Gerhard Hasel, former dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and Professor of Old Testament at Andrews University, was a major player in the development of Adventist theology—especially in the areas of Old Testament and biblical hermeneutics. His book, *Old Testament Theology: Current Issues in the Present Debate* was a major contribution to OT theological studies and was adopted widely as a text by many seminaries, regardless of denominational affiliation. His views heavily influenced a generation of church leaders and scholars. The students he influenced now occupy many of the senior professorships and administrative posts throughout the Seventh-day Adventist educational system and church. While not one of the initial founders of the Adventist Theological Society (contrary to popular belief in some quarters) he soon joined the society and would become one of the society’s early presidents.

In this issue we are pleased to publish several papers that were presented in a special symposium honoring Dr. Hasel's contributions in OT and Biblical Hermeneutics. We begin with an article that highlights the legacy of Dr. Hasel by one of his students and (later) colleagues, Richard Davidson. This is followed by Eugene Merrill’s article, “Archaeology and Old Testament Biblical Theology: Their Interface and Mutual Informativeness.” Gerhard Hasel was particularly interested in the role of archaeology in understanding the Bible as is evident in the fact that his son, Michael Hasel, who has contributed, “Life Sketch of Gerhard Hasel,” chose archaeology as his special field of study. The distinguished OT scholar, Walter Kaiser, has provided us with the insightful, “The Hasel-Kaiser and Evangelical Discussions on the Search for a Center or Mitte to Biblical
Theology” which highlights Hasel’s contribution to the debate on the center of OT theology. Dr. Michael Hasel’s “Life Sketch,” which gives a brief overview of the life of his father, is followed by a Bibliography of Dr. Gerhard Hasel’s literary works.

The remainder of the offerings in this issue round out areas that Dr. Hasel was certainly interested in. We have a study by Samuel Nunez entitled, “Narrative Structure of Daniel 8: A Text Linguistic Approach.” Next is Fernando Canale’s “Vision and Mission - Part 1”; Joseph Kidder’s “Christ, the Son of the Living God: the Theme of the Chiastic Structure of the Gospel of Matthew,” Ranko Stefanovic’s “The Meaning and Message of the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7)” and Dave Thomas’ thought-provoking “An Unconventional Look at the Challenge of Theodicy.”

Please keep up with the latest happenings involving ATS by consulting our website, www.atsjats.org. Back issues of JATS can be found under the publications tab on the webpage. You may also wish to note the other resources that are available there. The activities tab lists information about the various symposiums which ATS holds each year and the media tab has archived video and audio selections.

An additional website resource can be found at: www.perspectivedigest.org. Perspective Digest provides significant theological articles, but in a more accessible manner for the general public. Our newest resource is: ATSAcademy which can be found at: www.atsacademy.org and contains video resources explaining important, contemporary theological issues.

We trust that you will enjoy these resources from ATS and that you will be blessed and enriched by the articles published in this issue.

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A Bibliography of the Writings of Gerhard Franz Hasel

Michael G. Hasel
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BOOKS


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1 The information in this bibliography first appeared in Andrews University Seminary Studies, (Autumn) 1996, No. 2, pages 169-186. Published with permission.
Translations:


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Vision and Mission–Part 1: 
Historical and Methodological Background

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1. The State of the Church

The Seventh-day Adventist Church originated as a missionary global movement to prepare the way for Christ’s second coming in glory and majesty. This mission has led Adventists to reach the ends of the world thus becoming universal (catholic) in scope and spiritual experience. According to Ted Wilson’s report in his first State of the Church address, the Adventist mission remains vibrant and expanding rapidly, entering new frontiers, engaging postmoderns and reaching the megacities of the world.¹ Unfortunately, he also sees the church facing “some enormous challenges” that damage the spiritual life and derail the mission of the worldwide Adventist community. These challenges are: “(1) A loss of Seventh-day Adventist identity among some of our pastors and church members; (2) The growing tide of worldliness in many of our churches; (3) The danger of disunity; (4) A spiritual complacency and apathy that leads to a lack of involvement in the mission of the church.”²

If we reflect on these issues we discover that they represent a sequential order guided by an inner causal relation. In other words, each point is the cause of the next one. This order becomes clear when we learn Wilson believes the main malady affecting the church today is our lack of identity which, in turn, is caused by the “neutralization of Scripture” among “too

² Ibid.
many of our pastors and members.” Not surprisingly, he suggests that to deal with these challenges successfully we should de-neutralize and re-empower Scripture by studying it through the “historical, biblical method.”

a. Destination and Itinerary

If this scenario indeed reflects reality, the question arises: How should we facilitate a global return to Scripture in Adventism at all levels of church life? Simply put, how do we become anew the “people of the Bible”? And furthermore, is this even feasible in an institutionalized and secularized global community involving large-scale educational and medical institutions? I believe it is not only possible but incumbent upon us to diligently work towards this return to Scripture if we would fulfill Christ’s mission to the remnant in these last days.

