapter discourse address to Job and his friends, the longest divine dialogue in Scripture, reminds us that God's work is much more extensive that we often understand.

God instructs Job that there is indeed a divine plan unfolding in all of creation, but it is a plan infinitely broader than the human mind can grasp in sraight-

forward cause-and-effect patterns. We, along with Job, need to be reminded that there is so much in God's world that eludes human analysis and control. As God instructed Job, "if you cannot understand the *wild* creatures of My creation, if the creation cannot be domesticated, how presumptuous to think that My actions can, and that you can understand what I am doing with my human children!"

> Who shut up the sea behind doors
> when it burst forth from the womb,
> when I made the clouds its garment
> and wrapped it in thick darkness,
> when I fixed limits for it
> and set its door and bars in place,
> when I said, "This far you may come and no farther,
> here is where your proud waves halt? [Answer Me if you can!]"
> (38:8-11)

All right, says God, you take over the running of the universe.

> Would you discredit my justice?
> Would you condemn me to justify yourself? . . .
> Unleash the fury of your wrath,
> look at every proud man and bring him low,
> look at every proud man and humble him,
> crush the wicked where they stand.
> Bury them all in the dust together;
> shroud their faces in the grave.
> Then I myself will admit to you
> That your own hand can save you. (40:8-14)

God's declarations brought home to Job, and should to us, too, the limitations of human wisdom.

That Job finally understands this and is transformed by Yahweh's speeches is shown by his response:

> I know that you can do all things
> and no plan of yours can be thwarted....
> My ears had heard of you
> but now my eyes have seen you.
> Therefore I despise myself
> and repent in dust and ashes. (42:2, 5-6)

God does have plans for this world, and everything is not in chaos, no matter how it looks to us. And as important as the SDA mission is for God's kingdom at this time, we are not the only people He loves and cherishes. (I am always moved when I read of how God calls the fallen inside Babylon "My people" [Rev. 18:2, 4].). Many are the lessons we can learn from God's affirmation of Job.

Daniel

Seventh-day Adventists rightly continue to study Daniel's prophetic materials. However, in Ezekiel 14 it is Daniel's righteousness that God commends. What is it about Daniel's life that God acclaims? In the opening chapters of his book, we find a portrait of his life of strict temperance and integrity while a captive in Babylon. We also see Daniel maintaining his faith in God in face of death, and more than once. First, when he dares ask for a vegetarian diet as a prisoner-of-war, not knowing what will be the response from those in charge of his life there in Babylon's courts. Daniel is "sorely tried" at this time, Ellen White informs us, and "he was surrounded with distrust and suspicion . . . yet he maintained a serene and cheerful trust in God, never once deviating from principle."[12]

Yet there appears to be no evidence of Daniel harboring a haughty contempt for the non-Hebrew pagan religion he found there in Babylon.[13] The consistent record in Scripture of Daniel's noble attitude negates that possibility. Nor, however, is Daniel casually assuming that his Israelite faith is just one of several possibilities that climb the same mountain to God, and that it doesn't really matter which religion one chooses.

No, Scripture is explicit: Daniel knows exactly where he stands. He revers the God of Heaven and faithfully maintains his distinctive worship amid great difficulty. His posture is indisputable. And when called before the king in high court, to the very monarch who despises his Hebrew race and has decimated his own small country of Israel, Daniel does not hesitate to acknowledge the true God of Heaven as his source of wisdom. And he does this repeatedly, at times risking his life.[14]

Later, when a death decree is issued by the king, which Daniel realizes will certainly condemn him, he withdraws to his room. And in the face of determined and deadly political strategy, Daniel prays.

This is the fifth prayer in the book of Daniel.[15] The aged prophet knows he is powerless. He has served the high court with distinction and is well-acquainted with Median and Persian law. He realizes that once a royal decree is issued, it is irrevocable (v. 8). Even the king can do nothing. A similar example of the principle appears in the book of Esther (Esth 8:8).

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[12] *Selections from the Testimonies to the Church*, 2:69.

[13] Indeed, he almost certainly studied it in detail, as he is numbered among the "wise men of Babylon" (Dan 2:13), "the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers" (2:2). Perhaps his role was to discover the future by asking the God of Israel, rather than to cast the entrails or read the stars, but he certainly would have had contact with the other "wise men."

[14] "Although he knew full well the consequences of his fidelity to God, his spirit faltered not. Before those who were plotting his ruin, he would not allow even the appearance that his connection with Heaven was severed" (*Prophets and Kings*, 44).

[15] The following material on Daniel's prayer life is influenced by Jacques Doukhan's book, *Secrets of Daniel* (Review and Herald, 2000).

The prophet's prayer takes on deeper significance when seen in such a context. Daniel does not pray as a religious duty, nor out of mindless routine or superstition. Nor is it just the circumstances that have forced Daniel to pray. The text mentions that he "prayed, . . . just as he had done before" (v. 10). In spite of the calculated extermination policy forced by the satraps, Daniel offers the prayer of a free man. For he has always prayed, no matter what the circumstances. Prayer is not for him a last resort in sickness or in death, but an integral part of his life. The text states plainly that the prophet prays "three times a day" (Dan 6:10, 13), and not just when his soul is stirred by some special need.

But in this instance it takes heroic courage to ignore the edict and pray. In performing the simple act of kneeling, Daniel risks his life. He could have prayed in secret. Scripture even encourages prayer in seclusion (Matt 6:6). But when the authorities outlaw prayer, to pray in hiding is to imply that the king is greater than God. Daniel could have, for a while at least, adapted to the circumstances. After all, God forgives—He knows a person's heart. But Daniel prefers to die rather than put a momentary hold on his communion with heaven, or even let it appear that his connection with God is broken. Under these threatening skies, he does not run for shelter, but stands tall as a free man. The prophet chooses to remain faithful to God in his heart *and* in his actions. His courage is remarkable. An intelligent and experienced man within Persia's high court, Daniel knows what he is up against. His is not the action of naive virtue, incapable of appreciating the gravity of the consequences.

And we find that God dramatically singles out Daniel more than just through the prophet Ezekiel. On three occasions when the mighty angel Gabriel is dispatched from heaven to answer Daniel's prayers, note how Gabriel first expresses to Daniel the divine encouragment: "You are greatly beloved" (Dan. 9:23), and "O Daniel, man greatly beloved" (10:11; 18–19). Daniel is the only person in all the Old Testament so signally affirmed. Only the Messiah Himself receives such multiple divine expressions of affection (when at both His Baptism and His Transfiguration, the Father proclaims from heaven, "This is My beloved Son!").

Why These Three?

Why does God draw such pointed attention to Noah, Job, and Daniel through the prophet Ezekiel? Why does God hold Noah in such high esteem? Could it be because of his unqualified faithfulness amidst the prevailing skepticism of his time, his integrity in the face of scientific and philosophical mockery of the divine command given to him? He seems to face, just as we do now, a worldview committed to a kind of technological positivism which believes reality is defined and circumscribed by what is humanly imaginable and presently available. But Noah grasps the infinite unseen world, and this shapes his strikingly obedient faith, which leads him to follow God's commands explicitly by building a large boat on dry land, having never seen rain, and to announce God's

judgment on sin. And God commends Noah to us through the prophet Ezekiel—and also through Moses, Peter, and Paul!

Why Job? Job, too, travels a tortuous route with God. Yet in the face of seeming confusion, suffering, and pain, we find Job declaring his immovable faith in God. Moreover, his life is also an important portrait of the "grafted branches" God promises for the True Vine. And we must stand amazed at the *quality* of these grafts!

Why Daniel? Have we who face New Testament Babylon been called to the same lofty standard in our own personal habits, refusing harmful drinks and choosing a simple, vegetarian diet? I occasionally hear rumblings among some Adventists that these health standards of ours are not that important, or maybe not even relevant now. Daniel's singular witness in Babylon's luxurious court and its subsequent results gives different testimony.

Ellen White also implores us regarding Daniel's prayer life:

> If we as a people would pray as Daniel prayed, and wrestle as he wrestled, humbling our souls before God, we should realize as marked answers to our petitions as were granted to Daniel.[16]

When I consider the profound prayers of Daniel, along with his determination to bring glory to the God of heaven in that premier but pagan court, and recall that he is willing to face execution rather than compromise his faith or even let it appear that his relationship with God has been altered in any way, it is not difficult to understand why God pointedly draws attention to the righteousness of Daniel through the prophet Ezekiel.

Noah, Job, and Daniel—each one of them faces a distinct challenge that demands a profound level of faith. The issues that confronted them:

—faith in the word of God amid prevailing scientific skepticism,[17]

—faith in God in spite of acute suffering;[18]

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[16] *The Sanctified Life*, 47. She also tells us "Daniel was a moral and intellectual giant; yet he did not reach this pre-eminence at once and without effort. He was continually seeking for greater knowledge, for higher attainments. Other young men had the same advantages; but they did not, like him, bend all their energies to seek wisdom" (*Selections from the Testimonies to the Church*, 2:69)"

[17] "Every soul of us living upon the face of the earth must have our test and trials. Circumstances will occur in the providence of God when we will be called to vindicate our faith. We shall give decided evidence which side we are on. We shall either be decidedly the vindicators of God's holy law, or on the side of the transgressors. We shall be tested as Noah was tested. Because the corruption was nearly universal in his age, did he then argue that it would not pay for him to stand separate and alone for God's law? He took his position as God's nobleman on the side of right because it was right" (*Christ Triumphant*, 59 [Ms 86, 1886]).

[18] "Jesus did not interpose to deliver His servant. He knew that John would bear the test. Gladly would the Saviour have come to John to brighten the dungeon gloom with His own presence. But He was not to place Himself in the hands of enemies and imperil His own mission. Gladly would He have delivered His faithful servant. But for the sake of thousands who in after years must pass from prison to death, John was to drink the cup of martyrdom. As the followers of Jesus should languish in lonely cells, or perish by the sword, the rack, or the fagot, apparently forsaken by God and man, what a stay to their hearts would be the thought that John the Baptist, to whose faithfulness

—faith in God displayed in a situation of sophisticated pluralism, choosing to accept death rather than dishonor God.

These are issues that Ellen White, in *The Great Controversy*, suggests we too will face as our world falls under its final judgment.

Through Ezekiel, God commends these three Old Testament "worthies" to us, twice in one chapter! When God speaks, we can believe Him. He does not deal in "doublespeak." All through Scripture God calls us to righteousness. For example, He urges through Amos:

> Let justice run down like water,
> And righteousness like a mighty stream. (Amos 5:24)

He also commends Noah, Job, and Daniel for their righteous lives. Thus, we can begin to understand what God means. He twice calls our attention to these three, coupled with the repetition of "thus says the Lord." We can be certain what a righteous life really means—faithfulness to God *no matter what*.

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Christ Himself had borne witness, had passed through a similar experience. . . . God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as coworkers with Him. Not Enoch, who was translated to heaven, not Elijah, who ascended in a chariot of fire, was greater or more honored than John the Baptist, who perished alone in the dungeon. 'Unto you it is given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.' Phil. 1:29. And of all the gifts that Heaven can bestow upon men, fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is the most weighty trust and the highest honor" (*Desire of Ages* [Chapter: "Imprisonment and Death of John"], 224, 225).

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What Is the "Everlasting Gospel"?

Herbert E. Douglass

John the Revelator saw that sometime before the end of the world, before Jesus returned, a movement would arise, "having the everlasting gospel[1] to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come'" (Rev 14:6, 7).[2] Those who respond to this "gospel" are

[1] *Echonta euaggelion aiōnion*. Only here in the Bible is *aiōnion* connected with *euaggelion.* All biblical texts are taken from the NKJV.

[2] *Hōra* ("hour") refers to a time when something will take place, here referring to the time of "His judgment." In the context of the great controversy theme of cosmic conflict between Christ and Satan pervading the Book of Revelation, the basic issue is over the fairness of God and His laws. Satan has resisted God and made "war" against Him (Rev. 12). Throughout human history Satan has been charging that God is severe, exacting, unfair, and arbitrary. And God has been telling His side of the conflict through His messengers (prophets) and finally, most forcefully, revealed His character through an incarnated member of the Godhead, Jesus Christ. Men and women must see that God is not the kind of person Satan has made Him out to be. They must choose to ally themselves with Him against evil. The contrast between Satan's charges and God's loving and just ways must be clearly seen so thinking beings may make an intelligent choice, especially in the end-times when Christ's second advent will end probation (the period of testing) for that last generation.

During the time of "His judgment," events in heaven and on earth are bringing the controversy to its close. Soon intelligent beings will sing: "Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!" "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous areYour judgments." "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments." (Rev. 15:3, 16:7; 19:1, 2). This kind of judgment about God by intelligent beings is exactly what God has been patiently waiting for. These declarations are made after the character and judgments of God have been examined and after the trust unfallen beings (and those fallen but faithful) have in their Creator has been confirmed. The controversy is ended when intelligent beings, wherever in the universe, join in the triumphant declaration, in the face of Satan's accusations, that God has been transparently fair and merciful in His dealings with rebellious beings. Further, God will be declared just in His judgments regarding the redeemed because those He has chosen to live forever will have settled in their heads and hearts whom they will serve, so settled that they would never be moved to think and do otherwise. They have demonstrated before unfallen intelligences that God's judgment in their favor has been "true and righteous."

described in v. 12 as "those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."[3]

This "everlasting gospel" focuses on (1) God to whom worship and obedience are due and on (2) a people who "give glory to Him" during the time of His judgment.

Why is this emphasis on the "everlasting gospel" so timely, so important, so necessary? Apparently there was something about the "gospel" that had been muted or muddled for some time before the events seen in Rev 14, requiring this special heavenly intervention to set matters right, especially at this foretold time of "His judgment."

A brief overview of church history for the past two thousand years highlights the remarkable confusion regarding the gospel that has existed since apostolic days. Where would one go during the Protestant Reformation to find the fullness of the "everlasting gospel"? With whom should we agree—Luther or Calvin or Zwingli, the Anabaptists, or the Papacy—when it comes to what is involved in the plan of salvation? In the nineteenth century, would we agree with Presbyterians, or Methodists, or Baptists?

Most Protestants and Catholics would agree that Jesus died for our sins. But this common agreement, in itself, did not (and does not) seem to spell out a common understanding of the gospel. If the gospel includes more than telling the story of Christ's death, what is that something more? *And why was an end-time correction needed in order for God to get His final message across to seekers of truth before Jesus returns?* The question seems to stare us in the face: What is so helpful, so unambiguous about this "everlasting gospel" that it tells the truth about God and prepares a people for His coming?

One of my favorite gospel songs is "Because He Lives." Its message is comforting. But the first stanza, true as it is, gives only part of the gospel: "He lived and died to buy my pardon." By contrast, one of my favorite hymns, "Rock of Ages," emphasizes the full gospel in its first stanza: "Be of sin the double cure: Cleanse me from its guilt and power." We need a Great Physician to cure us of both the guilt of sin and its power over us.

This leads to a crucial question: Is the gospel (good news) primarily forgiveness (pardon), or is there more? One of the several ways of defining the "everlasting gospel" would be to ask three questions: Why did Jesus die? Why did He come to earth? And what is the purpose, or goal, of the gospel?

Why did Jesus die?

"[Jesus] gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works" (Titus 2:14). Here, what I like to call the ellipse of truth helps us to both achieve

[3] *Tērountes* (present participle) suggests that these commandment-keepers are making a life habit of loyalty to the will of God, especially under conditions that call for *hupomonē* ("endurance").

a correct balance and maintain the wholeness of its components. Jesus died (1) to redeem us and (2) to purify His special people for good works. Not an exclusive focus on one aspect, not a circle of truth focused on the other, but a double focus embracing the integrity (or wholeness) of truth. The everlasting gospel must have both foci at its core; the bright cloud of teaching surrounding the two foci forms not a circle but an ellipse, an ellipse of truth.[4]

A very insightful writer amplified Paul's good news: "How could He give you any stronger evidence of His love than He gave when He died for you on Calvary's cross? He died that you might have power to break with Satan, that

[4] A circle has one focus, or center. An ellipse is an oval (more properly a plane curve or conic section) with two fixed points (or foci) and meets the following condition: the sum of the distances from any one point of the curve to the two foci is a constant. The truth of many theological issues seems to reside in an evenly balanced dialectical synthesis of two good and true things (note that if we try to create an ellipse of, say, a good thing and an evil thing, we end up with dualism). Whether the two foci are so close that the ellipse is virtually circular, or so far apart that the ellipse looks like a hot dog, if you draw a line through the ellipse halfway between the two foci, both sides will be exactly the same size and shape. However, if one focus is emphasized more than the other, the ellipse is destroyed—the truth of the ellipse no longer exists. What is left is, perhaps, egg-shaped. In philosophy or theology, when objective truth (one focus) is over-emphasized at the expense of subjective truth (the ellipse's second focus), or vice versa, we lose the ellipse of truth. Over-emphasizing one focus and rejecting or minimizing the other leads to heresy (i.e., a partial understanding of truth which, by its partiality, leads people astray). Truth in any area of thought, whether theology, philosophy, law, music, education, etc., must be understood in the form of an ellipse, rather than a circle. An ellipse always has two foci; the circle has one. This means that truth is the sum total of its objective and subjective elements, the two foci in the ellipse. Biblical truth unites (for one example) the two circles of revelation and human responsibility within the ellipse of salvation. Some call this interchange the objective, external Word meeting the subjective response of a person who says, "This truth is for me." In other words, when someone appeals to the Bible as "truth" without an equal emphasis on personal responsibility rooted in relevance and personal meaning, we know that the ellipse of truth has become two circles.

Even as water cannot be divided between hydrogen and oxygen and remain water, so the objective and subjective elements of salvation cannot be divided and yet remain "salvation truth." In a way, the divisions between various churches within Christianity, and even between Christianity and other world religions, have occurred when the ellipse has been replaced with unconnected circles. For example, an overemphasis on objective justification tends to lead to human passivity, with faith becoming primarily a matter of mental assent to revelation. This often leads to a *careless* use of such phrases as "Jesus paid it all," or, "the atonement was completed on the cross," etc. But an overemphasis on subjective sanctification leads to feeling and reason as the test of faith. This often leads a person to *minimize* the primary authority of the Bible and to make predominant such expressions as "It's not truth for me unless I feel it or until it makes sense to me." Faith thus tends to be measured in emotional terms, depending on how one "feels" about a given religious experience. Again, an overemphasis on objective justification tends to make imputed righteousness the most important element in one's salvation, as if oxygen were the most important element in water. An overemphasis on subjective sanctification (imparted righteousness) tends to make human performance the basis of salvation, as if hydrogen were the most important element in water. For more examples, see the author's *Messenger of the Lord* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1998), 204, 206, 260, 440, 573.

you might cast off his hellish shackles, and be delivered from his power. Jesus paid your ransom with His own blood, and shall He have died for you in vain?"[5]

Notice the ellipse of truth again: He died that (1) we might have" power" over Satan as well as (2) that the "ransom" should be paid by His blood. As the hymn put it, cleansed from "its guilt and power."

All this is surely good news! The "everlasting gospel" flows out of this elliptical gift of grace. To ignore either foci of the ellipse is to proclaim a limited, inadequate gospel. Throughout Paul's letters, especially Romans, we hear the full-orbed gospel. Paul never tires of emphasizing how we are both "justified by His blood" and (2) "set free from sin and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life" (Romans 5:9, 6:22).

The pity throughout Christian history is that various groups have concentrated on one focus of the ellipse of truth or the other. Mighty clashes have originated by well-meaning leaders who focused either on Christ's gift of grace in terms of Sacrifice or on His gift of grace in terms of Example and Power to reflect His character. Both are right in what they emphasize, but dead wrong in what they omit or minimize. We often call these groups the Objectivists and the Subjectivists. At the risk of over-generalizing, Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists would tend to be Objectivists, and Quakers, Pentecostalists, and Wesleyan Methodists have tended to be Subjectivists.

The history of Christianity has been an oscillation, a see-saw, back and forth between prevailing sentiments of the Objectivists and the inevitable reaction of the Subjectivists. The Objectivists emphasize the objectivity of truth and the Subjectivists, its subjectivity. The Objectivists tend to emphasize unduly God's sovereignty and irresistible grace; the result is most often a focus on doctrine and compliance with external requirements. For objectivists, the *primary* purpose of grace becomes the gift of pardon—certainly a gift we all need and are eternally grateful for—but not a gift that equally includes the transformation of the sinner's life—certainly also a part of the plan of salvation. As some say, grace is God's amazing objective gift, not linked to any subjectivity within the believer's experience. The question remains: is there something more that *also* is done *in* and *through* the believer.[6]

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[5] Ellen G. White, *The Youth's Instructor,* March 2, 1893. In a letter to Elder and Mrs. Stephen Haskell, Nov. 28, 1898, she wrote: "God has given Himself to die for us, that He might purify us from all iniquity. The Lord will carry on this work of perfection for us if we will allow ourselves to be controlled by Him. He carries on this work for our good and His own name's glory."—*Manuscript Releases,* 4: 348.

[6] Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ,* 62, 63— "He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.

"More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to mai n-tain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So you may

Subjectivists react to what seems to be the Objectivist's scant regard for experience, reason, and feeling in the human response to Christ's atonement. However, Subjectivists often over-stress experience and reason as the test of truth. Though understandable, this response has too often minimized the authority of God and His revelation. Grace then tended to be defined in such terms as "This seems right for me" and "The Holy Spirit told me." Many modern gospel hymns emphasize this subjective response to God's grace, such as my earlier reference to "He Lives." But in so doing, the biblical emphasis on "doing" the will of God (Matt 7:21-29) is strangely muted.

Why Jesus Came

Another question that should be asked before we focus on the purpose of the gospel is, why did Jesus come to earth? Matthew notes that our Lord was called Jesus, "for He will save His people from their sins" (1:21). John wrote that "the purpose of the Son of God was . . . that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8); Jesus said that He came that "they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). And further, hours before Calvary, He affirmed one of His reasons for coming to earth: "I have glorified You on the earth, I finished the work which You have given Me to do" (John 17:4).

But Jesus was not yet finished with that magnificent prayer of John 17. For many reasons He then emphasized how His coming would benefit His believers: "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You have sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world" (vs. 17, 18).

In light of these texts, we can better appreciate the following insight: "Jesus came to bring moral power to combine with human effort, and in no case are His followers to allow themselves to lose sight of Christ, who is their example in all things. . . . Jesus presents the truth before His children that they may look upon it, and by beholding it, may become changed, being transformed by His grace from transgression to obedience, from impurity to purity, from sin to heart-holiness and righteousness of life."[7]

Thus Jesus came, not only to die the sinner's death, but to live the sinner's transformed life, not only to be his Sacrifice but also his Example. He came not only to reveal the truth about God but also to reveal the truth about what men and women can be through His saving grace.

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say, 'The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.' Galatians 2:20. . . . Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works,—works of righteousness, obedience.

"So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. We have no ground for self-exaltation. Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us."

[7] White, *Selected Messages,* 1: 262.

The Purpose of the Gospel

Again, the ellipse of truth helps us wrap together the two amazing purposes imbedded in (1) Christ's mission to earth, (2) why He died, and (3) the purpose of the gospel. The purpose of the gospel is to make plain why Jesus came and why He died. The "everlasting gospel" in the end-times restores the New Testament gospel in its wholeness, in its integrity. It explains God's plan to save men and women in such a way that their presence in the new earth would not jeopardize again the well-being and security of the universe.

Thus the gospel is not limited to the good news of His pardon and forgiveness. It presents the ellipse of truth that reveals the integrity of God's grace as including His forgiveness and His power to transform. This gospel ellipse is revealed beautifully in the book of Hebrews as "mercy" and "grace to help": "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (4:16). John expressed the same good news as "forgiveness" and "cleansing": "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Paul sang, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes [has faith]" (Rom 1:16).

The "everlasting gospel" adds much more to limited gospels that focus only on one half of the gospel ellipse. "The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It . . . means a heart emptied of self. . . . The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life."[8]

So, listening again to Revelation 14, the "everlasting gospel" will get a fair and full hearing in the end-times. Limited gospels that ridicule adherence to God's expressed will as being outside of the gospel will appear inadequate beside the clear proclamation of the "everlasting gospel". Limited gospels that cry "legalism" at any attempt to embrace faithful obedience will be seen as contrary to the message of New Testament grace (Acts 5:31, 32; 6:7; 24:24, 25; 26:20; Rom 1:5, 16; 16:26).