Because I believe that, as the Remnant Church, we all want to become involved in the final mission to prepare ourselves and the world for the glorious coming of Christ and the establishment of His eternal kingdom, my purpose in this journey is to explore the way in which we can all participate in bringing Christ and His Word back as the sole ground and living center of the life of the church.

Many contemporary Adventists incorrectly assume that the formative experience of Adventism was the Great Disappointment. In reality, the engine propelling Seventh-day Adventists to organize and become the universal church was their theological vision and system. In this essay I propose that remembering, retrieving, embracing, expanding, using and disseminating that vision and system is the key in our hands to foster unity and finish the global mission of the church, preparing the way for the

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3 “Now, here is precisely my concern. Too many of our pastors and members either have failed to recognize, or have forgotten, the divine prophetic calling God has given us as a church. There’s a growing tendency to minimize our differences with other denominations. In some Seventh-day Adventist churches, the messages from the pulpit are little different than the typical Protestant church. Much of this comes from the neutralization of the Bible as God’s Word. It is so important that we base our beliefs on the Word of God, using the historical, biblical method of studying the Scriptures, and approaching prophetic understanding from the historicist perspective. God’s Word must be foundational to our belief, faith, and practical living. The Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth if we will study, pray, and listen to God’s voice. This will help us strongly establish our Seventh-day Adventist identity.” Ibid.

4 Ibid.

second coming of Christ. What is that vision? How does it work? What does it do? How should we use it? These are the questions we will now ponder for the sake of Christ, His church and His mission.

To achieve this purpose and answer these questions I invite you to journey with me visiting some unique places that will provide us with new vistas, helping us discover the beautiful horizon before us. We will explore the best way to end the neutralization of Scripture and facilitate the worldwide denominational return to a biblical spirituality that can power the final mission of the church.

In this article (part 1 of a two-article series) we will start our journey by (1) assessing our present situation. Then we will go back in history to (2) learn where the pioneers got the vision and answer questions about it such as, what is it? What does it do? How does it work? What difference does it make? Moving on, we will (3) consider how Adventists lost their vision and the consequences that followed. Immediately after, we will (4) contemplate how the vision connects with the mission of the church throughout our denomination’s history. At that point in our journey we will be ready to explore, in the next article (part 2 of this two-article series), the direct connection that exists between vision and everyday life by (5) considering what it means to live out the vision spiritually and the difference its various interpretations have on the spiritual and missionary life of the church. After (6) exploring the oft-forgotten vision-spirituality-church-mission connection operating within the church, we will (7) survey the way in which it relates to the neutralization of Scripture. Finally, we will (8) seek ways to maximize the church’s rich human resources to overcome the neutralization of Scripture and empower God’s Word on a personal, institutional and global level.

A few tips may help our travelers make their journey more enjoyable and profitable. We are embarking on an “exploratory” expedition similar to the 40-day stake-out trip Joshua, Caleb and their ten companions made when Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan (Numbers 13:1-14:9). After a tumultuous process the Lord led them to possess the land they had surveyed. Somewhat like this group of men, I have been a “lone ranger” surveying the land for over 40 years. This experience has allowed me to select a few chosen destinations as samples of the vast territory yet to conquer.

When planning to visit a foreign country for the first time, among our many preparations we make sure to read travel guides or watch videos that describe the land and its culture. If you find our destination in this journey
is taking you to a “foreign land” I highly recommend you pick up my colleague and friend George Knight’s incisive “tour guide”: *The Apocalyptic Vision and the Neutering of Adventism.* In it he surveys the same territory we will visit and presents his own assessment of the land, sharing clear and penetrating insights on our present situation from the historical perspective of a seasoned Adventist thinker.

Also, please note that we are seeking to cover a broad terrain, which means the visits to each destination will be somewhat short and sketchy. After our journey, many questions will linger and a few destinations inspire us to further exploration. Yet, our basic overview, cursory though it may be, is the essential starting point for the massive goal we seek to reach. To profit from our visit to each destination you will need to keep in mind that I arranged our itinerary in a logical and narrative order. In other words, we need to visit some spots first in order to better understand and appreciate the next. This may require revisiting earlier destinations to understand present locations. To facilitate the reviewing of earlier sections I have included cross-references and figures along the way. With the roadmap and travel tips in hand, we’re now ready to get started on our journey!

**b. How Did We Get Here?**

To move ahead we need to assess, though briefly, how we have arrived at the point of nullifying Scripture in our lives and ministry. Bluntly put, how did we morph from being known as “the people of the Bible” to a people that “neutralize” Scripture? No doubt this mutation stems from a long and complex history. Here we need only trace some of the waymarks of its evolution: identity loss, doctrinal illiteracy, forgetfulness of prophecies, and neglect of spiritual disciplines.

Thirteen years ago in an address to Adventist leaders, Jan Paulsen, former president of the General Conference, likewise perceived a loss of Adventist identity in their ranks. According to Paulsen, by design or simple assimilation, Adventists were becoming more recognizable as mere “Christians” than as “Seventh-day Adventist Christians.” He stated that as Adventists we “…have a very specific identity, which we lose to our own destruction.” Paulsen appropriately reminded us that our identity is directly

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linked to—even equivalent to—our theological thinking. Thus, the decline in our sense of identity as Seventh-day Adventists revealed a malfunction in the theological thought structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Very likely this is one of the factors that have paved the way to our present “neutralization” of Scripture noted by pastor Ted Wilson. Since our identity is grounded in Scripture, a loss of identity may flow from an undetected disconnect between our theological thinking and Scripture.

Going back fourteen years, we find pastor Neal C. Wilson, then president of the General Conference, recognizing that "too many of our people are doctrinally illiterate, and as a result they have no firm convictions or commitment to this prophetic movement." It is not difficult to see how doctrinal illiteracy—producing a lack of conviction and commitment to the church—may lead to a loss of identity and the neutralization of Scripture.

To make a long story short, let’s go back even further in time to more than a hundred years ago and consider Ellen White’s reflections on the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference, particularly the spiritual debacle among the leadership. Mrs. White was not so much concerned with the theological issues on the table as with the lack of spirituality (conversion) exhibited by the leaders. According to her, the lack of unity and power among the leaders revealed a lack of Christian spirituality stemming from the “most wonderful laziness” in personal “close, critical study of Scriptures.” Their spiritual life depended too much on the research and preaching of others whose views they embraced uncritically as “positive fact” while they should have been able to discern these views “to be Bible truth [or error], through their own individual research, and by the deep convictions of the Spirit of God upon

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Using current terms, we may say the leadership had “head” knowledge based on tradition and not the necessary “spiritual” knowledge that transforms the heart. In these brief observations from the inspired pen, we can detect a dynamic that has continued throughout the ensuing one hundred and twenty-seven years, a dynamic which is silently but surely neutralizing Scripture and Christ from the life of the church.

To recap, we have traced some historical waymarks leading to our present state of apathy toward the Bible. We have noted that scriptural neutralization springs from a lack of ecclesiological identity, stemming from doctrinal illiteracy caused by a “wonderful laziness” in personal Bible study. Already in 1888, according to Ellen White, our church leadership was fast losing its spiritual ground in Scripture. Because Adventist spirituality had become dependent on listening to sermons (to the neglect of personal Bible study), the sola Scriptura principle became replaced by the “tradition of the elders.” This simple fact reduced the experience of church leaders to a mere “head knowledge” which did not spring from hearts intentionally disciplined by close Bible study. At the same time, in an imperceptible but real way, Adventists began to move away from the rock of Scripture to build on the sand of human traditions. This deadly combination of head knowledge and human traditions continues to affect Adventism. Instead of being the spiritual body of Christ eagerly heralding His soon return, we are more and more becoming a human institution whose self-preservation requires traditions that frequently interpret Scripture to gratify a people ignorant of Scripture (Hosea 4:6).