According to John, those who respond to the wonderful truths in the "everlasting gospel" are described as "those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Rev 14:12). If the works of Satan (which Jesus came to destroy) are embraced in the word "sin," and if the "essence of sin is to allow ourselves to become a contradiction of God's will,"[9] then those who respond to the "everlasting gospel" are most grateful for the "good news" of both God's pardon and power to destroy sin in their lives.

Thus, in the days when the "everlasting gospel" is heard again with New Testament precision and passion, Paul's constant refrain in all his epistles will be heard again: "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Prove

[8] White, *Christ's Object Lessons,* 419, 420.

[9] White, *Manuscript Releases*, 5: 348.

yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? —unless indeed you are disqualified" (2 Cor 13:5). Only God's magnificent grace can keep the vision of Christ's sacrifice ever before the committed Christian. Only His marvelous grace can keep His sustaining power fresh daily as the Christian counts up the many reasons to be grateful for the "double cure." Only God's grace can "qualify" the redeemed to be safe to save.

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A Review of the Biblical Evidence for the Use of the Fall-to-Fall Calendar

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When apocalyptic time prophecies begin in Old Testament times and extend into New Testament time, it is natural to measure them off according to the calendar that was in use when they began. Examples of these types of prophecies can be found in the 70 weeks of Daniel 9:24-27 and the 2300 evening-mornings of Daniel 8:14.

Seventh-day Adventist interpreters, and the Millerites before them, have taken the operative calendar in these cases to be the fall-to-fall calendar that began in the seventh month, also known as Tishri. This is commonly referred to as the civil calendar, used to measure off the regnal years of the kings, as opposed to the religious calendar that began with the first month in the spring, also known as Nisan. It is called the religious calendar because it was instituted to mark off the religious festivals, especially Passover.

The use of two calendars has complicated these calculations. Thus, it may be useful to review the biblical evidence for the fall-to-fall calendar. The idea that two calendars were in use at the same time is no more confusing than the two calendars that are in use in the United States today. This is the regular calendar year that runs from January to December and the fiscal calendar used in many places that runs from July 1 to June 30.

It was at the time of the Exodus from Egypt that the new calendar for Israel was instituted. The Lord came to Moses and said, "The month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you" (Exod 12:2). The calendar instituted at this time was a lunar one, in that it was based on months marked by new moons.

There was good reason for instituting such a calendar for future use in Canaan. The Egyptian "civil" calendar was a solar calendar based on the agricultural seasons governed by the Nile. It began in July and was divided into three seasons of four months each. Obviously, a calendar geared to the seasons of the Nile was not suitable for use in Canaan.

The Egyptians also had two calendars in operation, one the solar calendar just described and the other a lunar calendar. Dates for new moons are sometimes given in Egyptian texts in terms of the main civil calendar. Thus the idea of two calendars in use at the same time was well known to the Israelites from their experience in Egypt. So to find the Israelites using both a spring and fall calendar is not so unusual, given their ancient Near Eastern context.

One point should be made clear at the outset: the month numbers never changed, whether the spring or fall calendar was in use. The first month always began in the spring and the seventh month, the month of the fall New Year, always occurred in the fall, September-October. To have had two sets of month numbers in use would have introduced calendrical chaos.

Calendrical information in the Old Testament begins in the Pentatuch, it continues in the time of the united and divided monarchy, it runs through the Babylonian exile, and it concludes in the postexilic period when the books of the Old Testament end. The following evidence for the fall calendar will follow this chronological outline.

I. Levitical Legislation

CASE A. The Celebration of the Spring and Fall New Years

A. The Spring New Year. No special festival was assigned to the date, 1 Abib or Nisan.[1] It was simply treated like the other eleven new moons of the year. It is not even mentioned in the cultic calendar of Lev. 23 (cf. vv. 4-5). It is not separated from the new moon sacrifices in the lists of sacrifices in Num 28:11-15.

One may ask why the spring New Year was passed by so lightly in these legislative passages. The text does not specifically tell us, but one possibility is to avoid the connections with the fertility festival held at that time by the nations around Israel. In Babylon and Assyria it was known as the *Akitu* festival, and it lasted from seven to ten days. During this time the king would cohabit with the high priestess in order to insure fertility for the crops of the land for another year. Given ancient Israel's propensity to idol worship, it was wise to avoid instituting a spring New Year's festival parallel to that of the nations, for it could easily have been perverted into the same kind of idolatrous fertility festival.

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[1] Abib is the original name of the first month, Nisan the name used after the Babylonian exile. As Donald J. Wiseman writes in his article "Calendar" in the *New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd ed. [ed. J.D. Douglas, et al (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1982), 159], "The early names were probably local Palestinian references to the seasons, and differ from the designation of the months named in texts from Syria (Ras Shamra, Alalaḫ, Mari). Some are known from Phoenician also. *Abib*, 'ripening of corn' (Ex. 13:4); *Ziv* (AV Zif; 1 Ki. 6:1, 37); *Ethanim* (1 Ki. 8:2) and *Bul* (1 Ki. 6:38) of uncertain meaning, are the only names extant from this period. At all periods the months were usually designated numerically; first, Ex. 12:2; second, Nu 33:38; sixth, 1 Ch. 27:9; seventh, Gn. 8:4; eighth, Zc. 1:1; ninth, Ezr. 10:9; tenth, Gn. 8:5; eleventh, Dt. 1:3; twelfth, Est. 3:7. In post-exilic times the month-names of the Babylonian calendar were followed." (Wiseman includes a helpful chart showing names, seasons, relation to Gregorian months, and related festivals.)

B. The Fall New Year. By contrast, the fall New Year of the first day of the seventh month, the month called Tishri, was celebrated not merely as a new moon but as a separate and independent festival. The legislation dealing with this festival, known as the Feast of Trumpets, is found in Lev 23:23-25 and Num 29:1-6. It was known as a ceremonial Sabbath, a holy convocation was to be held on that day, and the people were not to do any laborious work on that day. None of these stipulations applied to the spring New Year, so one can already see in this early legislation the importance given to the fall New Year.

CASE B. The Use of the Fall New Year

A. To Measure Off the Sabbatical Years. Deut 31:10, 11 reads, "And Moses commanded them, 'at the end of every seven years, at the set time of the year of release, at the feast of booths, when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God.'" Thus the end of these seven year segments, the sabbatical years, came in the fall. The time of release was the Day of Atonement (see below), and this was followed by the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles (Heb. *Sukkot*). These fall festivals, marked off by the blowing of trumpets, all came in the seventh month. This marked the end of one sabbatical year cycle and the beginning of the next.

B. To Measure Off the Jubilee Years. Lev 25:9-10 reads, "Then you shall send abroad the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the day of atonement you shall send abroad the trumpet throughout all your land. And you shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants; it shall be a jubilee for you." Here the more specific date of VII/10 or the Day of Atonement was appointed for the beginning of the jubilee. This was in lockstep with the sabbatical years (of Lev 25:8). The approach of this fall period for the beginning and ending of these special years was heralded by the Festival of Trumpets on VII/1. Obviously, all the years between the 7th year and the 50th year had to be marked off by the fall month of Tishri that began on the fall New Year of the first day of that month.

II. During the United Monarchy

CASE A. The regnal years of Solomon.

More precise information is available for the regnal years of Solomon than for the regnal years of David. In particular, the more specific information comes from the record of the building of the temple and the palace. 1 Kgs 6:1 and 6:37-38 tell us the construction began in the second month of Solomon's fourth year and was completed in the eighth month of his eleventh year. 1 Kgs 6:38 concludes that he was seven years in building the temple.

These dates can be charted to show that if a spring-to-spring calendar was in use, the total time elapsed for the construction of the temple was 7 1/2 years. If they are plotted out on a fall-to-fall calendar then the construction time elapsed was 6 1/2 years.

The question, then, is, which of these two specifications fits best with the stated elapsed time of seven years? In this case, does seven years mean 6 1/2 actual years or 7 1/2 years of elapsed time?

This calculation involves the way the ancient Hebrews reckoned fractions. We place the dividing line at fifty percent, and anything above that goes to the next highest number, whereas anything below fifty percent goes to the lower number. The ancient Hebrews had a different system, known to scholars as "inclusive reckoning." In this system, any fraction goes to the next highest number. An example of this can be seen in 2 Kgs 18:9-10, which tells of the fall of Samaria to the Assyrian king Shalmaneser (V).

This siege began in the fourth year of Hezekiah king of Judah, and it ended in his sixth year. Hoshea was the king in the north at this time, and the siege began in his seventh year and it ended in his ninth year. Then the text says that "at the end of three years he took it." Neither by the regnal years of Hezekiah nor by the regnal years of Hezekiah do these dates stretch to the end of three years. These three years included one full year, Hezekiah's fifth, and parts of two others, Hezekiah's fourth and sixth. Yet this is added up to reach three years. The fractions of years involved have been reckoned as full years, a clear case of inclusive reckoning.

An even more famous case is found in the narrations that deal with the crucifixion and resurrection. Jesus was crucified on Friday and died that afternoon (Luke 23:54-56). He rested in the tomb on Sabbath and came forth from it on the morning of the first day of the week (Lk 24:1). All of this was to fulfill the typological parallel with Jonah, who spent three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish (Jonah 1:17; cf. Matt 12:40).[2]

Some have mistakenly interpreted the three days and three nights as a literal seventy-two hours. This has led to the inaccurate Wednesday crucifixion theory. Jesus was in the tomb all of one day (Sabbath) and parts of two other days (Friday and Sunday). By inclusive reckoning this yields three days.

Applying this rule of inclusive reckoning to the regnal years of Solomon, it can be seen that 7 1/2 years, according to the spring calendar, would be considered eight years, whereas the 6 1/2 years of the fall calendar yields the specified seven years. Thus, the regnal years of Solomon were calculated according to the fall-to-fall calendar.

CASE B. The Dedication of the Temple

1 Kings 6:38 indicates that the temple "was finished in all its parts, and according to all its specifications" in the eighth month of the year. The question then is, when was it dedicated and put into service? There would appear to be three logical possibilities. It could have been dedicated immediately after its

[2] The inclusively reckoned "three days and three nights" when Jesus was "in the heart of the earth" were in fact no more than thirty-eight hours, not seventy-two. By inclusive reckoning, the same may be true for Jonah. The truth of the Bible is revealed when we understand it correctly, not when we assume all words mean what they mean today.

completion, going into service without any delay. Or it could have been dedicated at the spring New Year four months later. Or it could have waited for its dedication and use until the fall New Year eleven months later. These three possibilities appear in descending order of likelihood.

In this case, however, Solomon took the least likely alternative. He waited until after the next fall New Year, eleven months later. This date is given in 1 Kgs 8:2, which indicates that the Ark of the Covenant was moved into the temple at the time of the feast in the seventh month. It was then that the massive number of animals were sacrificed and Solomon offered his dedicatory prayer (1 Kgs 8:12-53). This happened during the Feast of Tabernacles, and at its conclusion, on the eighth day, Solomon sent the crowds of people away.

This chronology is elaborated further in 2 Chr 7:8-10, which indicates that a total of two weeks were spent in the dedicatory services: one week during the Feast of Tabernacles and one week before that festival. This preparatory week overlapped with the Day of Atonement. The initial week is described as a time for dedicating the altar.

Thus Solomon took the least likely alternative and waited eleven months to dedicate the newly constructed temple in the seventh month, both of the two weeks of dedication following in that month after the fall New Year. It is unusual to think of the fully completed and equipped temple standing there in Jerusalem unused for eleven months until the time for dedication Solomon considered most appropriate. Why did he wait that long? He does not tell us directly, but one may estimate that he considered that dedication more appropriate at the time of the fall festivals than at the time of the spring festivals.

In addition, this dedication in the seventh month coincided with the beginning of his own next regnal year. Thus, the reign of God in His temple coincided with the reign of the king in his palace. Both began with the seventh month of the calendar year, in the fall.

III. During the Divided Monarchy

An extensive amount of chronological data about the kings of Israel and Judah is contained in 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles. The lengths of reign are given for nineteen kings of Israel and nineteen kings of Judah. This already yields thirty-eight chronological data to deal with. Then there are the synchronisms which tell when the king of one kingdom came to the throne in terms of the regnal year of a king in the other kingdom. Twelve of these synchronisms are given in terms of the years of the kings of Israel and twenty-three of these synchronisms are given in terms of the king of Judah. This yields a total of seventy-three points of chronological data to locate on a timeline that extended from 931 B.C. to 586 B.C.

The integration of all this data is a difficult task. Edwin R. Thiele has been done it especially well in his book *Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*.[3] This chronology is probably the most widely accepted among biblical scholars.

Thiele developed several principles by which to integrate the dates for the Hebrew kings. One of these principles was that different calendars were in use in the two kingdoms. To put the matter simply, the spring calendar was in use in the northern kingdom of Israel, and the fall calendar was in use in the southern kingdom of Judah.

It is absolutely necessary to make this distinction to make sense out of this chronology. If both kingdoms used the spring calendar or they both used the fall calendar, it is virtually impossible to integrate these data successfully.

This point is illustrated by the most recently published chronology of Israel and Judah, Gershon Galil's *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah*.[4] In this work Galil takes the opposite position to that of Thiele, holding that the fall calendar was in use in the northern kingdom and the spring calendar was in use in the southern kingdom.

The point here is not to decide between the position of Thiele and Galil. The point is that both of these major chronologies must make use of alternate calendars in the two kingdoms to make sense of the biblical data. For our present purpose, the fall calendar was in use in the north or the south. It is enough to simply use these chronologies to show that the fall calendar had to be in use in one of these kingdoms. It is an indispensable part of the chronology of the kings of Israel and Judah.

IV. At the End of the Monarchy

Not only do the books of kings give an extensive amount of chronological detail for the kings of Israel and Judah, but they also give some chronological data for foreign kings. This is true for Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 2 Kgs 24–25. The exile of Jehoiakin is dated in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar in 2 Kgs 24:12. The destruction of the temple in the eleventh year of Zedekiah is dated in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs 25:2, 8).

A new chapter in the study of this data occurred in 1961 when D. J. Wiseman published the *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*.[5] This book includes cuneiform texts from the first thirteen years of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. In this work Nebuchadnezzar's capture of Jerusalem in the time of Jehoiakin is dated in his ninth year (73); whereas the biblical text places it in his eighth year. Since both the kingdoms of Judah and Babylon used accession-year reckoning, in which the balance of the year in which the old king died counted as year 0 until the next new year's day, that cannot be the explanation for this difference.

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[3] This work has gone through three editions: in 1951, 1965, and 1983. The first edition was published by the University of Chicago and the last two editions by Eerdmans.

[4] Leiden: Brill, 1996.

[5] London: British Museum.

The same chronicle tells us that Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar's father, died in the fifth month and Nebuchadnezzar took the throne in the sixth month. This occurred in 605 B.C. For the Babylonians, the time until the spring New Year of 604 was Nebuchadnezzar's accession period, year 0, and this is even marked off in the tablet as such (69).

The Hebrews, however, applied their own fall calendar to the Babylonian king. That meant that his first full year began on 1 Tishri in the seventh month, the month after he took the throne. Thus they dated his regnal years from the fall of 605, not the spring of 604, as the Babylonians did.

When one comes to the fall of Jerusalem, in late winter of 597 B.C. (Babylonian 2 Adar, or March 16, 597 B.C.), the Hebrew dates were six months in advance of the Babylonian dates for him. Thus he conquered Jerusalem in his eighth year according to Hebrew fall reckoning, but in his seventh year according to his own Babylonian reckoning.

Even though we do not have a Babylonian tablet which describes the next conquest of Jerusalem, in 586 B.C., the same problem occurs there as one projects these dates forward. According to 2 Kgs 25:7 and 8, the temple was burned in Nebuchadnezzar's nineteenth year (according to Hebrew fall reckoning) when in his own Babylonian reckoning this would have been his eighteenth year.

Thus, the Hebrew fall calendar was in use late in the kingdom of Judah not only for their own kings but also in dating the events in the reign of a foreign king. Nebuchadnezzar. All this has been described in accurate detail by S. H. Horn in his study, "The Babylonian Chronicle and the Ancient Calendar of the Kingdom of Judah."[6]

V. During the Exile—the Prophets

CASE A. Dan 1:1

This text says that Nebuchadnezzar came up to and besieged Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiakim. Nebuchadnezzar's chronicle dates these events to the late spring and summer of 605, when he conquered all of "Hatti-land," or Syro-Palestine, which included the kingdom of Judah.

Critical commentaries on Daniel commonly ascribe this date in the third year of Jehoiakim to a mistake and hold that it should be the fourth year. There is no mistake here if one simply acknowledges the use of two Hebrew chronological principles, accession year reckoning and the fall calendar.

Jehoachim was deposed by Pharaoh Necho in the early fall of 609, as can be determined from the date for Necho's return from the battle of Harran.[7] Thus, Necho installed Jehoiakim in the fall of 609, after the fall New Year of 1 Tishri. The rest of 609 and of 608 until the next fall New Year was Jehoahaz's accession year of year 0. His first year ran from the fall of 608 to the fall of 607. His

[6] *AUSS* 5 (1967): 12-27.

[7] Wiseman, *Chronology*, 63.

second year extended from the fall of 607 to the fall of 606, and his third year reached to the fall of 605. Thus, it included the conquest of Jerusalem in the spring or summer of 605. There is no mistake here, once it is recognized that the fall calendar was in use in Judah at this time.

CASE B. The Dates in Ezekiel

A very large volume of inspired writing was produced to meet the crisis of the Babylonian exile. Ezekiel was with the exiles in Babylonia, Daniel was at court in Babylon, and Jeremiah remained behind with the remnant of Judah. Between these three writers 110 chapters of the Bible were produced in that time.

Each of these writers also used their own dating system. Aside from Dan 1:1, the rest of the dates in Daniel are given according to the year of the Babylonian and Persian kings. Even though he was in Babylonia, Ezekiel did not date to the years of the Babylonian kings, but to the years of his wave of the exiles. Jeremiah, in Judah, continued to date to the kings of Judah, and he may possibly have used a spring calendar. Evidence has been discussed above that shows Daniel used a fall calendar. The question then is, which calendar did Ezekiel use?

A useful study on this subject has been produced by K. S. Freedy and D. B. Redford.[8] In this study the authors adopt a fall calendar for Jehoiakim (465), for Zedekiah (466), and for Jer 36 (ibid.). For 2 Kgs 24–25 and the parallel passages in Jeremiah, however, they adopt a spring calendar (469). Then they go on to correlate the dozen dates in Ezekiel with Egyptian sources (468, 474-485). While the use of the historical sources here is very valuable, the pattern provided is a mixture which leans toward their spring calendar for 2 Kgs 24–25, when a more rigorous application of the fall calendar would have yielded an even more specific historical picture. In other words, one can use the data provided by Freedy and Redford to provide an even better correlation with the use of the fall calendar from Judah by Ezekiel in exile.

Another work which considers the fall calendar "equally possible" for the dates in Ezekiel is the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, which puts those dates as calculated according to the spring and fall calendars in parallel columns.[9]

CASE C. The Final Date in Ezekiel

The fourteenth and last exile date in Ezekiel is found in 40:1. The date given there is the twenty-fifth year of the exile, the eighteenth year after the city was conquered, the tenth day of *rosh hashanah*. The Hebrew phrase *rosh hashanah* refers literally to the "head of the year" or the New Year. The question then is, which New Year, spring or fall?

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[8] "The Dates in Ezekiel in Relation to Biblical, Babylonian, and Egyptian Sources," *JAOS* 90 (1970): 462-485.

[9] Washington: Review and Herald, 4:572.

In this case that matter can be decided by the theological significance of the date. If it was the tenth day from the spring New Year, that day was not especially significant for the context of the prophecy which follows in chapters 40–48 of Ezekiel. As the tenth day from 1 Tishri in the fall, however, this date becomes highly significant for the content of that prophecy.

The tenth day from the fall New Year was the Day of Atonement. The Day of Atonement was a time of ritual cleansing of the earthly tabernacle and temple so that it could begin the round of sacrificial ceremonies for the next year. At the time when Ezekiel received this prophecy, the temple was in ruins. It is a prophecy about the rebuilding and restoration of the temple, along with the restoration of the people to their land.

Thus, on the day when the temple was cleansed ritually, Ezekiel was shown that temple in its cleansed and pure state after its rebuilding according to the instructions given to him. How appropriate, therefore, for this vision of the restoration of the temple to be given on the Day of Atonement.

It might also be mentioned in passing that *rosh hashanah* is celebrated in modern synagogues in the fall, a descendant from the *rosh hashanah* mentioned here by Ezekiel. Thus, the final date in Ezekiel confirms what had already been suspected historically from the previous dates in the book, that he was using a fall calendar to measure off his years in exile.

VI. Extrabiblical Texts After the Exile—the Elephantine Papyri

The Elephantine papyri are texts written in Aramaic by a colony of Jewish mercenaries in the army of the Persian kings. They were posted to a fort on the southern Nile to guard the border of Persian Egypt from its enemies. Most of the texts in this collection were written during the 5th century B.C., during the reigns of Artaxerxes I and Darius II. These texts are double-dated with both an Egyptian date and a Persian-Babylonian date. Since both of these calendars were variable, the times when these two dates cross can be calculated. From those dates it can be determined whether the regnal year number of the king is calculated according to the Egyptian system or the spring calendar of the Persians and Babylonians or the fall calendar of the Jews. S. H. Horn has provided a detailed analysis of these texts in *The Chronology of Ezra 7*.[10] He concludes from his examination of these texts that the Jews in Elephantine in the 5th century were using their Jewish fall-to-fall calendar.

CASE A. The Reign of Darius II

Artaxerxes I died in February of 423 B.C. Darius II followed him on the Persian throne. From the third year of Darius II comes a papyrus known as Kraeling 6 which is dated in the month of Tammuz with a corresponding Egyptian date that locates the writing of this text on July 11 of 420 B.C. If this text was dated according to a spring calendar, it should fall in the fourth year (from

[10] Washington: Review and Herald.

the spring of 423), but it is the third year because it was written before the fall New Year, when the number would change.

This factor is pointed out by a text written but three months later, in Tishri or October of 420 B.C. (Kraeling7). Since it was written after the fall New Year, the regnal year number changed. These two texts make a nice pair that crosses the fall New Year and demonstrates the change that took place in the regnal year then.

CASE B. The Reign of Artaxerxes

It is difficult to tell from the texts from the times of Artaxerxes what kind of Semitic calendar they used, because in twenty-six of twenty-eight texts the year number follows the Egyptian month name, and it is therefore most likely calculated according to the Egyptian system.

There is, however, one text in this group that is highly significant. It is the earliest text from the reign of Artaxerxes I, *AP 6* (Cowley's numbering), written on January 2, 464 B.C. The dating is "year 21, accession year of Artaxerxes, when he sat on the throne." This text is so important because it shows quite clearly that the Jews at Elephantine did not begin the first regnal year of Artaxerxes in the fall of 465 B.C., or this text would have read Year 1. Xerxes was murdered in August of 465 B.C., but they did not begin Artaxerxes' reign on 1 Tishri in September-October of that year.

This date was delayed because of the struggle for the throne in Persia. Artexexes was not first in line for the throne. His older brother Darius was. Darius had to be eliminated first, which Artaxerxes did in league with an official named Artabanes. Then Artaxerxes had to fight two battles with another older brother named Hystaspes, who was the satrap of Bactria. I have discussed this course of events in a recent article in *JATS*, "Who Succeeded Xerxes on the Throne of Persia?"[11] It took time for Artaxerxes to carry out the plot to murder his oldest brother and to defeat the next oldest brother militarily. All of this political uncertainty is reflected in the unusual prolongation of Xerxes twenty-first year, which actually came to an end in August of 465, but here is prolonged until January of 464.

While this text does tell us that Artaxerxes' regnal year did not begin on 1 Tishri of 465, it does not tell us for certain whether his first year began in the spring of 464 or the fall of that year. That must be determined on another basis, by extrapolating backward from the reign of Darius II. If a fall calendar was in use in the time of Darius II, then it is likely that it was already in use during the reign of Artaxerxes.

The question has been raised in some quarters as to whether or not Siegfried Horn recanted from his position on the use of the fall calendar at Elephantine. As one who taught with Horn for more than a decade at the SDA Theological Seminary and discussed this subject with him on several occasions, I can say

[11] 12/1 (Spring 2001): 84-89.

from my own knowledge that he did not diverge from this position while he was at the Seminary. The Elephantine papyri provide extra biblical evidence for the Jewish use of the fall calendar during the Persian period.

VII. A Postexilic Biblical Example—Nehemiah

In chapter one of his book, Nehemiah records that he received a letter from Judea stating that Jerusalem was still in a broken-down condition. This episode is dated in Chislev on the ninth month of the twentieth year of Artaxerxes (v. 1). This is followed by the narrative in chapter 2, in which the king sees how sad Nehemiah is and asks him why he is so downcast. Nehemiah tells the king about the broken-down state of Jerusalem and asks the king for letters authorizing him to go and take care of the problem. The king provides Nehemiah with these. This episode is dated in Nisan, or the first month, of the twentieth year of the king (v. 1).

The significant point here is that the regnal year number of the king did not change even after the spring New Year or 1 Nisan was passed. The only way to explain the phenomenon is that a fall-to-fall calendar was in use here by Nehemiah for the foreign king under whom he served. Those commentators who hold that a spring calendar was in use here realize this problem, so they resort to emendation of the text, changing year twenty in 1:1 to year nineteen or changing year twenty in 2:1 to twenty-one. This is a case of manipulating the text to fit the theory instead of deriving the theory from the data in the text.

Beginning with the seventh month of year twenty, this narrative goes to the ninth month for the narrative of chapter 1. Then it goes on to the first month in the spring. The year number did not change until the seventh month following that second narrative. This is strong evidence for the use of the fall-to-fall calendar in the time of Nehemiah. Ezra was a contemporary and fellow worker with Nehemiah (Neh 8:1, 9; 9:6). Since it is unlikely that Ezra and Nehemiah would have used a different calendar, the fall calendar may also be safely applied to the decree that Artaxerxes gave to Ezra in Ezra 7:11–26. Since that decree was given to Ezra in Artaxerxes' seventh year, that year may be dated from the fall of 458 to the fall of 457. Since this was the decree from which the initial stimulus to rebuild Jerusalem resulted (Ezra 4:11-13), this date can also be applied to the decree for the restoring and rebuilding of Jerusalem with which the time prophecy of Dan 9:24–27 begins.

Summary

Ancient Israel used two different calendars: a spring calendar that measured off the religious festivals, and a fall calendar commonly used to measure the regnal years of kings. The spring calendar is commonly called the religious calendar and the fall calendar is commonly called the civil calendar. Since the fall calendar is less obvious, an attempt has been made here to study the evidence for this type of calendar throughout Old Testament times. It began with the same

Mosaic legislation with which the spring calendar began. It surfaced again in the time of Solomon, when it was used for his regnal years and to mark off the dedication of the temple.

During the divided monarchy the spring calendar was used in one kingdom and the fall calendar in the other. This is the only way to make sense of the chronological data in Kings and Chronicles. It was even used to measure off the regnal years of a foreign king like Nebuchanezzar.

During the exile the fall calendar was used by Daniel and Ezekiel. Ezekiel even received a vision of the restored temple at the time of the fall New Year. Jews in the service of the Persian kings in Egypt appear to have preserved a knowledge of this calendar.

Finally, it shows up in Neh 1–2 in use in the time of Artaxerxes. As a contemporary and fellow worker of Nehemiah, Ezra undoubtedly used it too and dated his decree from Artaxerxes by this calendar. This decree begins the seventy weeks of Dan 9, and therefore the apocalyptic time prophecies of Dan 8 and 9 should be measured off by using this same fall-to-fall or Tishri-to-Tishri calendar.

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Literary and Theological Parallels Between Revelation 14–15 and Exodus 19–24

William H. Shea

The more commentaries written on the book of Revelation, the more literary allusions to the Old Testament discovered there. Thus the list of allusions to the Old Testament found in the phraseology of Revelation becomes longer and longer. A recent example of this is the excellent and detailed study by Jon Paulien on the section of Revelation dealing with the trumpets.[1] After carefully analyzing the question of what constitutes an allusion and how previous interpreters have handled them, Paulien came to the conclusion that Revelation 8:7–12 contains thirty reasonably direct allusions to or echoes of the Old Testament, a higher count than all but one of the previous interpreters had found.[2]

With this ongoing study of Revelation through Old Testament eyes, it is inevitable that more and more connections of this type will be found. That is the point of this study. The passages of Revelation covered in this search are chapters 14 and 15, especially the instruction given there known as the three angels' messages (Rev 14:6–11). A sizeable body of information from the OT relating to this passage and its context remains largely untapped. The purpose of this study is to utilize those details in coming to a better understanding of this passage in Revelation.

We are not dealing here with only occasional words or phrases that are taken over into Revelation, though there are some examples of that kind of use. We are dealing here with a more comprehensive scheme in which a connected series of passages in one book are paralleled by another series of texts in the other. The parallels between these blocks of text may consist in lexical relations, in historical experiences, in theophanic aspects of revelation, or in theological relations. All of these features operate at one time or another in connecting these two extended narratives.

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[1] *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, Andrews University Seminary Dissertation Series, No. 11 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 1987).

[2] Ibid., 303.

The major lines of the prophecies in the book of Revelation can be divided off through their introductory scenes. This has been demonstrated by Kenneth Strand, who has emphasized that each line of prophecy in the book of Revelation is introduced by a "Victorious Vision" scene is set in the heavenly sanctuary.[3] These show the nature of God's activities taking place there while the succeeding prophecies are fulfilled in earthly events. The scene introducing the central prophecy of the book (chapters 12–14) is found in Revelation 11:19. There the heavenly sanctuary is opened and the ark of the covenant is seen inside it. The next major prophetic series of Revelation is divided off by the sanctuary scene occurring in Revelation 15:5–8. There the seven angels with the plague bowls come out of the heavenly sanctuary, and no one is permitted to go into it until they have finished their work on the earth. This describes a final phase to take place in the work of judgment. Thus the sanctuary scenes of 11:19 and 15:5–8 enclose the narrative with which we are concerned, showing scenes of the opening and closing of judgment.

We are not concerned here with all of the central prophecy of Revelation 12–14. For our present purposes chapters 12 and 13 have been laid aside, and this study begins with chapter 14. Chapters 12 and 13 are both self-contained prophecies. They are related to each other and to chapter 14, but they also go through their own complete cycles. I have elaborated this point in chapter 12 in a previous study.[4] Revelation 13 is also a self-contained unit, even though it has relations with what precedes it and what follows it. The sea beast in the first half of the chapter is a major opponent to God and His people at the beginning of and during the Christian age, while the land beast in the second half of the chapter is their major opponent at the end of the age. Chapter 14 starts a new section with a new scene that is not of the same nature as the two scenes in chapter 13, although they are related. The victors seen at the beginning of chapter 14 have gained the victory over the beast shown in the preceding chapter.

In particular, the message of the third angel of chapter 14 refers back to events in chapter 13, for it warns against the image of the beast and its mark, which are described there.

Externally, the two sanctuary scenes of 11:19 and 15:5–8 divide off the central section of Revelation from the rest of the book. Internally, this central section consists of three main prophecies, found in chapters 12, 13, and 14, respectively. Only the third of these three is under consideration here. It covers all of Revelation 14 and includes the first four verses of chapter 15. The chapter division does not coincide with the division between these prophecies. This

[3] "The Eight Basic Visions in the Book of Revelation," *AUSS*, 25 (1987): 107–122; idem, "The 'Victorious–Introduction` Scenes in the Visions of the Book of Revelation," *AUSS*, 25 (1987): 267–288.

[4] "The Parallel Literary Structure of Revelation 12 and 20," *AUSS*. 23 (1985): 37–54.

is indicated by the succeeding introductory sanctuary scene, which brings up the next major line of prophecy—the seven last plagues.

From these introductory observations we proceed to the heart of the exposition, a section by section comparison between the two major passages for study from Exodus and Revelation.

A. Exodus 19 and Revelation 14:1–5: Introduction and Setting

The most convenient way of presenting these comparisons is through two parallel lists:

Exodus 19	Revelation 14:1–5
1. Location: Mount Sinai (v. 2)	1. Location: Mount Sion (v. 1)
2. Location: at the foot of the mount (v. 23)	2. Location: on the mount (v. 1)
3. People present: 12 Israelite tribes (vs. 1, 3, 6)	3. People present: the 144,000, made up of 12 Israelite tribes (v. 1)
4. A voice from heaven: thunder and a musical instrument—the trumpet (v. 16)	4. A voice from heaven: thunder and musical instruments—harps (v. 2)
5. Origin of the people—redeemed from Egypt (v. 4)	5. Origin of the people—redeemed from the earth (v. 3)
6. Purity of the people: "do not go near a woman" (v. 15)	6. Purity of the people—"not defiled themselves with women" (v. 4)
7. Purity of the people: Moses consecrated the people and "they washed their garments" (v. 13)	7. Purity of the people: "they are spotless" (v. 5)
8. Words of the people: "all that the Lord has spoken we will do" (v. 8)	8. Words of the people: "in their mouth no lie was found" (v. 5)

The sequence of the text in Revelation 14:1—15:4 raises a basic question. Why does it start with this episode? It begins with what might be considered a conclusion, showing the 144,000 victorious upon Mount Sion with the Lamb. This should come at the end of the line, after the three angels' messages and the depiction of the Second Coming. Historically and chronologically that is where it belongs. Revelation 15:2–4 deals with the same scene and subject, and it is a continuation of the introductory scene in 14:1–5. Once the parallels with Exodus are recognized, however, a reason for this introductory scene is evident, because it parallels the picture of the people as they arrived at Mount Sinai. They were victorious over the beast of Egypt, just as this new spiritual Israel will be victorious over the beast of their own time. But that victory and their state in victory is also preliminary to what follows.

The victory of the 144,000 will be more complete and final than was the status of ancient Israel at Mount Sinai, hence some of the elements in the narrative have been transformed. Ancient Israel could not come up on the Mount because they were not holy enough, even with the most elaborate ceremonial preparations. The 144,000, however, may join the Lamb up on the mount. A close similarity between the names of these mounts can be seen (Sinai and

Sion), and this is the only place in Revelation that Sion appears. The twelve tribes are present in both settings, but now in Revelation they are spiritual or symbolic tribes (chapter 7). The conditions of purity have also been transformed. In the Old Testament setting there was a striving for ceremonial purity, but now in the new setting that has become spiritual and moral purity. The temporary prohibition against sexual intercourse now comes to represent spiritual intercourse with a worldly church (Rev 17), from which these modern saints have abstained. Ceremonial purity of garments has been transformed into a picture of being covered with garments of the righteousness of Christ. In the Old Testament setting the people said they would do all that the Lord commanded, but they failed soon thereafter (Exod 32). In the New Testament scene no such failure is mentioned, for the people have faithfully kept their word (cf. Rev 12:11).

B. Exodus 20–22 and Revelation 14:6–11: Giving of the Law and Giving of the Three Angels' Messages

All three of the angels' messages in Revelation 14 come in different forms. The first message, Rev 14:6–7, is given as a direct command, in the imperative: "*Fear* God and *give* Him glory . . . and *worship* Him." The technical term for this kind of command in studies on biblical law is apodictic law.[5] It was virtually unique to ancient Israel, and even there is found mainly in the Ten Commandments given at Sinai. This is the very passage appearing in parallel here.

The second angel's message, on the other hand, contains no commands. It is a historical description. It tells about the fall of Babylon and the state that led it to its fall (Rev 14:8). The third angel's message is also different. It is legal in nature and contains a command, but it is an indirect type of command. It is a command that first cites the case and then cites the penalty for those who participate in the wrong. This requires the use of an "if . . . then" sequence of clauses. This type of legislation is known as casuistic or case law. The "if" clause, known as the *protasis*, sets up the conditions. The "then" clause, known as the *apodosis*, explains the penalty for those who violated the conditions. That is why apodictic law is known as such, for it describes the direct command without setting up the conditions found in the *protasis*.[6]

These two types of law are found in Rev 14:6–11, and they are also found in Exod 20–22. In Exodus there is a midrash or commentary upon the law which follows after the giving of the Ten Commandments. This is known as the Covenant Code. The explanation or application of the law comes in various

[5] The primary study on biblical law that opened up a new chapter in the examination of law and covenant is that of G. E. Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburgh: Biblical Colloquium, 1955). This was reprinted from *Biblical Archaeologist* 17 (1954): 26–46, 49–76.

[6] Full treatments of both apodictic and casuistic law and the *protasis* and *apodosis* of casuistic law can be found in Mendenhall.

forms that derive from the original commandments. The Ten Commandments are given as apodictic law or commands, while the Covenant Code is given as casuistic law, covering some of the cases to which the earlier commands have been applied. A similar pattern is found in Revelation 14. The first angel's command is given as apodictic law, while the third angel's message is given as case law. A brief historical description intervenes between these legislative passages, and this is known as the second angel's message. In Exodus this type of historical description is found in 20:18–20. There the response of the people is given. These parallels emphasize the identity of the second angel's message as a response of the people to the content of the first angel's message. These parallels can be set out in corresponding columns of text:

Exodus 20:1–17	Revelation 14:6–11
Ten Commandments: Apodictic Law (examples) You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.	**First Angel's Message: Apodictic Law** Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment has come; and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of water. (v.7)
Exodus 20:11–20 **Historical Interlude of Response** Now when all the people perceived the thunderings and lightnings and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled; and they stood afar off, and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die."	**Second Angel's Message** **Historical Interlude of Response** Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink of the wine of her impure passion. (v.8)
Exodus 21–22 **Covenant Code: Casuistic Law** (Example explaining eighth commandment) *If* a man delivers to his neighbor money or goods to keep, and it is stolen out of the man's house, *then*, if the thief is found, he shall pay double. (22:7)	**Third Angel's Message: Casuistic Law** If anyone worships the beast and its image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, (then) he shall drink the wine of God's wrath . . . (vs. 9–10)

Some general relations are present in the sections of apodictic law. In Rev 14:6–7, three verbs and two dependant clauses are used to express those commands. In a general sense they bear a relation to the commandments of the first table of the law. They can be compared as follows:

The Ten Commandments	The First Angel's Message
I. You shall have no other gods before me.	Fear (the true) god.
II. You shall not make for yourself a	Give glory to Him (and not to false

graven image . . . you shall not bow down to them or serve them.	gods).
III. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.	For the hour of His judgment is come (when He will no longer allow people to go guiltless).
IV. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them.	Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of water.

The relations here are general in terms of phraseology, except in the case of the fourth commandment. There the modifying clause makes the connection quite specific in terms of the identity of the Creator God who is to be worshipped and whose day is to be remembered and observed. The use of the verb for worship here is significant in relation to its frequent use in the preceding chapter. Worship will be a major issue with the beasts, and this subject comes up again in the third angel's message. Thus these two references to worship point in opposite directions; the call to worship in the first angel's message points in the positive direction and the warning against false worship in the third angel's message points in the negative direction, to the opposite pole of the same issue.

The historical interludes between the legislation in these two narratives also show a general relationship, as a connection between belief and action is involved in each case. At Mount Sinai the people do not want to hear the voice of God because of their fear. They temporarily turn away from Him until Moses brings them back to a right relationship with Him, to fear Him in the right way, with reverential awe (Exod 20:19–20). In like manner, the spiritual harlot Babylon has been tested by God and been found wanting. She continues to indulge in her sins and does not demonstrate a fear of God. She also leads others into the same conduct. The momentary response of the Israelites at the foot of Sinai is remediable, but the case of Babylon in Revelation 14:8 is irremediable, so judgment is pronounced upon her.

Parallels in the case laws are more complex. The covenant code takes up this type of law in Exodus 21:1. Two other laws precede that main section, however. The first deals with idol worship (Exod 20:23). Then come special laws dealing with the cult, how to build an altar for sacrifice to God in the right way (v. 24a). These initial laws make good parallels to what is found at the outset of the third angel's message: "if any one worships the beast and his image" (Rev 14:9). Worship is what happened upon the altar described in Exodus, and the image proscribed here parallels the proscription of gods of gold and silver in Exodus.

What follows next in Revelation is a reference to the mark of the beast on the forehead or on the hand (v. 9b). What follows next in Exodus is the body of the Covenant Code proper. The very first laws found there deal with Hebrew

household slaves (Exod 21:1–6). In one special case (if the slave had married and had children and wished to remain with his master), he is marked by having a hole bored through his ear lobe, "and he shall serve him for life" (Exod 21:6). Thus, three elements found in the third angel's message have parallels back in the Covenant Code legislation of Exodus:

Covenant Code of Exodus	Third Angel's Message of Revelation
No gods of gold or silver (20:23)	No beast or his image (14:9b)
Worship at this altar (20:24)	No worship of them (14:9a)
Mark on the ear (21:6)	No mark on forehead or hand (14:9c)

These phrases in the *protasis* of the third angel's message express its conditions; the *apodosis* gives its penalty. The penalty is destruction by fire. This is expressed in four linked phrases. A survey of the Covenant Code for penalties of this degree of severity reveals that there are only two places where the death penalty is taken up, once toward the beginning of the Code (21:12–17) and once toward the end of the Code (22:18–24). It may be a coincidence, but it is interesting to note that in each case, as with the third angel's message, the death penalty is pronounced in precisely four cases in both passages, just as it is stated four times over in Rev 14:10–11. While the cases are obviously not the same, their fourfold nature will be outlined in parallel:

Exodus	Exodus	Revelation
1. Murder (21:12–14)	Sorceress (22:18)	Drink wrath (14:10)
2. Abuse parents (21:15)	Bestiality (22:19)	Torment by fire (14:10)
3. Mantheft (21:16)	Idolatry (22:20)	Smoke ascends (14:11)
4. Curse parents (21:17)	Oppression (22:21–24)	No rest (14:11)

The laws in the Covenant Code were given as an explanation of the laws found in the Ten Commandments. Each case can be traced back to the commandment from which these developed. A similar relationship can be seen between the first and third angels' messages. The first angel's message gives a law of command, and the third angel's message gives a case law. Both of them involve worship, and both of them use the word for worship. They should, therefore, stem from the same command of God. The third angel is warning against, in negative terms, what the first angel is talking about in positive terms, just as case law explains the nature of and delimits the commands expressed in apodictic law.

C. The Witness: Exodus 23:1–8 and Revelation 14:12–13

After the three angels' messages are given, the text of Revelation follows with references to two groups: living saints and dead saints. Why are these two groups referred to at this point in the narrative? What function do they serve here in this flow of events? The latter portion of the Covenant Code presents laws that deal with witnesses. Once that parallel to Revelation is noted, the

function of the saints in Revelation becomes more apparent. They serve a similar function, one of witness. The laws dealing with the witnesses in the Covenant Code serve a more limited purpose: the witnesses there were restricted to testifying in court. The witnesses in Revelation, however, have a more broadly addressed witness. Their witness is to the world addressed by the three angels. Their moral and spiritual witness is to the world at large, which needs to both hear these messages and see them lived out in the lives of the saints. Two groups of people are present in Revelation, and two sections of law are presented in Exodus:

Exodus	Revelation
A. You shall not utter a false report. You shall not join hands with a wicked man, to be a malicious witness. You shall not follow a multitude to do evil; nor shall you bear witness in a suit, turning aside after a multitude, so as to pervert justice; nor shall you be partial to a poor man in your suit. (21:1–3)	A´. Here is the call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. (14:12)
B. You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in his suit. Keep far from a false charge, and do not slay the innocent and the righteous, for I will not acquit the wicked. And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the officials, and subverts the cause of those who are the right. (Exod 23:6–9)	B´. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth. Blessed indeed, that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them. (Rev 14:13)

The second section of Revelation (v. 13) concerns the dead, and their deeds follow them. That is, their deeds for God live on after they die, so they continue to give witness, just as the living saints do. It is in the second of these legislative passages about witnesses in Exodus that the matter of death is brought up. Here it refers to the death of an unjustly accused person. That same situation may apply to those mentioned in Revelation, for they too may have died from an unjust persecution.

D. Exodus 23:10–17 and Revelation 14:14–20: The Harvest

Following the three angels' messages and the testimony to them by the witness of the living and dead saints, Revelation turns to the grand finale, the second coming of Christ. This is described in Revelation 14:14–20. There the Son of man is depicted as coming on a cloud with a sickle in His hand with which to reap the earth. At the call of an angel, the earth is reaped of the righteous first, represented by the grain harvest. Then another angel reaps the earth of the fruit or grapes in the harvest of the wicked (vs. 17–20). The grapes are crushed and pressed as the defeated wicked are destroyed.

There is an unusual aspect to this symbolism in Revelation. In the agricultural calendar these two harvests are separated by a number of months. The grain harvest occurred in April and May, its conclusion celebrated by the Festival of Weeks or Pentecost. Then came the fruit harvest at the end of the summer, celebrated by the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles. Here in Revelation, however, these two figures have been drawn together as two aspects of the same harvest event. The question is why? While it is certain that all people living on earth will be dealt with one way or another when Christ comes, why use this particular pair of agricultural figures to express that idea?

It may not be the only reason for such use, but the parallels present in the Covenant Code of Exodus provide one very direct connection. At the end of that explanatory legislation, the text turns to the subject of festivals and sabbatical years. The legislation about the sabbatical years comes first, and it mentions the sowing and reaping of the land during the six years preceding the sabbatical year (Exod 23:10). It also mentions the parallel activity "with your vineyard and with your olive orchard" (Exod 23:11). Both the grain harvest and the fruit harvest are mentioned together in this legislation, even though they actually occurred at different times of the agricultural year.

After repeating the instruction about the weekly Sabbath (Exod 23:12) and giving a further injunction against idolatry (v. 13), the laws turn to the subject of the three festivals during the year at which the adult males are to appear before the Lord (vs. 14–17). After mention of the feast of unleavened bread (vs. 14–15) the text turns to Pentecost: "You shall keep the feast of harvest, of the first fruits of your labor, of what you sow in the field" (v. 16a). Then comes the Feast of Ingathering, Tabernacles. This is the time when "you gather in from the field the fruit of your labor" (v. 16b). As with the sabbatical years, the grain harvest and the fruit harvest are mentioned together. Legislatively this occurs because these laws affect both the grain and fruit harvests through their festivals and in the sabbatical years.

In terms of the order of the text and parallels, the picture of the harvest of the world at the Second Coming occurs where the parallel passage in Exodus describes the legislation that deals with the spring and fall harvests. While those harvests occur at different times, they come together when they are referred to in these laws. The same thing occurs in Revelation, where the figures from these two different harvests have been brought together in one grand event: the Second Coming. This may not be the only explanation for that use in Revelation, but the connection in Exodus does provide another example of a similar sort of parallel on a literary and thematic basis.

E. Exodus 23:20–33 and Revelation 15:1: The Covenant Curses

The final section of the Covenant Code brings up the blessings and curses of the covenant. This was standard procedure for ancient covenants both in and

outside of the Bible.[7] The same sort of thing is found in Deuteronomy, for example, which also follows the covenant formulary. That book ends with the blessings and curses of the covenant first in prose (Deut 27–31) and then in poetry (Deut 32–33). This order of the text in Exodus provides a potential explanation for a seeming divergence from the natural order of events in Revelation. Revelation 15:1 brings up the subject of the seven last plagues, but only through a brief mention. Why not leave that subject until the next narrative, where the plagues form the body of the text (Rev 16), after they are introduced by another sanctuary scene (Rev 15:5–8)?

When the order of the parallel text in Exodus is noted, however, it seems quite logical to mention the plagues at this juncture in Revelation 15:1. They serve the same function that the covenant curses do in Exodus 23:20–33. While this passage in Exodus does include both blessings and curses, it emphasizes one central point: The curse upon your enemies shall be a blessing to you. This theme is found in Exodus 23:22: "I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries." The rest of the passage spells out in more details just how this will happen. God will send terror and confusion before the Israelites as they come into the land, and through this and other means He promises to drive their enemies out before them. The different afflictions and curses God is to send upon them can be looked at as parallel to the plagues.

This is the work of angels, both in Exodus and Revelation. The angel of the Lord is referred to three times in Exodus 23:20–23. In verse 20 God promises to send His angel before the Israelites and instructs them to harken to his voice. In verse 22 they are again urged to harken to his voice, but the word for "angel" is not used there. In verse 23 the angel is mentioned again, this time in terms of his actions against their enemies, not in terms of what he says. All three of these references are to the same angel; the word "angel" is used twice and his voice is referred to twice.