The English dictionary defines neutralization as “the process that makes something or someone ineffective by applying an opposite force or effect,” as such we should look for the opposing force behind the current neutralization. The full quotation may help the reader to gain a deeper understanding of Ellen White’s train of thought on this point. “It has been shown me that there are many of our people who take things for granted, and know not for themselves, by close, critical study of the Scriptures, whether they are believing truth or error. If our people depended much less upon preaching, and spent far more time on their knees before God, pleading for him to open their understanding to the truth of his word, that they might have a knowledge for themselves that their feet were standing on solid rock, angels of God would be around about them, to help them in their endeavors. . . . There is a most wonderful laziness indulged in by a large class of our people, who are willing others should search the Scriptures for them; and they take the truth from the lips of these as a positive fact, but they do not know it to be Bible truth, through their own individual research, and by the deep convictions of the Spirit of God upon their hearts and minds,” Ellen White, “To Brethren Who Assemble in the [Battle Creek] Week of Prayer,” Reading for Sabbath, December 15, 1888, in The Ellen G White 1888 Materials, 196.
neutralization of Scripture. According to the Great Controversy that force is Satan and his angels. We know Satan also operates through the visible Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:4) who early in the history of the church neutralized Scripture with human traditions and philosophy. We should therefore not be surprised if he attempts the same winning strategy with the eschatological remnant in our days. After all, he is fully aware that Scripture is the living source of power given to the Church to minister to humanity.¹⁰ This brief historical review and the spiritual situation it unveils are familiar to us. We are well aware of our need for spiritual renewal: We need revival and reformation. Yet how can we, as a worldwide community, accomplish this task? The success of revival and reformation in the Seventh-day Adventist church hinges on which foundation we choose to build: Will we choose the sand of human traditions or the rock of Scripture?

c. How Do We Move Forward?

Because we know that revival and reformation is the work of the Holy Spirit we have, for decades, prayed for the latter rain to be poured out on our people. We hold that only this event will produce the needed revival and reformation to finish the work. Thus, we exhort the church to read the Bible (Revived by your Word)¹¹ and pray for the latter rain (777 Prayer Initiative). Considering we have been doing these things, on and off, for the last 50 years or so, it would be wise to consider the possibility that there may be something else we are overlooking, something besides Bible reading, prayer, and missionary work that the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist church must embrace in order to experience the biblical spirituality of Christ and finish His final mission outlined by the Three Angels’ Message. Perhaps, we need to move from simply seeking “head” knowledge to obtaining a “heart” of understanding. To access such an experience we need to engage in personal critical Bible study, which is the necessary condition for the Holy Spirit to transform us into the likeness of Jesus Christ and give us the much-needed “heart knowledge.”

Although our personal experience and the institutions of the church are different in nature and purpose, they exist in intimate relation to each other.

¹⁰ “The life of God, which gives life to the world, is in His word. It was by His word that Jesus healed disease and cast out demons, by His word He stilled the sea and raised the dead, and the people bore witness that His word was with power. He spoke the word of God as he had spoken it to all the Old Testament writers. The whole Bible is a manifestation of Christ. It is our only source of power,” (Ellen White, Gospel Workers [Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1948], 251, emphasis mine).

While the institutions influence our experiences, we individually impact what the institutions do. This implies that changes must occur simultaneously, both in the individual and the institutions of the church. To gain speedy worldwide reach, the leadership of the church should embrace and facilitate serious Bible study and the application of biblical teachings and principles to the everyday operations and policies at all levels of our church’s administration and institutions. This work is a necessary condition for the sustained work of revival and reformation until our Lord’s return. In other words, we need to obtain a deep understanding and experience of God’s revelation in Scripture at all sectors of the church. We must move away from a culture of tradition and institution building to a culture of revelation and obedience. We need to think, feel, and act in the light of Scripture through the leadership of Christ our Lord who is the Head of the Church (Ephesians 5:23). We need to experience this now. The question is how?

d. Identifying our Resources

1. Institutional Resources

At the present time our church is enjoying the rich blessings of God manifested in many ways. Besides the basic organization of our church—General Conference, Divisions, Unions and Conferences—educational and medical institutions have played a leading role in the development and growth of Adventism since its formative years. These institutions were created under Christ’s direct guidance through His servant, Ellen G. White, with clear and explicit spiritual and missionary goals. Arguably, the present and future of Adventism is forged in the silent but faithful work of dedicated Adventist educators throughout the world. Since leaders are oriented and formed by their educational experience we can easily see the importance of our educational institutions. The students of today are the leaders of tomorrow.

Consequently, changes in education will directly and rapidly affect what happens in other fields and determine the present and future direction of the church. In the last thirty years there has been an explosion in the creation and growth of Adventist universities. Presently the Adventist church operates more than one hundred universities and colleges around the world. They are a solid resource indispensable to creating spiritual unity, advancing the vision and fulfilling the mission of the church. However,


118
when disconnected from each other and working from the basis and dynamic of human tradition they become a major hindrance to the work of God and, if left unchecked, will change the foundations of the church.