The harvest scene of Revelation 14:17–20 also refers to the work of God's angels against the wicked. While the Son of man harvests the righteous with His sickle, the wicked are harvested by an angel who comes out of the temple. He acts upon the instruction of another angel, the one at the altar. The word "angel" occurs three times in this passage, referring to two angels, and the voice of the second is referred to once. Numerically, the correspondence with Exodus 23:20–23 is not exact, but the focus is the same: the actions of God's angels by word and deed against the enemies of His people.

The number of the plagues is stated in Revelation 15:1 as seven. Parallel to this, the covenant curses of Exodus 23:20–33 fall upon seven nations. The Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites, and Jebusites are mentioned in verse 23, and the Philistines are mentioned in verse 31. In Exodus, the afflictions or plagues are sent upon seven enemies of the people of God, whereas in

[7] See the section on blessings and curses of covenants in Mendenhall.

Revelation it is the plagues that are seven in number, and they are sent upon all the enemies of the people of God.

F. Exodus 24 and Revelation 15:2–4: The Second Scene of Glorious Result

In Revelation 14–15 this line of prophecy ends with a second view of the 144,000. This time they do not appear upon Mount Sion, but are seen in heaven itself. They stand upon the sea of glass before the throne of God, singing their song of victory, the Song of Moses and the Lamb.

A second scene of theophany or divine revelation also occurs back in Exodus (24:1–2, 9–18). More people were permitted to come up on the mountain with Moses: Nadab, Abihu, and the 70 elders go up on the mountain with him (vs. 1, 9). Before the giving of the law the people only see indirect manifestations of the glory of God: lightning, thunder, the thick cloud, and the sound of the trumpet (19:16). On this occasion, after the law has been pronounced, the special group of people permitted to go up on the mountain have a closer view of His person, "and they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness" (Exod 24:10).

The same type of thing is seen in the new scene in Revelation (15:2). There the firmament stretched out before God is referred to as the "sea of glass." The phraseology is not exactly the same, but the idea and the object referred to certainty are (cf. Rev 4:6; Ezek 1:22). Using anthropomorphic terminology, Exodus tells us that the feet of God rest upon the firmament at Mount Sinai. Revelation develops this picture dynamically, for it is no longer the feet of God which rest upon it, but the feet of the 144,000
which rest "upon" (Gr. *epi*) it. God is now seated upon His throne
at the head of this great expanse, and the saints gather before Him upon it.

Another feature of this scene bears some similarity to the one in Exodus, and that is the added description of the sea of glass being "mingled with fire" (Rev 15:2). In the earlier description in Exodus, it is stated that the glory of God that manifested upon the mount has an "appearance like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain and in the sight of the people of Israel" (Exod 24:17). Now, in Revelation, that glory which appears like fire is manifested before the twelve tribes of the 144,000 as they stand upon the sea of glass. Its appearance is mingled with fire because the glory that radiates from God's person reflects upon that sea.

Exodus 25–27 and Revelation 15:5–8: Postscript—Sanctuary Construction

Revelation 15:5–8 is the opening of the next line of prophecy in the book. It conveys another view of activity in the heavenly sanctuary, in this case the conclusion of the work there. Even though it belongs to the succeeding line of

prophecy in the book, there is some overlap with the prophecy that precedes it in terms of Old Testament parallels. The episodes connected with the giving of the law in Exodus 19–24 described above continue with further instruction in Exodus 25–30. The particular instruction given there has to do with the construction of the sanctuary. The theme for this section is announced in Exodus 25:8: "Let them build me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." Then the instructions on how to build that sanctuary are given in the chapters that follow.

The particular connection between Revelation and Exodus here has to do with the terminology used for the sanctuary. In Revelation 15:5 it is called "the temple of the tent of witness in heaven." This kind of language has direct parallels in the sanctuary construction section of Exodus. First, it should be noted that there was not just the sanctuary or tabernacle, but there was also a tent placed over it. The hangings for the tabernacle are described in Exodus 26:1–6, while the skins for the tent over the tabernacle are described in Exodus 26:7–14.

The word used in Hebrew for "tabernacle" is *miškan*, while the word for the "tent" which extended over it as its cover is *ʿohel*, the standard Hebrew word for "tent." The LXX treats the word for "tabernacle" here and elsewhere with the Greek word *skēne*. In Exodus 26:7 the LXX has the word *skepen* for the "tent" or covering over the tabernacle, and this was composed of the *katakalumma* for the skins underneath and the *epikalumma* for the outer skins. Another word of importance here is the one used for the Ten Commandments as they were deposited in the Ark of the Covenant. This is referred to in Exodus 25:16, 21, and 22 as the Ark of the Testimony. The Hebrew word used for "testimony" is *ʿedût*, which was translated by the LXX as *maturia*, "testimony, witness."

In the phraseology of Revelation 15:5 there is reference to "the temple [*naos*] of the tabernacle [*tēs skēnēs*] of the testimony [*tou marturiou*] in heaven." Once the background of this phraseology in Exodus is realized, it becomes quite evident what is being referred to here:

Exodus:	Tent	Tabernacle	Testimony
Revelation:	Temple	Tabernacle	Testimony

There is only one difference in this terminology. Since the tent covering of the tabernacle with its animal skins does not exist in heaven, the tabernacle is located in the temple. The temple has taken its place, just as it also did on earth in Solomonic times. The Ten Commandments or the Words of the Covenant are within the inner shrine, which is in turn covered by the outer shrine—the tent in one case and the temple in the other. The only element which appears to be missing is the Ark, described in detail in Exodus but is not mentioned in Revelation 15. But it is mentioned in Revelation 11:19. There the Ark of the Covenant is seen when the temple (*naos*) of God is opened in heaven.

These two sanctuary scenes form an inclusio around this central section of Revelation (12–14). At the beginning of this section the Ark is seen when the sanctuary is opened, and at the end of this section and the beginning of the next, the reverse takes place: the sanctuary of the Ten Commandments, the testimony in the Ark, is closed for ministration until the plagues have passed. In one case that place is opened for a special work, and in the other case that special place is closed up after that work is over. The phenomena of theophany that accompanies that opening and the events which follow its close indicate that this special work involves judgment.

The parallels between the opening and the closing of the work in the sanctuary can be extended back into the parallel passages in Exodus. The close of the sanctuary work in Revelation 15:5 employs terminology for that sanctuary that has parallels from the construction of the initial earthly sanctuary in Exodus. This phraseology comes out of Exodus 25–27, especially from its Greek form in the LXX. That is the occasion when the first earthly sanctuary is constructed. Following its construction, it goes into operation for the first time after its anointing, or inauguration, in Exodus 40. That too has a polar opposite, a reverse parallel, with Revelation. The work of the heavenly sanctuary closes in Revelation 15, while the work of the first earthly sanctuary opens in Exodus 25–40. The beginning of ministry in one is related to the end of ministry in the other. The link between the two is shown by employing the same terminology for both.

Other similar features here which cannot be dealt with in detail are the use of golden bowls in Exodus 25:29 for libations which are poured out and in Revelation 15:7 for the plagues which are poured out. The angels in the heavenly scene have their parallel in the angels embroidered on the hangings of the sanctuary (Exod 26:1, 31), and their garments parallel the materials used for the hangings of the sanctuary (Exod 26:1, 31) and the vestments of the priests (Exod 28).

There is a sense in which the making of the covenant at Sinai (Exod 19–24) prepares Israel for the making of the covenant building and its furniture (Exod 25–29). In like manner, in Revelation the passages parallel to the covenant making prepare for the sanctuary and its ministry, with Revelation 14:1–15:4 leading up to the preparing for Revelation 15:5–8 and chapter 16.

Summary

This review of the parallels between Exodus and Revelation has covered five or six chapters in the earlier book and two chapters in the second. The extent to which these parallels have been drawn accurately demonstrate that the connections here are not random and isolated, but comprehensive and detailed in scope. We are dealing here with broad ranging relations that operate on several levels—those of terms, themes, and theology. The scope of these parallels may be presented in the following summary outline:

	I. Introduction	
Exodus 19 12 Tribes at Sinai Language of Theophany Ceremonial Cleansing		**Revelation 14:1–5** 12 Tribes on Sion Language of Theophany Spiritual Cleansing
	II. Body of the Message	
Exodus 20–22 Ten Commandments People's Response Covenant Code	 Apodictic Law Historical Interlude Casuistic Law	**Revelation 14:6–11** 1st Angel's Message 2nd Angel's Message 3rd Angel's Message
	III. The Witnesses	
Exodus 23A First Law of Witness Second Law of Witness		**Revelation 14:12–13** Witness of Living Saints Witness of Dead Saints
	IV. The Harvest	
Exodus 23B Sabbatical Law of Harvests Festival Law of Harvests		**Revelation 14:14–20** Harvest of the Righteous Grain Harvest of the Wicked Fruit
	V. The Curses	
Exodus 23c Upon the 7 enemies of God's people		**Revelation 15:1** 7 plagues upon the enemies of God's people
	VI. The Result	
Exodus 24b Caught up in the cloud on the mountain They see God upon the fiery firmament		**Revelation 15:2–4** Caught up to heaven itself They themselves stand on fiery firmament
	VII. The Commission	
Exodus 25–29 Build and commence the sanctuary The tent of tabernacle of testimony		**Revelation 15:5–8** Finish and leave the sanctuary The temple of tabernacle of testimony

Conclusion

If the parallels presented here have been worked out accurately, then there is clearly a structural intent operating behind them. An overall scheme has been manifested, and it has meaning and importance. What is that meaning and importance? In broad terms it may be stated that the giving of the three angels' messages and the events surrounding them relate directly to what happened at Sinai. Sion of Revelation and Sinai of Exodus are, in essence, one and the same; they partake of the same phenomena and convey similar meanings. This

speaks to the nature of the final controversy at the end of earth's history, as described in Revelation 14.

The call of the first angel's message is a call to worship. It is a call to worship God as Creator. The creator language found in the first angel's message harks directly back to the fourth commandment given at Sinai. The parallels elaborated here add two more lines of support to that interpretation. Now it can be seen that the setting of the giving of the law and the giving of the three angels' messages are described in very similar terms. The context is essentially the same, therefore, and the message of the context points in the same direction. The connection to the Ten Commandments, especially the fourth, is thus reinforced. The second point emphasized is the fact that both of these major episodes have to do with law. This is self-evident in Exodus, and it is now more evident in Revelation, through its connections with the law-giving in Exodus. Thus, it is all the more clear that the three angels' messages have to do with God's law.

In these connections the second and third angels' messages are involved. In the parallel location in the order of the text, where the Israelites' historical response to the giving of the commandments is found, the second angel's message appears. Since it tells us about the response of a body of people, it can be seen in the same light. The third angel's message is given in the form of case law, and it revolves around an issue of worship, just as the first angel's message does. Thus it may be seen as a midrash or commentary on the commandment in the message given by the earlier angel. The first angel gives his command in the positive or apodictic form, while the third angel gives a related message in the negative or casuistic form, just as the laws in the Covenant Code constitute a commentary on the Ten Commandments given previously. Thus, the case law given by the third angel should be taken as commentary on the same commandment with which the first angel dealt. Since that has been identified above as dealing especially with the fourth commandment, the third angel's message should be taken as dealing with that commandment, too, in the negative form of its antithesis.

One final point should be stressed, and that is the place the Son of man and the Lamb occupy in this narrative in Revelation. The section begins with the Lamb on Mount Sion with the saints joining Him there (Rev 14:1). It ends with the saints on the sea of glass singing a song of praise to the Lamb. The call here is not to a form of righteousness by works. It is a call to follow the Lamb wherever He leads. If His call leads the saints into conflict with the powers of earth, the saints can but persevere and follow their Saviour. He is the Lamb that was slain, and He is worthy to receive their worship because He has redeemed them by His blood (Rev 5:9). The same point is made at the foot of Mount Sinai when the blood of the covenant is sprinkled over the Israelites (Exod 24:4–8). This point is made in both of these passages. The Lamb leads at the foot of Mount Sinai in the Old Testament, and He will lead up on the Mount Sion of

Revelation, as He leads His people on to the city of God, the New Jerusalem (Rev 21–22).

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Daniel 9:27a: A Key for Understanding the Law's End in the New Testament

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The interpretation of Daniel 9 has generated a large body of scholarship in modern times.[1] This essay attempts an exegetical investigation of Dan 9:27, us-

[1]E. König, "The 'Weeks' of Daniel," *ExpTim* 13 (1902): 468–70; S. R. Driver, *The Book of Daniel* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1922); J. A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. T. Clark, 1927); D. L. Cooper, *The 70 Weeks of Daniel* (Los Angeles: Biblical Research Society, 1941); O. T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1945); R. D. Culver, *Basis for the Premillennial Interpretation of the Book of Daniel* (Th.D. Dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary, 1952); G. W. Shunk, *The Seventieth Week of Daniel* (Th.D. Dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1953); E. J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949); idem., *The Messianic Prophecies of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954); Ch. Boutflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963); H. W. Hoehner, *Chronology of the Apostolic Age* (Th.D. Dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1965); N. W. Porteous, *Daniel, A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965); H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1969); J. F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago: Moody, 1971); L. Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973); F. Zimmermann, *Daniel in Babylon* (Broadview, IL: Gibbs, 1974); J. C. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1978); J. B. Payne, "The Goal of Daniel's Seventy Weeks," *JETS* 21 (1978): 97–115; L. F. Hartman and A. A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, Anchor Bible 23 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978); G. C. Archer, "Modern Rationalism and the Book of Daniel," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 136 (1979): 129–47; A. Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel*, trans. D. Pellauer (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979); R. M. Gurney, *God in Control* (Worthing: H. E. Walter, 1980); idem., "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9:24–27," *EvQ* 53 (1981): 29–36; J. C. Whitcomb, "Daniel's Great Seventy-Weeks Prophecy: An Exegetical Insight," *GTJ* 2 (1981): 259–63; J. Doukhan, "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel: An Exegetical Study," in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, ed. A. V. Wallenkampf and W. R. Lesher (Washington: Review & Herald, 1981), 251–76; idem., *Drinking at the Sources* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1981); idem., *Daniel: The Vision of the End* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews UP, 1987); J. J. Collins, *Daniel, First Maccabees, Second Maccabees, with an Excursus on the Apocalyptic Genre*, OTM 16 (Wilmington, DE: M. Glazier, 1981); idem., *Daniel with an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*, FOTL 20 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984); G. F. Hasel, "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9:24–27," *Ministry Insert*

ing textual, linguistic, literary, structural, and contextual study of major terms and expressions. I will examine the literary structure of Dan 9:27a in the Hebrew Bible and analyze the contribution this prophetic text makes to our understanding of the law's end—the end of the sacrificial ritual system of the OT, as revealed in the NT. This text is the key to understanding such NT texts as Eph 2:13–16 and Col 2:14–17 and to understanding how the law was abolished by the Messiah, Jesus Christ, in the NT.

The Context of the Book of Daniel

The book of Daniel, especially the prophetic part, has many common patterns. The connections between chapters 2 and 7–12 in the book of Daniel are evident. They deal with similar motifs and employ similar language. Eschatological themes which occur in these chapters include: (1) the idea of an end of sin and the establishment of everlasting righteousness; (2) the role of Messiah, the coming of "one like a son of man," and the Michael figure; (3) the concept of judgment; (4) apocalyptic woes, deliverance, and the resurrection; and (5) the end of the age and the eschatological kingdom.[2] These themes give evidence of the strong unity of the book, of the interrelationship among its parts.

Daniel 9:27 is connected with the rest of the book most directly through its relationship to Dan 8. It is significant that most of the words in our text occur-

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(May, 1976); Idem., "The Book of Daniel: Evidences Relating to Persons and Chronology," *AUSS* 19 (1981): 47–49; idem., "Interpretations of the Chronology of the Seventy Weeks," in *The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy*, F. B. Holbrook (ed.), Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 3 (Washington: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 3–63; idem., "The Hebrew Masculine Plural for Weeks in the Expression 'Seventy Weeks' in Daniel 9:24," *AUSS* 31 (1993): 107–20; W. H. Shea, "The Relationship between the Prophecies of Daniel 8 and Daniel 9," in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, A. V. Wallenkampf and W. R. Lesher (eds.) (Washington: Review & Herald, 1981), 228–50; idem., "Poetic Relations of the Time Periods in Daniel 9:25," in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, ed. A. V. Wallenkampf and W. R. Lesher (Washington: Review & Herald, 1981), 277–82; idem., *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 1 (Washington: Review & Herald Pub., 1982); idem., "The Prophecy of Daniel 9:24–27," in *The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy*, F. B. Holbrook (ed.), Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 3 (Washington: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 75–118; idem., "Unity of Daniel" in *Symposium on Daniel*, F. B. Holbrook (ed.), Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 2 (Washington: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 165–255; J. C. Jeske, *Daniel* (Milwaukee,: Northwestern, 1985); H. Bultema, *Commentary on Daniel* (Grands Rapids: Kregel Pub., 1988); M. Kalafian, *The Impact of the Book of Daniel on Christology: A Critical Review of the Prophecy of the 'Seventy Weeks' of the Book of Daniel* (Ph.D. Dissertation, New York University, 1988); J. E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1989); M. H. Farris, *The Formative Interpretations of the Seventy Weeks of Daniel* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1990); D. H. Lurie, "A New Interpretation of Daniel's 'Sevens' and the Chronology of the Seventy 'Sevens,'" *JETS* 33 (1990): 303–09; B. Owusu-Antwi, *The Chronology of Daniel 9:24–*27, ATSDS 2 (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Adventist Theological Society Pub., 1995).

[2]For a detailed analysis of these eschatological motifs see A. J. Ferch, "Authorship, Theology, and Purpose of Daniel," in *Symposium on Daniel*, ed. F. B. Holbrook, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 2 (Washington: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 71–81.

ring elsewhere in Daniel are found only in chapters 8 or 10–12. This indicates that these chapters constitute a specific unit.

The Context of Daniel 9

One of the most remarkable and characteristic expressions in Dan 9 appears through the use of the verb *bîn* and its derived form *hēbîn* ("to understand" and "to cause to understand"). In Dan 9:2 appears the word *bîn*: "In the first year . . . I Daniel understood [*bîn*]" used to show that Daniel was seeking in the books to "understand" the prophecy of the 70 years of Jeremiah. The next use of this word comes in Dan 9:22, anouncing the revelation of the 70 weeks. Doukhan comments that this usage suggests a kind of internal bridge between the two prophecies mentioned in Dan 9 (70 years and 70 weeks), and also with Dan 8 (vs. 5, 15, 16, 17, 19, 23, 27). Moreover, he points that it is significant that the last verb used by the angel in 9:23 to introduce the prophecy of the 70 weeks is the same imperative form *hābēn* as in Dan 8:17, where the angel introduces his answer to the question of Daniel concerning the precise time of the 2300 evenings and mornings.[3]

The introduction and conclusion of Dan 9 (vs. 1–4 and 20–27) deal with the same concerns (the salvation of Israel and the number 70). That this same number is used at the beginning and end of the chapter indicates a strong internal relationship within Dan 9. It follows that the two periods of time (70 years in the introduction, and 70 weeks in the conclusion) are historical events, and they have theological implications. Between the introduction and conclusion of the chapter, the author places a prayer that reveals his main thought (Dan 9:5–19).

Daniel is concerned about the sin of his people, which he relates to the exile (Dan 9:5, 7, 16). He cries out to God and asks Him to intervene in His mercy and to forgive. He prays for Jerusalem—for the sanctuary—that it may recover its meaning and its glory of old (9:17–19). This prayer of "confession" and "supplication" (9:20) God answers by means of Gabriel: "as soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision" (9:23).[4] God makes known to him that within a certain time sin will be atoned for and justice will be brought in forever (9:24). God answers that within a certain time a word will be pronounced on behalf of the erection of the city but that afterwards the city will be devastated by a war and destroyed (9:25–26).

In Dan 9:17, 26 appear the noun masculine with suffix *miqᵉdāškā* ("on your sanctuary") and *wᵉhaqqōdeš* ("and the sanctuary") to establish the theological focus of Dan 9, and especially of Dan 9:27a: the sanctuary, i.e., the sanctuary and its sacrificial system theology. Finally, in Dan 9:21 occur the noun feminine construct and the noun masculine *minḥaṭ ʿāreb* ("the evening sacrifice") with the

[3]Doukhan, 255.
[4]NIV.

Hebrew word *minḥaṭ*, one of key words of Dan 9:27a. These have important implications for the fate of sacrificial theology.

The Literary Structure of Dan 9:27a

The literary structure of Daniel 9—especially vs. 24–27—has been analyzed by many scholars.[5] The literary structure of Dan 9:27a presents three microstructures or microsections in antithetical chiasm: A, B, C // C′, B′, A′. After examining this chiasm, we will study each microstructure in turn.

A Then he shall confirm (make strong) *wᵉhigbîr*

B a covenant with many *bᵉrît lārabîm*

C for one week *šābûaʿ ʿeḥād*

C′ But in the middle of the week *waḥᵃṣî haššābûaʿ*

B′ to sacrifice and offering *zebaḥ ûminḥâ*

A′ he shall bring an end.[6] *yašbît*

A || A′: Then He Shall Confirm (Make Strong) || He Shall Bring an End

First, we will consider the antithetical microsections A//A′. In the microsection A there are three antecedents that have been suggested as likely antecedents of the pronoun "he," the "he" who confirms a covenant, namely, "the Messiah, the Prince" (v. 25),[7] "Messiah" (v. 26a),[8] and "Prince" (v. 26b).[9] Syntactically, the nearest antecedent usually is the subject. However, the Prince of v. 26b cannot be the antecedent because it is neither the subject nor the object of the preceding clause, "and the people of the prince who shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." The "Prince" is subordinated to the subject of the clause "the people." Nevertheless, "the people" is plural in sense, though grammatically singular in Hebrew, and thus cannot be the antecedent of the "he" in v. 27.

"The Messiah, the Prince" (v. 25) is farther away from the "he" (v. 27) than the "Messiah" in the previous verse (v. 26a). Therefore, taking into consideration the syntax of the passage, the "Messiah" (v. 26a) is most naturally the ante-

[5]For example, Doukhan, 251–76; Owusu-Antwi, 79–88, 173–78; Shea, "Poetic Relations," 277–82; idem., "Prophecy of Daniel 9:24–27," 75–118; idem., "Unity of Daniel," 165–255.

[6]NKJV.

[7]Gurney, *God in Control*, 114; Shea, "Prophecy of Daniel 9:24–27," 95.

[8]Young, *Prophecy of Daniel*, 209; Allis, 122.

[9]Driver, 141; Lacocque, 197–98; Hartman and Di Lella, 252; Archer, "Modern Rationalism," 129–47; Walvoord, 233–34; Wood, 257; Baldwin, 171.

cedent of the "he" in v. 27.[10] Thus, it is "the Messiah" of v. 26 who is cut off "in the middle of the week" who is the "he" who is the subject of v. 27a, the "he" who shall make strong a covenant for the many.

The noun *māšîaḥ* comes from *mšḥ*, which means "to smear, anoint."[11] *Māšîaḥ* is a noun of the *qātîl* formation. It is assigned the same meaning as the Qal passive participle, "anointed,"[12] except that when it is used as a noun it is assigned the meaning "anointed one."[13] This noun is used thirty-eight times in the OT for different persons.[14] The term is used mostly in the OT for kings (Saul, David, Cyrus, and others) who are respectively "the Anointed."[15] It is also used to refer to a High Priest,[16] and with reference to fathers (that is, the patriarchs).[17] In the book of Daniel the term *māšîaḥ* appears only twice.[18] In Dan 9:25–26, we find the only absolute use of *māšîaḥ* in the OT. Here it is a noun without any article or suffix—it is used as a proper name.[19]

The Niphal imperfect *yikkārēṭ* ("cut off") in the phrase "the Messiah shall be cut off" (v. 26), designates a violent death of the Messiah.[20] The Niphal Hebrew verbal form is usually used in the sense of "be cut off, be removed, be destroyed,"[21] and intensively in the sense of "exterminate."[22] This formula is

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[10]Young, *Prophecy of Daniel*, 208.

[11]BDB, 602; W. L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1971), 218, "spread a liquid (oil, paint) over, anoint"; E. Jenni and C. Westermann (eds.), *Diccionario Teologico del Antiguo Testamento* (Madrid: Cristianidad, 1978), 1:1243–44, "anointed"; KBL, 573; E. Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English* (Jerusalem: U of Haifa, 1987), 391; G. J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren, and H. Fabry (eds.) *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (TDOT), trans. D. E. Green and D. W. Stott (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 9:44; R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer and B. K. Waltke (eds.) *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (TWOT) (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 1:530, "anoint, spread a liquid."

[12]See W. Gesenius–E. Kautzch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, trans. A. E. Cowley (GKC) (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), 50a–f; see also P. Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, Subsidia Biblica 14 (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1996), 1:147; B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ill.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 88; C. H. J. van der Merwe, J. A. Naudé and J. H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 162–63.

[13]BDB, 603; D. J. A. Clines (ed.) *The Dictionary of Clasical Hebrew* (DCH) (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 4:466; Holladay, 218; Jenni and Westermann, 1:1243–44; KBL, 574; Klein, 391; TDOT, 9:44; TWOT, 1:530.

[14]A. Even-Shoshan (ed.) *A New Concordance of the Old Testament* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1989), 717.

[15]30 times.

[16]KBL, 574 (6 times).

[17]1 Chron 16:22; Ps 105:15 (twice).

[18]Dan 9:25, 26.

[19]GKC, 131a; Joüon and Muraoka, 2:477–78; Waltke and O'Connor, 229; Van der Merwe, Naudé and Kroeze, 228.

[20]Cf. Gen 9:11; Lev 7:20; Deut 20:20; Jer 11:19; Ps 37:9; Prov 2:22.

[21]BDB, 503–04; DCH, 4:465; Holladay, 165; Jenni and Westermann, 1:1171–76; Klein, 288; TDOT, 7:339–52; TWOT, 1:456–57.

commonly called an "extermination formula" or "excommunication formula."[23] The Niphal is found 24 times in conection with this formula.[24]

The structure of the passage, as analyzed by J. Doukhan[25] and W. H. Shea,[26] indicates that the same Messiah is meant in vs. 25 and 26. According to the structure, *yikkārēṭ* ("cut off") implies the idea of suddenness. The nature of this act (sudden destruction) points, therefore, to a specific moment in time (midst of the week), rather than to a duration of time (half of the week).[27]

The OT concept of a future figure, the Suffering Servant, includes a violent death of that figure. "He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people He was stricken, and they made His grave with the wicked."[28] This passage in the book of Isaiah (Isa 53:6–12) has thematic and terminological connections with Dan 9:26–27: (1) the atoning death (Isa 53:6, 8, 12 // Dan 9:27), and (2) *gāzar* ("cut," Isa 53:8),[29] is synonymous with *kāraṭ* ("cut," [Dan 9:26]).

Many scholars identify the Messiah as Jesus Christ.[30] The designation "Messiah" in Dan 9:25 and 26 in its absolute usage without the article seems to imply that "the Messiah" must be known. This absolute usage of the Messianic title, coupled with the Messianic nature of Dan 9:24–27, seems to fit the OT Messianic expectation and appropriately points to Jesus Christ as the referent in Dan 9:27.

The verb *higbîr* is a Hiphil perfect form used in the regular verb position. The Hiphil *waw* consecutive verb *higbîr* is causative, a construction in which a cause produces an event. The Hiphil *waw* consecutive verb *higbîr* must then be translated "and he shall make strong." Thus the object, "covenant," receives the action of the verb. Therefore, the proper translation should be "and he shall make strong a covenant."[31] The root *gbr* of the Hiphil verb *higbîr* and its derivatives appear 328 times in the OT.[32] The verb occurs about 25 times.[33] The verb

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[22]TDOT, 7:342.

[23]Ibid., 347.

[24]Gen 17:14; Exod 12:15, 19; 30:33, 38; 31:14; Lev 7:20, 21, 25, 27; 17:4, 9, 14; 18:29; 19:8; 20:17, 18; 22:3; 23:29; Num 9:13; 15:30, 31; 19:13, 20. The *kāraṭ* verb appears 73 times in the Niphal of 288 times that it occurs in the OT (see Even-Shoshan, 563–64).

[25]See Doukhan, 260–62.

[26]See Shea, "Prophecy of Daniel 9:24–27," 90–92.

[27]Doukhan, 262.

[28]Isa 53:8–9, NKJV.

[29]See BDB, 160; DCH, 2:341; Holladay, I 59; Jenni and Westermann, 1:1173; Klein, 96; TDOT, 2:459–61; TWOT, 1:158.

[30]Archer, 113; Boutflower, 191; Bultema, 286; Gurney, "The Seventy Weeks," 31; Jeske, 181; Shea, "Prophecy of Daniel 9:24–27," 89; Wood, 251; Young, *Prophecy of Daniel*, 203; Zimmermann, 137.

[31]See Shea, "Prophecy of Daniel 9:24–27," 95: "The translation sometimes given—"he shall make a strong covenant"—would have been more naturally expressed by an adjectival construction."

[32]TWOT, 1:148.

has been defined as "be strong, mighty,"[34] "be mighty,"[35] "to be strong,"[36] "prevail, be mighty, have strength, be great,"[37] "be superior, prevail, succeed increase,"[38] "be superior, strong."[39] Apart from Dan 9:27, the Hiphil form, which denotes "be strong,"[40] "make strong, cause to prevail,"[41] occurs in only one place in the OT, Ps 12:5[4].

The term *higbîr* suggests that the covenant to be made strong was already in existence.[42] The typical word used for the making of new covenants is *kārat*.[43] The term was used of covenants because in the process of making a covenant, an animal was cut off or cut in two and the parties passed between as a ratification of the covenant.[44] In Dan 9:24–27 the verb has connotations relating to atonement (v. 24), the covenant (v. 27), and the ceasing of the sacrificial system (v. 27). B. Owusu-Antwi has suggested that "cut off" is used in Dan 9:26 in a cultic sense, indicating covenantal connotations that include atoning and sacrificial aspects, as well as covenant-making and covenant-ratifying overtones.[45]

In microsection A′, a clear antithetical parallelism appears because the verb *yašbît*, a Hiphil imperfect form used in the regular verb position, is antithetical to the verb *higbîr* ("shall confirm [make strong]")[46] of microsection A.[47] Besides, the Hiphil verb *yašbît* is causative, a construction in which a cause produces an event. The Hiphil verb *yašbît,* then, must be translated, "he shall cause to cease (bring an end)." Thus, the object, "sacrifice and offering," receives the action of the verb. The word *yašbît* implies a definitive effect.[48] It is significant that this word is used mostly to designate an eschatalogical cessation.[49]

B || B′: A Covenant with Many || To Sacrifice and Offering

Now let us analyze microsections B//B′. Microsection B presents *b^{e}rît,* a noun feminine singular and the direct object of the verb *higbîr*. The term *b^{e}rît*

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[33] Even-Shoshan, 221; Jenni and Westermann, 1:569; TDOT, 2:367, has 24 times; TWOT, 1:148 has 26.

[34]BDB, 149.

[35]DCH, 2:312.

[36]TDOT, 2:368.

[37]TWOT, 1:148.

[38]KBL, 167.

[39]Jenni and Westermann, 1:569

[40]Holladay, 54.

[41]TDOT, 2:368.

[42]Shea, "Prophecy of Daniel 9:24–27," 95.

[43]See for example, TDOT, 7:339–52; TWOT, 1:456–57.

[44]See G. F. Hasel, "The Meaning of the Animal Rite in Gen 15," *JSOT* 19 (1981): 61–78; E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, Anchor Bible 1 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 112.

[45]Owusu-Antwi, 167.

[46]Hiphil perfect.

[47]BDB, 991.

[48] Cf. Deut 32:26.

[49] See especially Ezek 7:24; 12:23; 16:41; 23:27, 48; 26:13; 30:50; 34:10, 25; etc.

appears in Dan 9:27a in the statement: "Then he shall confirm a covenant [*b^{e}rît*] with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering."[50] Both the LXX and Theodotion render *b^{e}rît* with *diathēkēn*, "will or testament,"[51] while the Vulgate has *pactum*. All the major English versions translate *b^{e}rît* with "covenant."[52]

Lārabîm (noun masculine plural) is a prepositional phrase acting as the indirect object of the verb *higbîr*.[53] *Rabîm* ("many") occurs 13 times in the book of Daniel.[54] In Daniel it always refers to people, except in Dan 9:18, where it refers to God. For instance, in Dan 8:25 "many," not all, are destroyed by the "little horn."[55] In Dan 12:2: "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt."[56] There the many is partitive from "those who sleep in the dust of the earth." In Dan 9:27, "the many" is used in contrast to those who do not benefit from the "making strong of the covenant." In Dan 12:10, a parallel usage can be found: "Many will be purged, purified and refined; but the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand."[57] Here "many" is used in contradiction to "the wicked." The same meaning is found in Isa 53:11: "As a result of the anguish of His soul, he will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities."[58] In both Isa 53:11 and Dan 9:27 the same term and form, *lārabîm*, is used. In Isa 53:11 *lārabîm* specifies those who are "justified" through the ministry and death of the Suffering Servant. The partitive nature of the "many" in Dan 9:27, the Messianic nature of the passage, the significance of the verb *higbîr*, and the covenantal implications of the passage point to the meaning of "the many" in Dan 9:27 as it is found in Isa 53:11.[59] Therefore, "the many" in Dan 9:27 refers to the faithful ones of Israel for whom "the Messiah" fulfilled the covenant.

B^{e}rît in the Old Testament. The basic terms for "covenant" used in Hebrew are *ʾalah* ("oath") and *b^{e}rît* ("covenant"). In Akkadian the words *riksu* and *māmitu* and in Hittite *išiul* and *lingai* express pledge and commitment, which actually create the covenant.[60] The word *b^{e}rît* appears 283 times in the OT.[61] The

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[50]NKJV.

[51]A. Rahlfs (ed.), *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1949).

[52]KJV; NKJV; RSV; NRSV; JB; NIV.

[53]BDB, I 912; Holladay, I 330; Jenni and Westermann, 2:900–14; Klein, 601; TWOT, 2:827.

[54]Dan 8:25; 9:18, 27; 11:10, 14, 18, 26, 33, 39; 12:2, 3, 4, 10.

[55]Dan 11:14, 26, where not everybody but "many fall down slain" (NASB). In Dan 11:18, 39, the implication seems to be great numbers. It always functions with a partitive connotation.

[56]NKJV.

[57]NASB. Cf. Dan 11:33; 12:3.

[58]NASB.

[59]Owusu-Antwi, 184.

[60]See TDOT, 2:253–79.

[61]See Even-Shoshan, 205–06.

first occurrence of the term "covenant" is found in Gen 6:18, where God established a covenantal relationship with Noah. The objective of this covenant, initiated by God, is the redemption of Noah and those who would enter the ark with him according to the directions of God.[62] In Gen 9:8–17, the Noachic covenant is expanded by God after the deluge to become the only covenant in the Bible that is universal in scope. In Gen 15:18 God makes a covenant with Abraham. This covenant is also mentioned in Gen 17. Like the Noachic covenant, the Abrahamic covenant is initiated by God. The Abrahamic covenant seems to have bilateral obligations. *Bᵉrît* is used in connection with a treaty or agreement between equal parties like Abraham and the Amorites,[63] unequal parties like Israel and the Gibeonites,[64] between states and their representatives,[65] kings and their subjects,[66] two households like Jacob's and Laban's,[67] individuals like David and Jonathan,[68] and between God and his people.[69]

***Bᵉrît* in the Book of Daniel**. The author of Dan 9:4–14 points to unfaithfulness to the covenant stipulations as the cause of the exile to Babylon and the faithfulness of Yahweh to the covenant as the basis for this petition (Dan 9:4, 15–16).

The term *bᵉrît* occurs 7 times in the book of Daniel. All seven occurrences are concentrated in chaps. 9 and 11.[70] Daniel 11:22 mentions a "prince of the covenant." Scholars generally identify "the prince of the covenant" in Dan 11:22 with the "Messiah" who is cut off in Dan 9:26.[71] This identification is to be supported since the term rendered "prince" is *nāgid*, the same term used in Dan 9:26.

In Dan 9:4, where the word *bᵉrît* first appears in the book of Daniel, the covenant is definitely the covenant of God with His people, for Daniel states in his prayer: "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his *covenant* [*bᵉrît*] of love with all who love him and obey his commands." The passage containing

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[62]The reports concerning such commitments normally start from a relationship. They normally include a record of negotiations, formulation of terms, and a statement that the act of making *bᵉrît* was actually performed. Thus the negotiations end with a solemn ratification of the terms. The terms normally apply to both parties, and the act is commonly the work of both. Indeed, even unilateral terms (i.e., they empower or tie one party, e.g., 2 Sam 5:3; Ezek 17:11–21) could depend on a common act. It is tied up with a complex of recognized relationships, negotiations, terms which relate one party to another, and a common act. The word *bᵉrît* carries these overtones. It is relational.

[63]Gen 14:13.

[64]Josh 9.

[65]1 Kgs 5:12; 15:19; 20:34.

[66]2 Sam 5:3; 2 Kgs 11:17.

[67]Gen 31:44–47.

[68]1 Sam 18:3; 20:8.

[69]E.g., Gen 6:18; 9:8–17; 15:18; 17:1–14; Exod 19:5; 24:7; Deut 7:1–8; 2 Sam 7:12–16; 23:5. See TWOT, 1:128–29.

[70]Dan 9:4, 27; 11:22, 28, 30 (2x), 32.

[71]See Hartman and Di Lella, 252, 295; Lacocque, 226; Porteous, 142, 166; Montgomery, 381, 451.

the prayer of Daniel is filled with covenant terminology. For example, Dan 9 is the only chapter in the book of Daniel where the covenant name Yahweh appears.[72]

Microsection B′ presents the terms *zebaḥ* ("sacrifice") and *minḥâ* ("offering"), appearing in parallelism with *bᵉrît* ("covenant"). We will now analyze these terms, for they serve as a key to understanding the relationship between the covenant and the law's end in the NT.

Zebaḥ in Ancient Near Eastern Literature. The root *zbḥ* is found in all Semitic languages. The Akkadian noun *zibu(m)* I means "food offering."[73] Elsewhere it is a general term for sacrifice, so that a priestly title can also be derived from it. The Ugaritic *zbḥ* is very similar to Hebrew *zbḥ*. Both the verb and the noun refer to a sacrificial ritual comprising slaughtering, a libation, and a meal or a festival meal at which meat was consumed. Moreover, Hebrew and Ugaritic also share corresponding word pairs, such as *dbḥ*/*ʿšrt* = *zbḥ-mʿśr*. Also similar to to the Hebrew *zbḥ* are Old South Arabic *dbḥ* ("offer animal sacrifice"), Ethiopic *zabḥa* ("slaughter, sacrifice") and Arabic *ḏabaḥa* ("slaughter, sacrifice").[74]

Zebaḥ in the Old Testament.The noun *zebaḥ* appears 160 times in the OT.[75] The word *zebaḥ* is the name of a specific ritual, namely, *animal sacrifice*, but it can refer also to the celebration of the ritual (sacrificial festival or meal) or the animal sacrificed (or its flesh). Everywhere else the notion of sacrifice is expressed by a series of specific rituals comprising at least two members[76]; in particular, the doublet *ʿôlāh-zebaḥ* occurs frequently.[77] The following doublets also occur: *zebaḥ-šᵉlāmîm* ("peace offering"),[78] *zebaḥ-tôdhāh* ("thank-offering"),[79] *zebaḥ-hayyāmîm* ("yearly sacrifice"),[80] etc.[81] It is assigned the general meaning "sacrifice."[82]

***Minḥâ* in Ancient Near Eastern Literature.** The term *minḥâ* is only infrequently attested outside the Hebrew Bible. The earliest extant occurrences point to Ugarit, where *mnḥ* occurs with the general meaning "gift, tribute,"[83] whereas the meaning "sacrifice, offering" posited by Cyrus Gordon cannot be derived

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[72]Vs. 2, 4, 10, 13, 14, 20.

[73]J. Black, A. George and N. Postgate (eds.) *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* (CDA), SANTAG 5 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999), 447.

[74]TDOT, 4:10–11.

[75]53 times are in legal contexts, including 34 in Leviticus.

[76]Lev 7:37; Deut 12:6; Isa 1:11; Prov 15:8; etc.

[77]Ex 10:25; Deut 12:6; 1 S 15:22; Hos 6:6; etc.

[78]48 times (the sacrificial list in Num 7 uses *zebaḥ-šᵉlāmîm* 13 times).

[79]6 times.

[80]3 times.

[81]TDOT, 4:12.

[82]BDB, 257; DCH, 3:78–80; Holladay, 86; Klein, 193; TWOT, 1:233.

[83]TDOT, 8:409.

from these few occurrences.[84] Late Egyptian attests *mnḥt* with the meaning "gift of homage." *Mnḥt* II ("sacrifice, offering"), in the form of a stela, a temple, or a vegetable gift, is profusely attested both in the Elephantine Aramaic papyri and in Phoenician-Punic and Neo-Punic inscriptions. Finally, the root is also attested in the Arabic *manaḥa* ("to give, loan") and *minḥat* ("gift"). Rabbinic literature attests only the noun *minḥa*, in the Targumim *minḥāṭā'*, with the meanings "gifts, sacrificial offering, especially cereal offering,"[85] and figuratively, "the time of the afternoon sacrifice."[86]

***Minḥâ* in the Old Testament**. The noun *minḥâ* occurs 211 times in the OT, and twice in the Aramaic sections (Ezra 7:17; Dan 2:46).[87] In half of its occurrences it appears undeclined in the singular absolute state with[88] or without[89] the article, and it also occurs in the singular construct state.[90] The LXX renders *minḥâ* with *thusia*,[91] *thusiasma*,[92] *holokautōma*, and *prosphora*.[93] In language related to sacrifice and offering it does not differentiate between *minḥâ* and *zebaḥ*, rendering both terms with *thusia*.[94]

It is assigned the meaning "gift, tribute, offering, sacrifice."[95] The term *minḥâ* acquired the specialized meaning of a sacrifice or offering which was to be a "pleasing odor" to the deity. The *minḥâ* constitutes the high point of the sacrificial ritual, since it insures that God is able to smell the pleasing fragance of the offering. The term *minḥâ* frequently occurs in connection with or parallel to *zebaḥ* and *ʿôlâ*.[96] In the official cult, the *minḥâ* was normally connected with animal sacrifice.[97] The *minḥâ* is used commonly to refer to cereal offerings (flour, fruits, grain, etc.). Together these two words *zebaḥ* ("sacrifice") and *minḥâ* ("offering") encompass all animal and nonanimal sacrifices—the sacrificial system as a whole.

In the writings of Qumran the term *minḥâ* appears concerned with the community rule and is picked up in a few fragments from 4Q with clear invocation of OT sacrificial terminology.[98] The Temple scroll also uses it.[99] The Ara-

[84]C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*, AnOr 38 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965, 1967[2]), n° 1500.

[85]TDOT, 8:410.

[86]Cf. 1 Kgs 18:29, 36; 2 Kgs 3:20; 16:13, 15; Isa 43:23; Mal 1:10, 11.

[87]Even-Shoshan, 680–81.

[88]40 times.

[89]73 times.

[90]23 times.

[91]142 times.

[92]Twice.

[93]Once each.

[94]TDOT, 8:411.

[95]BDB, 585; Holladay, 202; Klein, 357; TWOT, 1:514.

[96]TDOT, 8:417.

[97]Jgs 6:19; 13:19; 1 Sam 1:24.

[98]4 times.

[99]40 times.

maic 1QapGen contains two occurrences referring to Abraham's sacrifices. Qumran attests both "morning" (11QT 13:15) and "evening" *minḥâ* (17:7).[100]

Sacrifice, Offering, Isaiah 53 and the New Testament. In Isaiah 53 the Servant of Yahweh suffers vicariously and is made an offering for sin (v. 10). The word used here is *ʾāšām* ("guilt offering")[101] In Isa 53 the sacrifices find their fulfillment in the Servant of Yahweh. The substitutionary nature of the sacrifice of the Servant of Yahweh is emphasized in Isa 53:5[102]: "But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed."[103] In Isa 53 the animal sacrifice is replaced by the ultimate sacrifice of the Servant of Yahweh, who bears the sins and the punishment of sin for humankind. He is "stricken" and "afflicted" (v. 4), "pierced through for our transgressions" and "crushed for our iniquities" (v. 5), "led to slaughter like a lamb" (v. 7), "cut off" (v. 8), and "assigned a grave to be with wicked men" (v. 9).

Jesus applied the prophecy of Isa 53 to Himself in Mark 10:45 and by so doing declared His death as the antitypical fulfillment of Israelite sacrifices. The two passages are connected by common expressions, as is evident in the LXX of Isa 53 and the Greek of Mark 10:45: *(para)didonai* ("to give"), *psuchē autou* ("his life/soul"), and *polloi* ("many"). This suggests that Jesus is alluding to the prophecy of Isaiah. Furthermore, the substitutionary theme that pervades Isa 53 is also evident in Mark 10:45 in the use of the preposition *anti* "for," which has the meaning of "in place of."[104] The concept of ransom, *lutron*, which denotes the price that Christ pays on behalf of many,[105] also refers back to Isa 53. It is evident that Christ fulfills the role of "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Other sayings of Jesus that allude to Isa 53 and depict Jesus' understanding of Himself as the sacrificial lamb are the Last Supper sayings recorded in Matt 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:15–20.

In these texts Jesus makes the statement: "This is My blood of the covenant [*diathēkēs*], which is to be shed on behalf of many [*pollon*] for forgiveness of sins."[106] This is the same covenantal language one finds in Dan 9:27a. Jesus' blood is shed, like the OT sacrifices, for the forgiveness of sins, and thus for the restoration of the covenant relationship. Paul also understood the death of Christ in terms of the Israelite sacrificial system. In Eph 5:2 Paul refers to the death of Christ with the terminology of accepted sacrifice used in the OT.[107] Christ "gave

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[100]TDOT, 8:420–21.

[101]BDB, 79–80: "The Messianic servant offers himself as an אשם in compensation for the sins of the people, interposing for them as their substitute Isa 53:10;" DCH, 1:415; Holladay, 29–30; Jenni and Westermann, 1:375–83; Klein, 58; TDOT, 1:429–37; TWOT, 1:78–79.

[102]See also vs. 6 and 10.

[103]NASB.

[104]TDNT, 4:342.

[105]Ibid., 4:340–43.

[106]Matt 26:28, NASB; cf. Mark 14:24; Luke 22:19.

[107]See Gen 8:21; Exod 29:18, 25, 41; Lev 1:9, 13, 17; 2:9; 4:31; Num 15:3, 7.

up himself on our behalf as an offering [*prosphoran*] and a sacrifice [*thusian*]," which he describes as "an odor of sweet smell" (*osmēn euōdias*).

The book of Hebrews addresses the typological nature of the OT sacrifices and offerings that meet their antitype in the sacrifice of Jesus. The author is obviously concerned to emphasize the sufficiency of the one-time sacrifice of Jesus Christ in contrast to the repetitious offerings of the Levitical system. This is evident in the original language by the tenses the author employs in Heb 8:3: "Every high priest is appointed *to offer* [*prospherein*, present infinitive] gifts and sacrifices [*thusias*, noun accusative]; hence it is necessary for this priest also to have something *to offer* [*prosenegkē*, aorist subjunctive]." The first "to offer" in the present tense denotes the continual, repetitive sacrificing of the earthly high priests. The second "to offer" in the aorist tense indicates the once-for-all-time nature of Christ's sacrifice on the cross.[108]

In Heb 9:13–14, the blood of the animal sacrifices is contrasted with the blood of Christ, and He is presented as the unblemished and sufficient sacrifice. The better blood of Christ, more efficacious than all sacrifices, able to provide thoroughgoing cleansing and access to the very presence of God—this is the author's leading point. The "blood" is the chief theme of the sustained theological argument of Heb 9:1–10:18. We find also mentioned daily sacrifices (9:9–10), the sacrifice of the red heifer (9:13), the sacrifices at the inauguration of the covenant with Israel (9:18–20), and the generalized "sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (10:8, 11). In Heb 10:1–18, the old sacrifices are characterized as the shadow of the antitypical sacrifice of Christ that caused the old sacrifices to cease.[109] The intent of the author is to show that Calvary is the antitype of all the sacrifices of the OT.

Since the OT in anticipation, saw the sacrifice of the Servant of Yahweh as vicarious and final (Isa 53), and the NT interprets only the death of Christ as ending the OT sacrifices (Heb 10), then the event of Christ's death must be the event that would cause sacrifices and offerings to cease, as mentioned in Dan 9:27a. It is tenable, then, to conclude that the event that would happen in the midst of the seventieth week to cause the ceasing of sacrifice and offering was the cutting off of the Messiah mentioned in Dan 9:26a.

C || C′: For One Week || But in the Middle of the Week

To conclude this analysis, we will consider the central microsections C//C′ of the chiastic structure of Dan 9:27a. In microsection C appears *šābûaʿ ʿeḥād*, "for one week" an adverbial phrase showing the time for the confirmation process. The terms *šābûaʿ* and *ʿeḥād* are the noun masculine singular[110] and numeral

[108]F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 164.

[109]Outside chapters 9 and 10, we find other references to sacrifice: "gifts and sacrifices for sins (5:1–3); daily sacrifices for sins (7:27); "the blood of the covenant" (10:29); Abel's sacrifice (11:4); the blood of the Passover (11:28); and the blood of the new covenant (12:24).

[110]BDB, 988.

masculine singular forms,[111] respectively. Both LXX and Theodotion render the Hebrew term *šābûaʿ* in Dan 9:27 with the Greek term *hebdomas*. The term *hebdomas* occurs 10 times in the LXX outside of the book of Daniel.[112] The Greek versions consistently use the term *hebdomas* outside the book of Daniel to designate the regular "week." In the book of Daniel, the term *hebdomas* in Dan 10:2, 3 also means regular weeks of seven full days. In the Greek versions of the LXX and Theodotion the rendering of *šābûaʿ* in Dan 9:24–27 means "seventy weeks, week."

Šābûaʿ has the basic meaning of "unit (period) of seven,"[113] or a "week."[114] However, scholars list the first meaning of *šābûaʿ* as "a period of seven days, week."[115] The second meaning listed is usually in reference to only Dan 9:24–27, which is seen as "seven periods of years."[116] This seems to indicate that the word *šābûaʿ* has a special meaning in Dan 9:24–27 different from the ordinary primary meaning attached to the term in the OT.[117]

The various forms of *šābûaʿ* appear 19 times in the Hebrew Bible.[118] Eleven of the 19 occurrences are outside the book of Daniel.[119] Outside Daniel each occurrence of *šābûaʿ* ("week") has the meaning of a regular week, a period of seven days.[120] The term *šābûaʿ* occurs 8 times in the Book of Daniel.[121] Six of the 8 occurrences are in Dan 9:24–27. Two occurrences outside Dan 9:24–27 are present in Dan 10:2, 3. In all the 19 cases *šābûaʿ* is consistently used in a temporal sense to signify "week" in the sense of a regular, literal seven-day period.

The study of the usage of *šābûaʿ* in the OT and in the book of Daniel, as well as the interpretation of the Greek versions, shows that the biblical usage is consistently in reference to the regular seven-day week.

The noun *šābûaʿ* in Dan 9:24–27 means regular "week(s)," as has been established, but interpreters accept unanimously that the events outlined in Dan

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[111]BDB, 25.

[112]Exod 34:22; Lev 23:15, 16; 25:8; Num 28:26; Deut 16:9 (2x), 10, 16; 2 Chron 8:13.

[113]BDB, 988; Holladay, 358; KBL, 940.

[114]BDB, 988; Holladay, 358; KBL, 940; Klein, 635; TWOT, 2:899.

[115]BDB, 988; Holladay, 358; KBL, 940; Klein, 635; TWOT, 2:899.

[116]See BDB, 989; Klein, 635.

[117]For an analysis of the different suggestions about the meaning of the term *šābûaʿ*, see Hartman and Di Lella, 244; Lacocque, 191; Montgomery, 373; Porteous, 140; Hasel, "Hebrew Masculine Plural," 107–20; König, "Weeks of Daniel," 468–70; Lurie, 303–09; Whitcomb, 259–63; Wood, 247; Young, *Prophecy of Daniel*, 195.

[118]Even-Shoshan, 1103.

[119]Gen 29:27, 28 (singular construct forms); Exod 34:22 (feminine plural form); Lev 12:5 (dual form); Num 28:26 (feminine plural construct with suffix); Deut 16:9 (2x), 10, 16 (feminine plural forms); 2 Chron 8:13 (feminine plural form); Jer 5:24 (feminine plural construct).

[120]For an analysis of the meaning of word *šābûaʿ* outside of the book of Daniel see Owusu-Antwi, 93–98.

[121]Dan 9:24 (masculine plural form), 25 (2x, masculine plural forms); 26 (masculine plural form); 27 (2x, singular form); Dan 10:2 (masculine plural form), 3 (masculine plural form).

9:24–27 cannot be fulfilled within seventy regular weeks.[122] Accordingly, scholars from throughout the entire spectrum of interpretation have advanced contextual arguments to show that the "weeks" must be chronologically interpreted in terms of years.[123] Thus, both "seventy weeks" of Dan 9:24–26 and *šābûaʿ ʿeḥād* "one week" of Dan 9:27 have been generally interpreted by scholars to be chronologically 490 regular years and 7 years, respectively.[124]

On the other hand, microsection C′ presents an antithetical parallelism, because the term *ḥᵃṣî*[125] used in Dan 9:27a—"Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle [*ḥᵃṣı*] of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering,"[126]—denotes a point in time. The term *ḥᵃṣı* has been used in the OT in the sense of "half" when used with units of measure like cubits[127] or acre.[128] It is mostly used in the sense of "half" with people,[129] especially when it describes half of a tribe.[130] However, when *ḥᵃṣı* is in construct relationship with a period of time (here "week"), it always means "midst" and not "half."[131] The context of Dan 9:27a is concerned with a definite action, *yašbît* ("cause to cease") in the imperfect.

While Dan 9:26 is not definite in fixing the specific point when Messiah shall be cut off in the seventieth week, this point in time is specifically fixed in v. 27 as "the middle of the week." The temporal expression "in the middle" means a specific point (i.e., midpoint) in the last week.[132]

The Theological Meaning of Dan 9:27a

The sanctuary-sacrificial system, messianism-christology, Mosaic law, and eschatology constitute the four main aspects of the theology of Dan 9:27a.

Sanctuary-Sacrificial System. We may observe a strong sanctuarial and sacrificial ritual system background. This is evident in the specific terms used: *zebaḥ* ("sacrifice"), *minḥâ* ("offering") *miqᵉdāškā* ("on your sanctuary"), and *wᵉhaqqōdes* ("and the sanctuary") (Dan 9:17, 26).

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[122]Young, *Prophecy of Daniel*, 196, sustains: "The brief period of 490 days would not serve to meet the needs of the prophecy, upon any view. Hence, as far as the present writer knows, this view is almost universally rejected." See also Wood, 247, states that "a total of only 490 days (seventy such weeks) would be meaningless in the context. In contrast, a week of years does fit the context."

[123]See for instance Doukhan, 265; Shea, *Selected Studies*, 77–78; Lurie, 305; Montgomery, 373; Walvoord, 218; Goldingay, 257.

[124]For an analysis of the prophetic principle of "a day equals a year," see Shea, *Selected Studies*, 56–88.

[125]BDB, 345; DCH, 3:294–95; Holladay, 113; Klein, 229.

[126]Dan 9:27a, NKJV.

[127]E.g., Exod 25:10; 1 Kgs 7:31.

[128]1 Sam 14:14.

[129]1 Sam 19:41 [40].

[130]Num 32:33; 34:13, 14, 15; Josh 1:12; 4:12; 1 Chron 5:26.

[131]Exod 12:29; Josh 10:13; Judg 16:3 (2x); Ruth 3:8; Ps 102:25 [24]; Jer 17:11.

[132]For an analysis of the main interpretations for the chronological stipulations regarding the Messiah's being cut off "in the middle of the week," see Owusu-Antwi, 309, 311, 316–17.

Messianism-Christology. The second main aspect of the theology of Dan 9:27a is a strong messianic and christological background. This is evident in the specific terms used: "He" (2 times) and *māšîaḥ* "Messiah" (Dan 9:25, 26a).

Mosaic Law. Daniel reveals the theological background of Dan 9:27a's prophecy in the prayer, where he refers explicitly to the law of Moses (9:11, 13). This is evident in the specific terms used: *bᵉrît* ("covenant"), *zebaḥ* ("sacrifice"), and *minḥâ* ("offering")—terms related to sacrificial laws.

This theological meaning is the most important for our analysis of Dan 9:27a. This theological aspect is the key for understanding the law's end in the NT. The prophetic meaning of Dan 9:27a enables us make sense of the most significant texts on the question of the law's end, such as Eph 2:13–16 and Col 2:14–17.

It has been observed that there are many similarities between the apostle Paul's letters to the Ephesians and Colossians. Ephesians 2:13–16 says: "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity."[133]

These verses refer to the blood of Christ, consequently, to His sacrifice. Christ has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances. "The law of commandments contained in ordinances" is generally understood to refer to the ritual or ceremonial precepts that regulated sanctuary-temple worship. By removing this, Jesus removed that which had become the occasion of bitter feelings between Jews and Gentiles. Here the author of the epistle is making an evident reference to the Messiah's prophetic mission in Dan 9:27a, where He puts an end to the system of sacrifices and to the blood of the animals of the OT, replacing them with His own sacrifice and blood.[134]

Colossians 2:14–17 says: "having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ."[135]

These verses have even more evident prophetic references to Dan 9:27a because they include aspects of sacrificial ritual system in food, in drink, and re-

[133]NKJV.

[134]For a detailed analysis of these verses see R. Ouro, "The Chiastic Structure of Ephesians 2:11–22," *Enfoques* 9/2 (1997): 38–49 (Spanish).

[135]NKJV.

garding festivals of the OT prescribed by the laws of Moses. The religious activities listed in verse 16 are similar in order and content to those mentioned elsewhere in the Scriptures, where the sacrifices and festivals of the ceremonial law are set forth.[136]

Both the larger context and the immediate context strongly suggest that Paul was referring primarily to the festivals and ordinances of the ceremonial law. Throughout Colossians 1 and in the early part of chapter 2 Paul extols Christ as the Son of God, the Creator, the One who deserves worship and honor, the One who provides forgiveness and redemption, the One all should accept as Lord. He emphasizes one of his favorite themes—that to be "in Christ" is the *summum bonum* of religious experience. He sets forth Christ as the One who on the cross reconciled the world to God, the One who is Head of the church. Paul is determined to make clear that only that faith which focuses on Christ is of value. Neither thrones, dominions, principalities, nor powers (1:16 and 2:15) are to be feared or venerated, for they are under the authority of Christ, having been created by Him. Thus, while the immediate context of verse 16 speaks of the complete forgiveness offered by Christ to believers (verses 13, 14), the larger context, the main theme of Paul's message, is the greatness of Christ and the importance of being "in Him," adhering to His teachings and recognizing that circumcision and ceremonial meats, drinks, holy days, new moons, and sabbaths have no value for salvation.

Logically, then, Paul would have set forth the truth that to perform ceremonial rites as a means of salvation was not only futile but an implicit denial of the fact that Jesus was the Messiah, the One who, by fulfilling the types, made them meaningless. And to help the Colossians identify the parts of the Torah that no longer were binding, he mentioned several rituals and festivals prescribed in the sacrificial and ceremonial law.

Verse 17 is the key to the passage, inasmuch as it identifies the nature of "the handwriting of requirements." According to this verse, "the handwriting of requirements" dealt with the sacrificial and ceremonial system. In other words, the apostle Paul is speaking of typical eating/drinking –such as the Passover meal, the typical feasts/festivals and new moon feasts, and the seven annual ceremonial sabbaths (see Lev 23).[137] All these items had their part in the system to foreshadow the coming Messiah and aspects of His death and priesthood.

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[136] See for instance, Ezek 45:17; 2 Chron 2:4; 8:13; Hosea 2:11.

[137]The Adventist historic position on Col 2:16 is that the "sabbath days" mentioned in this verse are festival sabbaths prescribed by the laws of Moses (Lev 23:32, 37–39), not the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment of the Decalogue. Among the references in Adventist literature that discuss Col 2:16 see: W. H. Branson, *Drama of the Ages* (Nashville, TN: 1950); E. Hilgert, "'Sabbath Days' in Colossians 2:16," *Ministry*, February 1952, 42–43; W. E. Howell, "'Sabbath' in Colossians 2:16," *Ministry*, September 1934, 10; id., "Anent Colossians 2:16," *Ministry,* April 1936: 18; A. E. Lickey, *God Speaks to Modern Man* (Washington, DC: 1952); F. D. Nichol, *Answers to Objections* (Washington, DC: 1932); id., *Problems in Bible Translation* (Washington, DC: 1954); id., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington, DC: 1957), 7:205–6; K. A. Strand

The key word in the passage, the word that argues strongly that the law of verse 16 is sacrificial and ceremonial law, is *skia* ("shadow") a word used in a similar way in Hebrews 8:5 and 10:1. Paul says that the meat, drink, holy days, new moons, and sabbath days "are a shadow [*skia*] of things to come . . . the substance is Christ" (Col 2:17). A shadow ends when it reaches the reality. Thus "shadow" describes well the various elements of the sacrificial and ceremonial law, including the annual sabbaths, for they pointed forward to Christ as the reality.

The Colossians and the community of believers apparently understood that Paul was speaking of the rites and ceremonies connected with the Jewish faith. They understood him to mean that the cross abolished the ritual sacrifices, festivals, regulations involving meats and drinks, ceremonial sabbaths, special days governed by the new moon, and even the ceremonies that had been performed on the seventh-day Sabbath—for example, the daily burnt offering was doubled on that day.[138]

These two Pauline passages (Eph 2:13–16; Col 2:14–17) plainly teach that the sacrificial and ceremonial system of Israel (which included all the rituals, festivals, and feasts that centered in the sanctuary-temple) was abolished and blotted out by the atoning death of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we think that Dan 9:27a is a prophetic, exegetical, and theological key to explaining the law's end in the NT.

Eschatology. The text of Dan 9:27a is also imbued with eschatology. The idea of an *eschaton* is explicitely indicated at the last step or stage of the prophecy in the term *yašbît* ("cause to cease [bring an end]") In addition, the numbering in weeks (1 and 1/2), and the word *šābûaʿ* ("week") give strong support to this eschatological idea by the time element of the prophecy.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis that we have carried out of the antithetical chiastic structure of Dan 9:27a, we have shown the structural, literary, and linguistic unity of the microsections of this text. Also, we have shown by means of an exegetical and theological study that this verse is key to explaining and understanding the end of the typologically significant laws of the system of ritual sacrifice in the NT.

As we have seen, the study of the text and context of Dan 9:27a and of the most important Hebrew terms—*higbîr* ("he shall confirm [make strong]"), *bᵉrît* ("covenant"), *šābûaʿ* ("week"), *zebaḥ* ("sacrifice"), *minḥâ* ("offering"), and *yašbît* ("he shall bring an end")—indicates that the Messiah's prophetic mission would be putting an end, in the middle of the week, to the OT system of sacri-

(ed.), *The Sabbath in Scripture and History* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982), 338–42; M. C. Wilcox, *Questions and Answers* (Mountain View, CA: 1911); id., *Questions Answered* (Mountain View, CA: 1938).

[138]Num 28:3–10.

fices and offerings. Therefore, this text is key to understanding such NT texts as Eph 2:13–16 and Col 2:14–17 and how the typological law was abolished by the Messiah, that is to say, Jesus Christ, in the NT. Even though at stake in Christ's mission of salvation and obedience was another law besides the abolished law regarding sacrifices and offerings, the law regarding the ritual system of sacrifices of animals was now replaced by Christ's atoning sacrifice by means of His blood and death on the cross.

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Introduction to the Ecclesiology of the Book of Revelation

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The Book of Revelation has not only a rich theology—it focuses strongly on God the Father—and a strong Christology, but has also a lot to say about the church. John the apostle communicates a profound ecclesiology.

In this essay I will examine the names of and images representing the church, as found in the Apocalypse. I will ask where in the book the church is found and what is the significance. I will examine characteristics of the ideal church and tasks for the church as well as appeals and promises to the church. In Revelation the church faces tremendous difficulties. These are internal as well as external challenges. The external difficulties include opponents and a system called Babylon, which stands in contrast to the church. God's relationship to the church and his care for the remnant are important. Finally, the church is pictured as being victorious. Because she belongs to the Lamb, the Lamb will guarantee a positive outcome of her struggles. Some practical implications will be drawn.

I. Names of and Images for the Church

A church consists of a number of individual believers who together form a larger organism which NT writers call, in a metaphorical sense, a body. In Revelation, these individual believers and groups of believers form the Christian church; they are part of her or are in some way related to her. They are introduced with a variety of designations: (1) fellow servants, brothers, servants (1:1; 2:20; 6:11; 7:3; 12:10; 19:2, 5; 22:3, 6), (2) the church (*ekklēsia*; 1:4, 11, 20; 2:1, 7, 8, 11, 12, 17, 18, 23, 29; 3:1, 6, 7, 13, 14, 22; 22:16), (3) priests and a kingdom (1:6; 5:10; 20:6), (4) lampstands (1:20); (5) the overcomer (2–3; 15:2; 21:7), (6) the remnant (2:24; 12:17), (7) those in white clothes (3:4–5; 6:11; 7:9, 13), (8) the saints (5:8; 8:3–4; 11:18; 13:7; 14:12; 16:6; 17:6; 18:20, 24; 19:8; 20:9), (9) the 144,000 (7:4–8; 14:1–5), (10) the great multitude (7:9–17), (11) the holy city (11:2), (12) the woman (12; 19:7; 21:9), (13) those that are called,

chosen, faithful (17:14), (14) my people and his people (18:4; 21:3), (15) the bride (21:9; 22:17), and (16) the twelve tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles of the Lamb (21:12, 14). The harlot (Rev 17) and the worshipers of the beast and its image (Rev 13–15) are contrasted with the true church.

It is interesting how many designations for the church or in relation to the church are found. These different names and titles point to different aspects of the church. We will now briefly focus on some of them.

1. The Term *ekklēsia*. The word *ekklēsia* is found twenty times in Revelation. In each case it stands for the group of believers. It is remarkable that this expression occurs nineteen out of the twenty times in Rev 1–3, i.e., right in the beginning of the book, and once in its conclusion. (Rev 22b). The Book of Revelation is a letter and a prophecy addressed to seven churches.

The distribution of the singular and the plural forms of this term is interesting. In Rev 1 only the plural is found. Four times we hear about the seven churches. This changes with Rev 2 and 3. At the beginning of each of the seven messages the singular is used in order to address the respective local church. However, at the end of each message the formula "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" connect the churches with each other. Church number four, the one found in the middle of the seven churches, contains an additional plural of the term *ekklēsia*: "And all the churches shall know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you as your works deserve" (2:23).

In these passages we hear about local congregations. The church is a local entity. On the other hand, it is true that the number seven and the mix of singular and plural forms of the word *ekklēsia* in each message to these churches point to completeness and interdependence of the churches and tell us that there are not only local congregations but a universal church. The local congregations form one universal church. This is more evident in the apocalyptic part of Revelation (Rev 4–22a).

In spite of their shortcomings, these churches are still God's church. The majority of them may have to face his temporal judgment, but they are not separated from Him. Thus, the term *ekklēsia* in Revelation always points to some sort of relationship with God. It also always refers to the *ekklēsia militans*, which toward the end of the book is depicted as the triumphant church, yet without the particular term *ekklēsia* being applied to her.

The term "overcomer" or "victor" is found in each of the messages to the seven churches, pointing to the fact that some church members may not belong to the church triumphant and that individual decisions are to be made. Church membership does not save. Whereas *ekklēsia* stresses the corporate aspect, terms such as overcomer point to the individual aspect.

2. Saints. The expression *hagios* (holy, saint) is used in Revelation for God (3:7; 4:8; 6:10), God's city (11:2; 21:2.10; 22:19), God's angels (14:10), and

most frequently for the church (5:8; 8:3–4; 11:18; 13:7–12; 14:12; 16:6; 17:6; 18:20–24; 19:8; 20:6–9; 22:11).

Holiness or sanctity is one of God's attributes. Therefore, whatever stands in a relationship with God and is directed toward him is holy. Since God is holy and the believers, the church, is also holy, the special relationship between God and his people is pointed out, and it is emphasized that the church focuses on her Lord. Throughout the Apocalypse "holy" is a positive term, and all those who are thus designated belong together. In the center of the book the saints seems to be a synonym for the faithful end time remnant of God.[1]

3. The 144,000 and the Great Multitude. As an answer to the question of Rev 6:17 ". . . the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" the 144,000 and the great multitude are introduced, a twofold scene in Rev 7. This is part of the sixth seal, which deals with the heavenly signs prior to and at Christ's second coming and the Day of the Lord. Rev 6:15–16 portrays people who are not able to survive the day of the wrath of God and the Lamb. On the other hand, Rev 7 points to people who are able to stand it.

The context of Rev 7 suggests that both the 144,000 and the great multitude are God's end time people that is going to be saved. Obviously, the 144,000 and the great multitude which will be found before the throne of God in his sanctuary refer to the same group.[2]

Just as in Rev 5:5 John hears about Jesus as the lion, but in 5:6 sees a lamb, so in 7:4 he hears the number of the sealed, but in 7:9 sees the great multitude of the redeemed.

The answer to the question of who will be able to stand (6:17) is provided by the entire seventh chapter. Both the 144,000 and the great multitude have to go through difficult times. The 144,000 are sealed before the winds blow and have to stand the successive difficulties. The great multitude has come out of the great tribulation. Thus, the 144,000 are introduced as an immediate answer to

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[1] See discussion below.

[2] See, for example, Richard Bauckham, "The List of the Tribes in Revelation 7 Again," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 42 (1991): 102–103; Beasley-Murray, 139–141; Caird, 94–96; Charles, 1:201; J. Comblin, "L'Épître (Ap 7, 2–12): Le rassemblement de l'Israel de Dieu," *Assemblées du Seigneur: Catechèse des dimanches et des fêtes* 66 (1966): 22–23, 25; Jörns, 77; Martin Kiddle, *The Revelation of St. John*, The Moffat New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1940), 138–139; Krodel, 184; Ladd, 116; Lenski, 244–245, 254; Alfred Loisy, *L`Apocalypse de Jean* (Frankfurt: Minerva, 1972), 164; Beatrice S. Neall, "Sealed Saints and the Tribulation," in *Symposium on Revelation—Book I: Introductory and Exegetical Studies,* ed. F. B. Holbrook, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, vol. 6 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 245, 269–270; William S. Sailer, "Francis Bacon Among the Theologians: Aspects of Dispensational Hermeneutics," *Evangelical Journal* 6 (1988): 80–81; Strand, "The 'Spotlight-On-Last-Events' Sections," 206; Swete, 97; Cornelis van der Waal, *Oudtestamentische priesterlijke motieven in de Apocalyps* (Goes, Netherlands: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre N. V., 1956), 116–117; and Wilcock, 80–81. This view is rejected, for example, by Bousset, 287; Kelly, 289–290; and Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 139–149. The different options are discussed by Neall, 267–272.

the question of 6:17, whereas the great multitude receives a more detailed description and is depicted as standing before God.

The 144,000 are the fullness of God's end time church on earth. The great multitude is the consummated end time church, which after the great tribulation is found in heaven. The sealing would be incomplete if it did not lead to the final consummation.

The 144,000 are "servants of our God" (7:3). The great multitude "serves" God (7:15). Both Greek terms are used for the same group in 22:3.[3]

These and other considerations support a symbolic understanding of the 144,000.[4]

The 144,000 are found again in Rev 14 in the context of the satanic trinity, which is specifically dealt with in the central vision of the Book of Revelation (11:19–14:20). In this section, the 144,000 of Rev 14 seem to be a synonym of the remnant of 12:17. Since this remnant apparently comes into existence after the 1260 days, which according to Adventist understanding ended in 1798 A.D., the clear connection of the 144,000 to the second coming of Christ as found in Rev 6 and 7 is not as obvious. This may be due to the fact that John does not see much time elapsing between the appearance of the remnant, the universal worship of the beast and its image, including the death degree for those who worship God only, and the final salvation and glorification of the faithful ones.[5]

The 144,000 enjoy a special relationship with the Lord. Being virgins, they have not defiled themselves with women—i.e., they have not entered into a relationship with false religion, or they have separated from it.[6] They follow Jesus every step of the way (cf. John 10:27–28) and are transformed through God's grace. The Lamb and these 144,000 stand on top of Mount Zion. Those who have been condemned and persecuted in chap.13 now triumph with the Lamb.[7] Instead of the mark of the beast on their foreheads, these people bear the name

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[3] For more information see, Ekkehardt Müller, *Microstructural Analysis of Revelation 4–11*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, Volume 21 (Berrien Springs: Andrews UP, 1996), 254–269.

[4] Here are some additional reasons: (1) The immediate context is clearly symbolic (7:1–3), as is the extended context (see, e.g., the four horses, the martyrs under the altar), and the parallel passage in 14:1–5 ("who have not defiled themselves with women," "virgins," "lamb"). Therefore, symbolic language is also expected for 7, 4–8. (2) The number is symbolic (12 times 12 times 1,000) and points to the fullness of the people of God (see, 21:12–14). (3) The enumeration of tribes is unusual. The tribe Dan is missing, whereas Manasseh should already be contained in Joseph. Ephraim is not mentioned; however, Levi is counted. Judah is found in first place. Such a list is not found elsewhere in Scripture. (4) Most of the twelve tribes no any longer exist today. (5) The NT knows about a spiritual Israel (Rom 2:28–29; Gal 6:16).

[5] In Matt 24 a similar phenomenon is found. Jesus does not directly indicate that a huge time span lies between the destruction of Jerusalem and his *parousia*.

[6] Cf. the woman in chap. 12 and the harlot in chap.17, Jezebel in 2:20; furthermore, 2:14 and 18:2.4.

[7] Lohse, 84, labels Zion as "die Stätte der endzeitlichen Bewahrung" (the place of end time preservation).

of the Lamb and of the Father. They belong to God. He keeps them. They are similar to Him. They are purchased. Even though they were unable to buy or sell (13:17), Jesus has bought them. They are the remnant of God that will survive the end time.

4.The Remnant. The term remnant (*loipos*) is found a number of times in Rev. In some cases it has no direct connection to the church, such as when talking about the remaining trumpets (8:13), the survivors (9:20; 11:13), and a group of people who are subject to judgment (19:21; 20:5). In several cases it is linked to the church. Once it is connected to the church in a negative sense (3:2), once possibly in a positive sense (11:13),[8] and twice clearly in a positive way. There is a faithful remnant in the church of Thyatira (2:24) and God's end time remnant in 12:17.[9]

When we look at Rev 12, we notice that it comes in three parts. The first and the third part correspond and are in many ways parallel, although there are also differences.

A The woman, the son, and the dragon (12:1–6)
B Michael and the dragon (12:7–12)
A´ The woman, the remnant, and the dragon (12:13–17)

In both of them the same time span occurs, namely the 1260 days or 3 1/2 years. A chronological outline looks the following way:

A 12:1–5 Early conflict between dragon and woman
12:6 Medieval conflict between dragon and woman
B 12:7–12 Conflict between Michael and the dragon in heaven
A´ 12:13–16 Medieval conflict between dragon and woman (continued)
12:17 End time conflict between the dragon and the woman[10]

There is a descendant of the woman in the first part of Rev 12, and there is another descendant of the woman in the last part of the same chapter. The woman has brought forth Jesus, the Messiah, and the woman, the church, brings forth the remnant. In 12:17 we read about the "remnant of her seed." The term seed does not occur again in the Apocalypse. An identical phrase is not found in the entire Bible, but seed is mentioned quite often and may refer to the seeds of plants (e.g., Matt 13:24,27,32), to descendants or children (especially of Abraham and David, e.g., Luke 1:55; Mark 12:19–22; John 7:42), or to Jesus himself (e.g., Gal 3:16, 19). The first and last parts of Rev 12 allude to Gen 3:14–15. In

[8] The survivors of 11:13 are terrified and give glory to God. In light of 14:7 they seem to turn to God and become a faithful remnant.

[9] A faithful remnant is apparently mentioned in Rev 3:4. Yet the word in use here is not *loipos* but *oligos*—in the plural "some," "a few." See also Gerhard Hasel, "The Remnant in Scripture and the End Time," *Adventists Affirm*, Fall 1988:11, and "Who are the Remnant?" *Adventists Affirm*, Fall 1993:9. For a more detailed discussion on the remnant see Ekkehardt Mueller, "The End Time Remnant in Revelation," *JATS* 11(2000): 188–204.

[10] Cf. William H. Shea, "Time Prophecies of Daniel 12 and Revelation 12–13," in *Symposium on Revelation—Book I*, 349.

both passages, the woman, the serpent, the seed, and the enmity between them are mentioned.[11] Rev 12, including its second section, seems to be the fulfillment of that promise in Gen 3. It may very well be that the seed in Rev 12:17 alludes to Jesus, since this verse is based on Gen 3:15. Jesus is the descendant of the woman. The remnant of her descendant is not only structurally juxtaposed to Jesus, but stands in a special relationship to him, the true seed.

Although Gen 3 lies behind Rev 12, this does not mean that the woman must be understood as Eve or Mary, even though she reminds us of them by verbal echoes. The time spans, to be understood according to the year-day principle and lasting for more than a thousand years, rule that out. John is creative in combining OT and NT imagery. The woman should be understood as the church.[12]

Thus, Rev 12 presents a survey of the conflict between the church and the dragon, the Messiah and the dragon, and the remnant—which appears only after the 1260 years—and the dragon. It thereby sets the stage for the next chapters. In the first part of Rev 13 the sea beast attacks the saints. The expression "remnant" is not found. The focus is on the time after 1798 A.D.[13] Later the beast out of the earth follows, and those who do not participate in the universal worship of the beast and its image are threatened with death. They do not receive a specific name. Chapter 13 looks so bleak that one could fear that no faithful believer would be able to survive. Therefore, the first part of Rev 14 depicts the 144,000 in the presence of the Lamb.

Obviously the remnant, the saints, those who do not receive the mark of the beast and do not worship the beast and its image, and the 144,000 are the very same group. Why? The dragon went *poiēsai polemon meta tōn loipōn* (to make war with the remnant—12:17). The sea beast is given power to *poiēsai polemon meta tōn hagiōn* (to make war with the saints) and to overcome them (13:7). The two groups are linked on the literary level. Not only are Rev 12:17 and Rev 13 linked, but also the different parts of Rev 13 and 14 are connected. The formula "here is" appears at the end of each section.

A. The beast out of the sea (13:1–10)
    1. "I saw . . . "
    2. Description of the beast and its activity
    3. *"Here is* patience and faith . . . "
B. The beast out of the earth (13:11–18)
    1. "I saw . . . "
    2. Description of the beast and his activity

[11] Nestle-Aland lists Gen 3:14 and 15 with Rev 12.

[12] Cf. Ezek 16, 23; Eph 5.

[13] Cf. Ulrich B. Müller *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, Ökumenischer Taschenbuchkommentar, vol. 19 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1984), 247, who states that chap. 13 develops what is meant by the dragon cast out of heaven battling against Christians. This starts a final assault against those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus (12:17). See also Shea, 354–359.

3. "*Here is* wisdom . . . "

C. The 144,000 and the three angels' messages (14:1–12)
1. "I saw . . . "
2. Description of the 144,000
3. "I saw . . . "
4. Three angels' messages
5. "*Here is* patience . . . faith . . ."

Furthermore, in Rev 12–14 three texts are interwoven that describe the main characteristics of the remnant. The references are Rev 12:17, Rev 13:10, and Rev 14:12. The last two belong to the "Here is" statements.

If it is true that the 144,000 and the remnant are the same group, then the characteristics of the 144,000 mentioned in 14:1–5 are additional characteristics of the remnant. We should keep in mind that the remnant, which seems to be a visible group, appears at the beginning of the 19th century, whereas the 144,000, although they represent the remnant, are those who live at the second coming—at least according to Rev 6 and 7. Probably John does not describe in a detailed way the passing of time since the appearance of the remnant. In Matt 24 a similar phenomenon is found. Jesus does not directly indicate that a huge time span lies between the destruction of Jerusalem and his *parousia*. Because of the information of Rev 7 about the 144,000, we may conclude that the 144,000 of Rev 14 seem to be that remnant that will experience Christ's coming.

II. Places in Revelation Where the Church Is Found

The various designations for the church are found in many chapters of Rev. However, we also notice that there are chapters where we find a heavy concentration on the church, whereas other chapters contain little to nothing about God's people.

1. Letter Frame and Apocalyptic Part. The term *ekklēsia* occurs only in the first three chapters and in chapter 22. This is the letter frame of the Apocalypse. This letter frame is somewhat different from the apocalyptic part of the book, which starts in chapter 4 and ends in chapter 22a. The letter frame contains fewer symbols than the apocalyptic part. When it comes to the apocalyptic part, *ekklēsia* is avoided and replaced with symbols and images, such as the 144.000 (7:4–8; 14:1–5); the holy city (11:2); the woman (12; 19:7; 21:9); and the bride (21:9; 22:17).[14] In this case there is also a strong emphasis on the worldwide church, rather than on individual congregations.[15]

[14] We observe a similar phenomenon in Christology. In the letter frame Jesus appears under this very name and is also called Christ. His specific and predominant name in Rev, however, the term lamb, used 28 times, occurs only in the apocalyptic part

[15] Rev 1b–3 has connections to both sections. On one hand, it is part of the letter frame, because the seven churches are addressed similarly to the way Paul addresses his churches. The seven churches have already been mentioned in 1:4. On the other hand, this seven series reminds one of the other seven series of the book, which follow immediately, and somehow link the seven messages to

2. Spotlights on Last Events. A heavy concentration on the church is found in the so-called spotlights on last events. These are expansions of those sections of visions two to four that precede the respective last element, namely the culmination or glorious climax.[16] The first spotlight on last events is Rev 7, the expansion of the sixth seal. It contains the 144,000 and the great multitude. On one hand, it is God's army opposed to the demonic army of 200 million beings under the sixth trumpet (9:16). On the other hand, it is the surviving church. The next spotlight is the expansion of the sixth trumpet in Rev 10 and 11a. John, with his sweet-bitter experience, seems to be a representative of the end time church. The stress is on the proclamation of the Gospel. The holy city in Rev 11:2 points also to the church. The last spotlight occurs in Rev 14a. It again depicts the 144,000 and presents God's end time message.

3. The Center of the Book. The center of the Apocalypse, Rev 12–14, contains the strongest emphasis on the church. It is a description of the attempt of the satanic trinity to destroy the church. Therefore the church, especially in the form of the remnant, is found in all these chapters.

4. The Eschatological Part. In the eschatological part of Revelation, i.e., in chapters 15–22a, Babylon is contrasted with the New Jerusalem. But Babylon and the New Jerusalem are not only cities. They are pictured as women. In addition to the woman of Rev 12, Babylon is a woman, a harlot, and the New Jerusalem is the bride of the Lamb. In other words, the church and her counterpart are featured in the second half of the Apocalypse.

This short survey shows us that Revelation has an extensive ecclesiology. This is all the more remarkable since the book contains a very elaborate theology, i.e., doctrine of God, and a very high and extended Christology. On the other, if the Lord is so much stressed, it is quite natural to focus also on those who belong to him. Secondly, in Revelation individual Christian congregations are addressed, though the stress seems to be on the church as a whole. Furthermore, the focus is not so much on the churches of the first century or on the church throughout history as on the end time church. Therefore, this book is relevant for our times. Finally, a conflict between Babylon, the satanic trinity, and the remnant is described, a conflict between apostate churches and the faithful community. Although difficult times are predicted, a positive outcome is promised.

III. Characteristics of the Ideal Church and Tasks for the Church

The Apocalypse describes the characteristics of the ideal church. These qualities are at the same time challenges and tasks for God's church on earth. Therefore, we will not sharply distinguish between them but list them together.

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the other septenaries. Furthermore, Rev 1b–3, depicting the church militant, has a counterpart at the end of the book, the church triumphant.

[16] The expression "spotlight on last events" was coined by Kenneth Strand in "The 'Spotlight-On-Last-Events' Sections in the Book of Revelation," *AUSS* 27 (1989): 201–221.

The church has high privileges. Great promises are given to her. Along with the privileges come responsibilities:[17]

Being Saved (1:5; 5:9). The church is freed from slavery to sin. Its members are purchased by the blood of the Lamb. The church is the community of those being saved.

Being a Kingdom and Reigning as Priests (1:5–6; 5:10; 20:6). The church is God's kingdom and has priestly functions. Her reign is one of mediation between God and the world. She lets the world know who God is and how God is. In the name of God the church addresses those who dwell on earth in order that many may repent and turn to God.

Love (2:4–19). The church in Ephesus is reprimanded because she has lost her first love. Jesus expects his church to manifest love.

Works and Service (2:1, 3–5, 19; 19:8). The church serves both God and humans. Thus she brings forth good works. Because Jesus has saved the church and has made her a kingdom and a community of priests, it is natural that the church produces works. She is motivated by faith and love. She serves because Jesus has served, and she tries to serve in the same way Jesus has served. Therefore, the term servant is used quite frequently. Believers are servants of God (7:3; 19:2; 22:3) and fellow servants (6:11). The church consists of those who serve each other and the world. According to 19:8 the bride of the Lamb is clothed with the righteous deeds of the saints.

Patience (2:3,19; 13:10; 14:12). Patience is stressed in two passages, in the letters to the seven churches as well as in the vision about the evil powers or satanic trinity. The church is characterized by perseverance.

Dissociating from Heresies (2:6). For example, the Nicolaitans are mentioned. The church of Ephesus dissociates itself from them. Jesus praises that church. The idea that the church is a pluralistic society in which some may believe in God and in certain biblical doctrines and others do not, in which church members have life styles totally opposed to each other, is not biblical. Certainly there is some latitude, but there are also limits and boundaries. Not everything is possible. The church challenges heresies because she believes she has found some gems of absolute truth. If there is no truth any longer, if everyone is correct, heresies cannot be opposed any longer.

Overcomers / Victors (2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 12:11; 15:2; 21:7). The topic "victory" runs throughout the entire Book of Revelation. It is prominent in the messages to the seven churches. It is characteristic of the redeemed standing around the sea of glass. It is found at the end of the book and in other places.

[17] Cf., 1Pet 2:9. In this verse Peter first lists the fourfold privilege of the NT church, privileges originally given to the Israel of the OT. They are contained in the main clause. The subordinate clause continues to describe the responsibilities resulting from the privileges: "that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

Faithfulness until Death (2:10; cf. 6:9). The church is faithful to Jesus, even if members are required to lay down their lives. This deep commitment to the Lord is a response to his ultimate commitment until death.

Holding on to Jesus and Professing Jesus (2:13, 25; 3:8). The church does not deny Jesus. She does not give in easily. The church holds on to Jesus. She professes the Lord even under difficult circumstances.

Faith (2:19; 13:10; 14:12). Right in the beginning of Revelation as well as in its central part dealing with the satanic trinity faith is mentioned as one of the characteristics of God's church. Biblical faith in Jesus and His teachings is one of the characteristics separating the church from those who worship the beast and its image.

Prayer (5:8; 8:4). The church prays. She turns to God in confession, thanksgiving, petition, and intercession. She expects him to do great things. Prayer is not a nice addition to the activities of the church. Prayer is not merely an appropriate part of the worship service. Prayer must be a kind of ministry of the church.

Living as Brothers and Sisters (6:11). The church is special because her members are brothers and sisters. The church is a family, and its members serve, support, and encourage each other.

Worshiping and Praising God (7:9,10; 14:3). Worship and praise of God characterize the church in this age as well as the age of the triumphant church. In 15:3–4 God's children stand around the sea of glass and sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb: "Great and wonderful are thy deeds, O Lord God the Almighty!" Therefore, Revelation contains many hymns. A church without worship is unthinkable. Her center is always the One who sits on the throne and the Lamb.

Fearing God, Reverence (11:18). To fear God describes the right kind of relationship with God. Reverence and respect and accepting God as the supreme Lord may be implied. While the church fears God, she proclaims to the world: "Fear God and give him glory . . ." (14:7).

Testimony (12:11) and Testimony of Jesus (12:17; 20:4). The overcomers have conquered the dragon "by the word of their testimony." The church proclaims the gospel and is a witness of Jesus. This may also be alluded to by the statement in the beginning of the book when the seven churches are compared to lampstands which have the function to give light to the environment. In addition, the church has the testimony of Jesus. She treasures the prophetic Word of God, and the gift of prophecy is found within her ranks.

Keeping the Commandments (12:17; 14:12). In the vision of the satanic trinity the issue of worship and the law of God play an important role. While the saints persevere and keep the commandments and the faith of Jesus, the rest of humanity makes a decision to worship the beast and accepts its mark. The church is obedient to her Lord.

Virginity (14:4). The 144.000 are, symbolically, virgins, and thus the church is made up of virgins. That means she is not engaged in religious or political systems that in the end damage the church's relationship to its Lord. The church stays away from what her Lord would avoid. Her thinking and her life is directed towards Jesus.

Following the Lamb (14:4). Jesus is the center. The church follows Him and tries to imitate His life to a certain degree. We talk about "a certain degree," because the life of the Savior was and will always be different from that of the saved ones. What He was required to do is different from the requirements for his disciples in important aspects.

No Deceit, Blameless (14:5). On one hand, even believers commit sins and sometimes make terrible mistakes. In themselves they are not perfect; only in Christ are they perfect. This is also true of the church. In Jesus the church is perfect; in herself she is not. On the other hand, this phrase may call us to live a holy life and pursue sanctification (Heb 12:14).

Interestingly enough, the just listed characteristics and tasks are normally connected with the church or groups of believers representing the church rather than individual believers. Therefore, the Apocalypse does not strongly stress spiritual gifts and different functions in the church.[18]

IV. Appeals and Promises to the Church

1. Appeals. In the Apocalypse, God addresses his people and calls them to certain actions, to changes of attitudes, and to maintaining their relationship with him.

Listening to the Holy Spirit (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). First of all, Jesus calls the churches to listen to the Holy Spirit. Seven times this appeal is made: 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Remembering the Previous Situation (2:5; 3:3). Sometimes it is better to let the past rest. Sometimes, however, it is wiser and more helpful to remember previous times. That it might grow in faith, the church is challenged to look back to when she received the gospel, when her relationship with the Lord was still vibrant, and when she considered it a joy to serve God and fellow human beings. Such a look back may motivate the church again and may lead her into a renewed connection to the Lord.

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[18] The gift of prophecy is referred to in the Apocalypse. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (19:10). However, the prophetic gift is connected to the entire church. In the church the gift of prophecy is manifested, yet not in such a way that each individual believer possesses this gift. Functions that are listed in Rev are apostles, elders, and prophets. However, the apostles (18:20; 21:14) are predominantly the Twelve. The elders (4:4, 10; 5:5, 6, 8, 14; 7:11, 13; 11:16; 14:3; 19:4) are limited to 24 and are found in heaven only. Prophets (10:7; 11:10, 18; 16:6; 18:20, 24; 22:6, 9) are, with the exceptions of the false prophetess Jezebel (2:20), understood in a positive way. This is also true for the words "prophecy" (1:3; 11:6; 19:10; 22:7, 10, 18, 19) and "to prophesy" (10:11; 11:3). The frequent use of this word group shows that John in Rev stresses the Prophets more than any other group within the church.

Repenting (2:5, 16, 21; 3:3, 19). Repentance means to turn around, to turn away from whatever is wrong and destructive, and to turn toward God. The challenge to repent is not only addressed to the world, but also to the church.

Doing the First Works (2:5). Not only quantity is asked, but even more so quality. The church has to evaluate her ministry and service. The question is how much she is involved in mission outreach and in care for fellow humans. But the issue is also the motif of her service. She must ask herself whether or not this motif is love toward God and humans.

Fearlessness (2:10). In spite of persecution, the church does not need to be afraid. Jesus knows her, and his promise of everlasting life is valid.

Faithfulness until Death (2:10). Believers may not be able to escape death, but the second and eternal death does not affect them. Jesus guarantees eternal salvation to those who remain faithful.

Keeping and Not Losing the Crown (2:25; 3:11). The church is called to keep what has been bestowed upon her and not to lose the crown of victory which already has been given to her. This certainty of salvation is very important and must not be given up. In spite of surety of the church's salvation, the motto "Once saved, always saved!" is not true for individuals unless they persevere.

Waking Up and Strengthening the Others (3:2). We are responsible not only for our own life, but also for others. Christians are not content to care for their own little world, but turn toward others.

Purchasing Gold, White Garments, Salve for the Eyes (3:18). To purchase gold, white clothes, and eye salve means to accept God's good gifts and not to rely on one's own works or righteousness. The church recognizes her dependence on God.

Separating from Babylon (18:4). This call is directed to God's people within Babylon, not to the remnant, who are not part of Babylon. However, God's church does not enter into questionable relations.

Joy (18:20). Finally, the church may rejoice over the judgment, not because she enjoys the punishment of the evil ones, but because judgment means liberation from all enemies and final salvation.

2. Promises. Appeals are important. Promises may be even more crucial. The Apocalypse contain not only God's calls and charges, but his promises.

Jesus' Second Coming (1:7; 2:25; 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20). The immediacy of Christ's second coming is the first, last, and most frequent promise to the church. The second coming brings about fellowship with God in an unprecedented way. At the same time it starts the eradication of all that is evil and undesirable.

Eating from and Partaking of the Tree of Life (2:7; 22:2,14). The church can be sure of everlasting life.

No Second Death (2:11). The church is not affected by the second death, because Jesus has suffered this death in her place.

Manna, a White Stone, and a New Name (2:17). God grants spiritual and everlasting life. Believers become new creatures in Christ..

Power over the Nations, Receiving the Morning Star (2:26–28). The church participates in Christ's rule. According to Rev 22:16, the morning star is Jesus himself.

White Garments, Name in Book of Life, Jesus Confesses Their Names (3:4, 5). Again final salvation is promised to the church. The repetition of the promise of salvation by using new symbols manifests how important it is..

Kept from Hour of Trial, Pillar in God's Temple, Designated with the Names of God, the New Jerusalem, and Jesus (3:10–12). Jesus promises spiritual protection and a place in God's immediate presence. The pillar may also remind of strength and stability. Furthermore, God identifies with the church. She belongs to him and has a special relation with him.

Dining with Jesus, Sitting with Jesus on His Throne (3:20, 21). Jesus offers his friendship and fellowship, which will be fully realized at the marriage supper (19, 9). But even before that the church experiences Christ's love. Finally, she is allowed to participate in his rule.

Being a Kingdom and Reigning as Priests upon the Earth (5:10; 20:6). What in the perspective of the world may look small and insignificant counts a lot in God's eyes. His people are depicted as the real rulers of the earth. A similar formulation was already found in 1:6 and may go back to Exod 19:6, which Peter then takes up in 1Pet 2:9. John notes that the church has been set in a new state.

Sealing (7:3). Being sealed means to be property of the one who has initiated the sealing. At the same time it points to protection. Before the last crisis on earth takes place the church is sealed. This does not mean believers do not have to face difficult times, but that they are protected spiritually. Furthermore, God's wrath does not affect them.

Being before the Throne of God, No Hunger, Thirst, or Heat Any More, Living Water, Tears Being Wiped Away (7:15–17; cf. 21:3–7; 22:1–5). Whatever is negative will be done away with. The last verses of Rev 7 remind us of the first verses of Rev 21. However, there is a difference. Whereas in Rev 7 the redeemed are pictured before God's throne in his temple, Rev 21:22 informs us that in the New Jerusalem no temple was seen and that God and the Lamb are the temple. Rev 7 may therefore refer to the time during the Millennium, whereas Rev 21 describes the time after the Millennium.

Reward (11:18; 22:12). This reward may be final destruction or final salvation. The faithful church will experience the latter.

Standing on Mount Zion (14:1). It is not only important to be saved but to be in the presence of the Lamb. Then a new song will be sung. The end time church will have won the victory over all evil powers.

Standing at the Sea of Glass (15:2). The sea of glass is already mentioned in 4:6. It is located in front of the throne of God. Now the redeemed are found there presenting their song of redemption.

Judgment over the Persecutors of the Church (14–19). It is part of God's justice that he executes judgment. For his enemies the judgment is terrible. For his own people it means liberation from all oppression and all oppressors.

New Earth and New Jerusalem (21–22). Rev 21 and 22 is much more detailed than is the last part of Rev 7. At the beginning and end of this long passage the close fellowship of the believers with God is stressed. The new earth and the New Jerusalem will surpass our wildest imagination and all of our expectations.

Seven Beatitudes (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14). (1) Blessed is the one who reads and hears the Apocalypse and keeps its words (1:3). (2) Blessed are those who die in the Lord from now on (14:13). (3) Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes (16:15). (4) Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb (19:9). (5) Blessed is the one who takes part in the first resurrection (20:6). (6) Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the Apocalypse (22:7). (7) Blessed are those who wash their robes so that will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city (22:14).

V. Difficulties for the Church

As we have already seen, the church has to face difficulties. To belong to God does not mean to be free of all problems and challenges. Oftentimes the opposite seems to be true. Jesus had to suffer, and his children are not exempt from suffering. Unfortunately, suffering is quite normal. The church has to face internal and external difficulties. They can be quite threatening. Both kinds must be mastered, and God offers his help. In the case of internal difficulties, Jesus points to the problems and thus allows for a change of behavior. In the case of external challenges, God oftentimes intervenes or gives strength to cope with them.

1. Internal Difficulties. Internal difficulties include a lack of love (2:4; Ephesus), false teachers and false doctrines (2:6, 14, 15, 20–24; Thyatira and Pergamum), spiritual death (3:1; Sardis), lukewarmness (3:15, 16; Laodicea), and self-deception (3:17; Laodicea).

2. External Challenges. Internal difficulties of the church are reported in Rev 2–3, namely in the letter frame of the Apocalypse. External difficulties, however, are found in both the letter frame and the apocalyptic part of Revelation. They include blasphemy (2:9; Smyrna), tribulation and persecution (2:9, 10; 6:9–11; 7:14; 12:13–17; 13:7, 16, 17; 17:6; Smyrna), and death and martyrdom (2:10; 6:9; 13:15).

Just as the term "*ekklēsia*" is limited to the letter frame, so are internal difficulties. They are not found in the other part of Rev. On the other hand, external challenges to the church occur throughout the book. Although they start already

in the letter frame, these difficulties are intensified in the prophetic-apocalyptic section of Revelation, where oftentimes rich and vivid imagery is used.

3. Opponents of the Church. A number of opponents of the church occur in the Apocalypse. Of special importance is the satanic trinity. We have already noted that Satan persecuted the church and turned his wrath in a special way toward the remnant of the true church. He continues to work against the saints through the sea beast and against those who do not accept the mark of the beast and do not worship his image—actually the same group—through the land beast.

These three evil powers we call the satanic trinity because they imitate the divine trinity of Rev 1:4–5. The false trinity will force humanity into universal false worship, probably a mixture of genuine and false elements. Those who do not participate are going to be persecuted.

In Rev 14 Babylon occurs for the first time by name. Obviously, Babylon is nothing else than this satanic trinity.[19] It is presented as the great city and at the same time as a woman. There are four important women figures in Revelation: Jezebel, the woman of Rev 12, Babylon, and the New Jerusalem. Two are found in the first half of the book, the historical part, and two in the eschatological part. In each part one is negative and the other is positive. Three of them belong to the apocalyptic part. Thus, Babylon is bordered by the true church of Rev 12 and the New Jerusalem, the bride of the Lamb as found in Rev 19, 21 and 22. Babylon is the evil counterpart of both women and resembles them in many ways.[20] Clear parallels and contrasts can be found between the woman of Rev 12 and the harlot of Rev 17 and the bride of the Lamb and the harlot. The latter two are also contrasted as cities, the great city and the holy and beloved city. The New Jerusalem has a precursor and an opponent in the present time. The precursor is the holy city of 11:2, which is nothing else than the woman of Rev 12. The opponent is Babylon. The book clearly distinguishes between the church and Babylon, or the remnant and Babylon. Therefore, the remnant should not be called Babylon. It is not the remnant that is called to go out of Babylon, but "God's people" who are still in Babylon (18:4).

VI. God's Relationship to the Church and Her Final Victory

We need to ask one more question, namely how God the Father and Jesus relate to the church. Indirectly we have already touched on that topic. Let us therefore briefly summarize!

Jesus Loves the Church (1:5). Jesus' love to us has led to our salvation. Jesus has given us tremendous privileges and responsibilities.

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[19] Its sudden appearance in the message of the second angel (14:8) suggest that it comprises the before mentioned evil powers. This seems to be supported by Rev 16.

[20] For a more detailed discussion, see Ekkehardt Mueller, "Babylon", unpublished document.

Jesus Stands in the Middle of His Churches (1:13, 20; 2:1). Jesus cares for his local churches. He praises and reprimands them in order to help them. Christ's love is evident even when he announces judgment. He wants us to return to him.

God Answers Prayers (6:10–11; 8:3–4). Prayers of the saints are mentioned in 5:8 in connection with the Lamb. In 6:10 the martyrs turn to God in prayer. In 6:11 they are given a preliminary answer. A further answer is the trumpet judgments upon those who dwell on earth.

God Seals His Church (7:3–4). God commands the sealing of his church. He intervenes for her. He does not want anybody to be lost.

Jesus Has Saved the Church (7:14, cf. 12:11; 14:3). Salvation is possible because Jesus has shed his blood for us. He came so close to us that he died on the cross in our stead. Now we should come close to him.

Jesus Is Shepherd of His Church (7:15–17; cf. 21:3–4). He provides more than what we need.

Jesus Comes Forth from the Church (12:2, 5). His incarnation points to his closeness with his saints.

Because of Their Relationship with the Holy One, the Believers are also Holy (16:5–6). Again a close relationship is indicated.

God Raises the Faithful Ones in the First Resurrection (20:4, 6). The church follows Jesus in suffering, but also in the resurrection. God gives eternal, incorruptible life and allows us to take part in this rulership.

The Church Will See Her Lord Face to Face (22:3–4). This is the final goal. This promise can comfort in difficult times.

All these statements point to the fact that God loves his church, he enjoys her fellowship, and he will secure her final victory. The church will triumph because Christ has triumphed.

VII. Practical Implications

Finally, what are the practical implications?

(1) *Revelation Points to the Importance of the Church.* Although the book contains the individual aspect, there seems to be a strong accent on the corporate aspect. The author seems to take it for granted that a Christian cannot live his or her Christian life in self-chosen or self-inflicted isolation. Christians are members of Christ's church. God oftentimes works through his Church. She is his army on earth. Thus, we are challenged to take it seriously and willingly get involved in mission outreach and caring relations.

(2) *In Revelation the Church is a Local Congregation and the Universal Church*. A congregational approach to church structure does not seem to be in harmony with the Apocalypse. There are local churches in Revelation, and yet there is a worldwide church to which the others belong. Therefore, the unity of the church must be promoted. E.g., we should be careful not to create national, racial, and gender-based theologies that hinder the unity and progress of the

church. Believers will support their local congregation as well as the fellowship of the sister churches.

(3) *In Revelation the Church is the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant*. The struggling church with her weaknesses may catch our attention today and may irritate us. Therefore it is useful to contrast Rev 1–3 with Rev 19–22. We need the larger picture. We need to see the final outcome. As a church we do not excuse sins and mistakes, but confess them. As individuals we support the church in spite of her shortcomings. These are our shortcomings!

(4) *In Revelation the Church Seems to Be Visible, though Parts Seem to Be Invisible*. The church and the remnant are basically visible entities. Characteristics help to identify the remnant. Time prophecies support that. The church must be visible for others to join it. But the group of Rev 18:4, called "my people," is obviously not a visible entity. Our concept of the church most allow for the visible and invisible aspects.

(5) *Revelation Emphasizes the End Time Church*. Ecclesiology is a pressing topic today. It is very important for all of us, as we draw nearer to the end of time. This is precisely what Revelation tells us. The Bible can prevent us from building our own constructs of ecclesiology. We need to listen to her voice.

(6) *Jesus loves His Church*. So do we!

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Cause and Effect in Creation and Un-creation[1]

Robert H. Brown

The term "un-creation" has been chosen to represent a miraculous event, or series of events, that reverse the consequence of a creation event. A prime illustration is the Flood (Gen. 6-8) that reversed the consequences of Creation Week (Gen 1, 2).

Man's distinction from the other higher level animals that exhibit intelligence—as a being created "in the image of God"—is marked by a driving desire for explanation. However satisfactory it may be, an explanation for an event or process is merely a description in terms of other contributing events or processes. We have a "good explanation" when a description is made in terms of phenomena that have been repeatedly observed to be basic manifestations of God in the regular operation of the physical universe. A good explanation of an electric motor is a description of its operation in terms of the basic laws (repeated observations) of electricity and magnetism. A good explanation of Joe's nosebleed includes the electrical interactions between molecules in Joe's nose and Mike's fist, the limits of electrical attraction between the molecules in Joe's blood vessels, and Mike's intention.

One type of event that cannot be described in terms of continuously repeatable observations comes under the classification of creation. Such an event may be the appearance of something that has no preexistence and identifiable natural cause. A creation event that brings disorganization to something created, or removes a previous creation event, may be classed as an un-creation event.

The first chapter of Genesis lists a series of creation events described *in toto* as Creation Week, an episode that gave planet Earth a perfect biosphere. Genesis 7 describes an un-creation episode that reduced the planet back to the state described in Gen. 1:1, or something rather like it. The Flood was probably the first

[1] This brief comment is in response to the article "A Scientific Paradigm for the Genesis Flood," by Ted Noel and Ken Noel, published in *JATS* 12/1 (Spring 2001), 106–138.

un-creation episode the inhabitants of the universe had seen. They would have no explanation for it, other than as a unique expression of God.

The Creation Week account lists a series of creation events, none of which may be described as a consequence of the one preceding it, or explanation for the one following. If the first verse of Genesis is considered to specify a creation of matter, or the Solar System, at an unspecified time prior to the events noted in the following verses (a position accommodated by the NIV in translating *ʿereṣ* differently in Gen 1: 10 than in Gen 1:1 and 2:1), this event cannot be considered as a cause of, or explanation for, any of the events noted in the following verses.

The first event specified in the Flood un-creation episode is the break-up of Earth's crust and heavy rain (Gen. 7:11). In our desire to push explanation back as far as possible, we can speculate that the break-up and rain were the result of an unspecified preceding un-creation event, such as a change in the Earth's rotation. Without testimony from someone who observed planet Earth at the beginning of the Flood episode, there is no way to determine whether the initial break-up and rain were an unexplainable cause or an effect.

Genesis eight summarizes a late-stage-Flood creation process causing results similar to the creation event at the beginning of the third day of Creation Week—transformation from the low surface relief of the crust associated with universal coverage by water, to collection of water into basins (oceans). The erosion processes observed to be caused by wind, rain, and tides will eventually erode Earth's crust surface to a low relief that has universal coverage by water. Genesis 1:9 and chapter 8 record two creation events/processes in which planet Earth was transformed from a natural equilibrium state to a surface disequilibrium state suitable for the support of land-based plants and animals.

Unless a change was imposed by the Creator, only relatively insignificant changes in Earth's rotation would be associated with these surface transformations. Earth's rotation axis is presently inclined 23.5 degrees with respect to its revolution axis about the sun. This inclination produces seasons and provides for the designation of the year as a unit of time. There are many varieties of plants that cannot survive without a cold season in the annual growth cycle.

This amount of inclination is about ideal for maximizing the portion of Earth's surface that is desirable for habitation. According to Gen 1:14, the most reasonable presumption is that there was a similar inclination following the third day of Creation Week. A subsidiary presumption is that whatever changes may have occurred during the Flood episode, the rotation axis returned essentially to its initial inclination.

I do not perceive the foregoing comments to have any bearing on personal salvation, but offer them for whatever benefit they may have in dialog with individuals who like to associate scientific explanations with event specifications in the Bible.

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Annihilation and Biblical Inspiration: Do Words Mean What They Say?[1]

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> "When *I* use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."
>
> "The question is," said Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things."
>
> "The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master—that's all."
>
> –Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*

Evangelicals have long prided themselves on basing their beliefs on Scripture alone. In fact, however, we may argue *sola scriptura* when disproving the unbiblical beliefs of other denominations, yet when it comes to our own dearly held views, we are not above ignoring biblical evidence that contradicts us. Should Evangelicals ever argue from tradition rather than Scripture, though? Should Evangelicals base their teachings on ambiguous texts viewed by the light of traditional understandings, while ignoring clear texts that point to the opposite conclusion? Who among us would say yes?

It seems to me that like Humpty Dumpty, those arguing for the eternal torment of the wicked often assign arbitrary and contradictory meanings to words already perfectly clear in English, Hebrew, and Greek—words like "destroy," "consume," "dead," and "devoured."[2] It is true that these words, as used in Scripture, may refer to several areas of experience, and it is also true that they are often used metaphorically. However, *when metaphors are used, they always allude to the established meanings of words, not to their opposites*.

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[1] This is, essentially, the text of the overhead transparencies used in a talk I gave on this topic at the 2001 annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, held in Colorado Springs. I've left it in this form because my space is limited to six pages at the end of this issue of *JATS*.

[2] Rather than give instances that cause embarrassment to scholars, I will leave it to readers to consider what they've read and remember such instances. There have been many.

What follows is not a formal paper, but a collection of texts with a few words of commentary. My hope is that they will spark thought, discussion, and study.

What Does "Eternal" Mean?

Eternal Judgment (*krímatos aiōníou)*: **Heb 6:2** "of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of **eternal judgment**." [The period of **judging** or **judgment** is limited in duration, but the **verdict** will never be reversed, so the **judgment** is **eternal**.]

Eternal Redemption (*aiōnían lútrōsin*): **Heb 9:12** "Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all having obtained **eternal redemption**." [Jesus redeemed us "once for all," but the **effect** of that redemption is **eternal**.]

Eternal Salvation (*sōtērias aiōníou*): **Heb 5:9** "And having been perfected, He became the author of **eternal salvation** to all who obey Him." [Jesus **saved** us by a "once for all" act, called salvation, but the **effect** of that salvation is **eternal**.]

Eternal Sin (*aiōníou hamartēmatos*): **Mark 3:29** "but He who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, but is guilty of an **eternal sin**." [The **sin** occurs during a finite lifetime, but its **effect** is **eternal**.]

Eternal Destruction (*ólethron aiōnion*): **2 Thes 1:9** "These shall be punished with **everlasting destruction** from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." [**Destroyed** once, but the **effect** of that destruction is **eternal**.]

Eternal Punishment (*kólasin aiōnion* / *zōèn aiōnion*): **Matt 25:46** "And these will go away into **everlasting punishment**, but the righteous into **everlasting life**." [**Resurrection** to **life** happens "in a twinkling of an eye," but the **effect** is **eternal**. **Execution** is an **event** completed only by **death**, and it has **not** occurred unless death **results**, but it is an **eternal punishment** because it is **irreversible**.]

Eternal Fire (*puròs aiōníou*): **Jude 7** "as **Sodom and Gomorrah**, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as **an example** [*deigma*, a specimen], **suffering the vengeance of eternal fire**." [The clear statement here is that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by "eternal fire," yet that fire is not still burning. The **effect** of the fire is permanent, but the fire burned until the fuel was consumed, then went out. Genesis 19:24–29 tells us the cities were "destroyed," and 2 Pet 2:6 tells us they were turned to "ashes." We may think we know what Jesus means by "eternal fire" in Matt 18:8 and 25:41, but the Bible provides its own answer.][3]

[3] The word most frequently used with "eternal" is of course "life." It begins at the resurrection (1 Cor 15:42–43). The resurrection to life is a single event with eternal effects the Bible calls "eter-

What Do the "Worms and Unquenchable Fire" Verses Mean?

Mark 9:44, 46, 48 "Their **worm** does not **die**, and the **fire is not quenched**." Jesus is quoting **Isa 66:24** "And they shall go forth and look upon the **corpses** [*peger*; corpse/carcass] of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their **worm** does not die, and their **fire is not quenched**. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh." [The correct understanding of Jesus' meaning must take into account the following points: 1) One is not a **corpse** until one is **dead**; 2) Maggots eat **only dead flesh**, but **fire kills maggots**; 3) Thus, this is a **mixed metaphor**, and **literal fulfillment** is **impossible**; 4) But, the metaphors point to an **irreversible process of destruction following death**.]

Ezek 20:47–48 "And say to the forest of the South, 'Hear the word of the LORD! Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I will kindle a fire in you, and it shall devour every green tree and every dry tree in you; **the blazing flame shall not be quenched**, and all faces from the south to the north shall be scorched by it. All flesh shall see that I, the LORD, have kindled it; **it shall not be quenched**."'" [This metaphorical language refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah, using the image of "unquenchable fire" not to suggest an eternal process, but a process unstoppable until its end is reached.]

What Does It Mean to "Die"?

Gen. 7:21–23 And all flesh **died** [*apéthane*] that moved on the earth: . . ."

John 11:26 "'And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never **die** [*apothánē*]. Do you believe this?'" [Logically, thus, those who **do not** believe **will die** at some time, becoming like those who died in the Flood. If they die, they are dead, and if they are dead, they are not alive, and if they are not alive, they cannot experience eternal torment. Death does not mean life.]

What Does "Devoured" Mean?

2 Kings 1:12 "And fire of God came down from heaven and consumed [*wattōʾkal* [4]/ *katéphagen*] him and his fifty." [καὶ κατέβη πῦρ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ κατέφαγεν αὐτὸν]

Rev 20:9 "They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured [*katéphagen*] them." [καὶ κατέβη πῦρ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρα-

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nal life." Similarly, "eternal destruction" is a single event with eternal effects the Bible calls "death" (Rom 6:23). "Eternal life" is lived in the presence of the "eternal glory" of the "eternal God" and the "eternal Spirit" because of God's "eternal purpose." It is interesting that when it refers to God, "eternal" has no implied beginning or end, but "eternal life" begins when we begin sharing in God's own eternality, so for us it is eternal in only one direction. Similarly, the "eternal covenant" was not always in place. Sometimes an "eternal" event has a clear beginning and end, with only the effect being eternal.

[4] From *ʾākal*, to "eat up" or "consume."

νοῦ καὶ κατέφαγεν αὐτούς.**]** [If in Elijah's day God literally **kills the wicked with fire from heaven**, and if John then **quotes** this phrase **exactly** to indicate what he has seen in vision about the fate of the wicked, how can we say they will **not** be **devoured** to death?]

Isa 24:6 "Therefore the curse has **devoured** [*édetai*, eaten] the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are **burned**, and few men are left."

Isa 26:11 ". . . Yes, the **fire** of Your **enemies** [*hupenantíous*] shall **devour** [*édetai*, eat] **them**."

Heb 10:27 ". . . but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and **fiery** indignation which will **devour** [*esthíein*, eat up]the **adversaries** [*hupenantíous*]." [What has been **devoured** or **eaten up** exists no longer. What has been **devoured by fire** can no longer be **alive**. *Esthiō* and *edō* usually refer to eating food, and they are often used metaphorically, but **they are not metaphors of something <u>never</u> eaten but remaining <u>eternally uneaten</u>, though eternally chewed**.]

What Does "Perish" or "Destroyed" Mean?

Matt 22:7 "'But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, **destroyed** [*apōlesen*] those murderers, and **burned up their city**.'" [Jesus is not revealing that the murderers were tortured forever, but that they were killed. This is the primary meaning of the word.]

Matt 26:52 "But Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will **perish** [*apolountai*] by the sword.'" ["**Perish**" here means **death**, not some never-ending flaying with a sword throughout eternity.]

Luke 11:51 "'from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who **perished** [*apoloménou*] between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation.'" [Was Zechariah still **perishing** in Jesus' day, or had he completed the process implied by the word and **perished**, as the text says?]

Luke 13:3, 5 "'I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise **perish** [*apoleísthe*].'" [If the process of **perishing** cannot be **completed**, then Jesus is **wrong** about this.]

John 3:16 "'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not **perish** [*apólētai*] but have everlasting life.'" [If those who believe **do not perish**, then those who do not believe logically must **perish**. But if the wicked suffer everlasting torment in Hell, then they **don't perish**, and **they also receive everlasting life**. Thus, **both** the righteous and the wicked receive everlasting life—the difference is only in the nature of that life. If this were so, then Jesus would be wrong here.]

2 Pet 3:6 "by which the world that then existed **perished** [*apōleto*], being flooded with water." [That world **died**, along with the people in it, except for Noah and family.]

2 Pet 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should **perish** [*apolésthai*] but that all should come to repentance." [Those do not repent **perish**. If they cannot **die**, they cannot **perish**.]

Rom 6:23 "For the wages of sin is **death** [*thanatos*], but the free gift of God is **eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord**." [The wages are not **eternal suffering**, but **death**. If we are not Humpty Dumpty, then **death** means **death**, not **life**.]

Luke 17:29 "'but **on the day** that Lot went out of Sodom it rained **fire and brimstone from heaven** and **destroyed** [*apōlesen*] them all.'"

Matt 10:29 "'And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to **destroy** [*apolésai*] **both soul and body in hell**.'" [If they live on in eternal torment, they have not been **destroyed**.]

How Long Does "Stubble" Burn?

Exod 15:7 [Against Egypt] "'You sent forth Your **wrath**; It **consumed them like stubble**.'"

Obadiah 16, 18 [Against Edom] "'And **they shall be as though they had never been**. . . . The house of Jacob shall be a **fire**, and the house of Joseph a **flame**; but the house of Esau shall be **stubble**; **they** [Jacob and Joseph] **shall kindle them and devour them**, and **no survivor** shall remain of the house of Esau,' for the LORD has spoken." [This is metaphorical, but it points to a process leading to swift and certain death. It points not to a never-ending process, but to a process that will reach a completion.]

Isa 47:14 [Against Babylon] "'Behold, they shall be as **stubble**, the **fire shall burn them**.'" [Experience shows us that stubble does not burn forever, but once burned, it cannot be restored, so the effect is permanent. The usage here is metaphorical.]

Nahum 1:9–10 [Day of the Lord] "**Affliction will not rise up a second time**. For while tangled like thorns, and while drunken like drunkards, **they shall be devoured like stubble fully dried**." [Whether metaphorical or literal, the fire burns quickly. Note that the Old Testament prophets do not distinguish, in their "Day of the Lord" language, between the death of the wicked at Christ's coming, as seen in Revelation, and the punishment of the wicked in Rev 20. They know only the latter, and they see the burning as swift, with the effect permanent.]

What Are "Ashes"?

Mal 4:1, 3 [Day of the Lord] "'For behold, the day is coming, Burning like an oven, And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be **stubble**. And the day which is coming shall **burn them up**," Says the LORD of hosts, "That will leave them neither root nor branch. . . . You shall trample the wicked, for **they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this**,' Says the

LORD of hosts." [If the wicked burn in eternal conscious torment for all time, they cannot be ashes under the soles of the feet of the righteous at any time, much less "on the day" their burning begins. Even if the language is metaphorical, the metaphor points to death, not to eternal life apart from God.]

Ezek. 28:18–19 "'By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore **I have brought fire from the midst of you**; it has **consumed** you, and **I have turned you to ashes on the earth** in the eyes of all who see you. All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have become terrified and **you will cease to be forever**.'" [Some think this is speaking covertly of Satan. Whoever it may be speaking of, to "cease to be forever" cannot mean to **be** forever, even metaphorically. One cannot be "ashes" until one has "ceased to be." Ashes, formed during combustion, are what is left after something has been burned up.]

What Does "Slay" Mean?

Isa 65:15 [Day of the Lord] "'For the Lord GOD will **slay** you.'"

Isa 66:15–16 [Day of the Lord] "'For behold, the LORD will come with **fire** and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with **flames of fire**. For **by fire and by His sword** the LORD will judge all flesh; and the **slain** of the LORD shall be many.'"

Isa 66:24 "'And they shall go forth and look upon the **corpses** of the men who have transgressed against Me. For **their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched**. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.'" [One is not **slain** until one is **no longer alive**. If the wicked have been **slain** by the fire of God, they cannot still be **alive**. They are **corpses**. To say that "slain" here does not really mean "slain" but "not slain" is again to imitate Humpty Dumpty.]

What Does "End" Mean?

Zeph 1:18 [Day of the Lord] "'Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's **wrath**; but the whole land shall be **devoured by the fire** of His jealousy, for **He will make speedy riddance** [NIV, "**a sudden end**"] of all those who dwell in the land.'"

Matt 13:40 "'As the **weeds** are pulled up and **burned in the fire**, so it will be at the end of the age.'" [There can be no "sudden end" of people who suffer eternal conscious torment for all eternity. Either the doctrine is wrong, or the Bible is wrong.]

Any fair discussion of the fate of the wicked should include these verses. Base beliefs on the entire biblical witness, not a few proof texts. Establish the meaning of seemingly clear words by seeing how they are used elsewhere in Scripture. Do not twist the meanings of words so they fit beliefs. Let what is clear explain what is ambiguous. These are basic rules of sound interpretation, but they have been ignored to often in discussions of this topic.