In short, educational institutions—elementary, academy and higher education—are resources that shape the mind and heart of human beings when they are young, thereby determining their usefulness for the church. Educational institutions are the only means to pass on the experience of one generation to the next thus crafting the shape of the future. As in worship, the decisive resources in educational institutions are not material but human. In the church, the decisive qualifications for human resources are the theological and spiritual convictions and commitments of our personnel, faculty, and administration. At all the educational and administrative levels within the Seventh-day Adventist church, first and undivided allegiance must be given to Christ and Scripture (sola Scriptura).

2. Human Resources

With the passing of time, Adventists have lost not only their “first love” (Revelation 2:4) but also, and more importantly, the formative Adventist pioneers’ “experience” that moved them to create and organize what we now know as the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church.¹³

The human resources of the church are its members, leaders and laity. All are needed for ministry and mission. However, we know that our usefulness for ministry and mission depends on our actions, which are determined by our spiritual union with Christ. Our spiritual oneness with Christ, in turn, hinges on the theology (doctrinal understanding) we adopt, and the fountainhead from which all theology flows can be only one of two: tradition or Scripture. The success of the church, then, depends on the spiritual quality of their human resources, not on the material excellence and number of its institutions. As such, we must foment each believer’s spiritual union with Christ. When Adventist institutions foster and facilitate this spiritual dimension in all their members they will naturally achieve their mission and maximize their resources.

Because spirituality can flow from one of two sources, tradition or Scripture (1.b), two different types of spirituality result. To distinguish between them we need a vision from which to evaluate them. Let us, then, turn our attention to the Adventist Vision.

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2. Getting the Vision

The title of this section deserves some clarification. The word *vision* has a variety of meanings. Throughout our journey I will use the word *vision* not in its prophetic sense of anticipating the future and receiving information supernaturally, but as (1) the ability to think about or plan the future with imagination or wisdom, and (2) a mode of seeing or conceiving. When we go to the optometrist we seek to improve our ability to see. Without the ability to see clearly, our seeing activities can be distorted. Thus, when using the word *vision* in reference to Adventism I will be referring not the actions we perform in seeing things but to the ability to think with wisdom the deep things of God around whom the Church gathers and exists.

This ability is grounded in a mode of seeing or conceiving the things of God. This mode of seeing is the vision whose main role is to allow us to see (understand) the Truth of Christ in Scripture. In this way, vision has a hermeneutical function, that is to say, it works as a set of principles or ideas guiding the process of interpretation and understanding. From now on, then, the word *vision* will have the added meaning of “hermeneutical principles or ideas necessary to interpret and understand Scripture and reality as a whole.” In short, the word *vision* (and the contents associated with it) will always have a hermeneutical function.

Adding the adjective *Adventist* to *vision* simply signals our intent to discover what the vision (as described above) means in Adventism and the role it plays in the life and mission of the church. This will help us then move forward to the questions on function, retrieval, and method.

a. From Where?

If Adventists have had a vision propelling them forward, it did not arise out of nothing. From where did it come? As we will see in the next destination, our Adventist vision arose from the sanctuary. Moreover, we know the sanctuary message did not come to Adventism by divine revelation but through Bible study because all believers were united in an impassioned commitment to the *Sola Scriptura* principle. They had received this principle as a treasured inheritance from the Protestant Reformation but were the first to understand and apply it fully.

While the reformers correctly placed the authority of Scripture over tradition, they implicitly continued using tradition as a hermeneutical guide to interpret Scripture. However, this was not so among the leaders of the Advent Movement. We find them intentionally drawing their hermeneutical
(interpretive) principles from Scripture, thereby departing further from the authority of tradition. According to William Miller’s rules of interpretation, they had come to believe that the hermeneutical principles we need to interpret Scripture must come from within Scripture itself. Briefly put, Scripture interprets itself. Also, for them *Scriptura* meant “the whole of Scripture,” including both Testaments, not only the New. Since they were intentionally seeking to build their whole understanding of Christianity on Scripture alone, interpreted by itself, sooner or later their vision was bound to spring exclusively from Scripture. They were moving in the right direction.

*b. What Is It?*

Based on the *sola Scriptura* principle thus understood we ask, what is the Adventist vision? To avoid unnecessary disagreements I suggest we consider the “formative” vision that compelled Adventists to become the global eschatological Remnant of Christ’s Church, motivating them to global mission. Let us direct our attention, then, to the contents and role of the Seventh-day Adventist formative vision.

Historians tell us that on the day after the October 22 frustration, Hiram Edson discovered the cause of their “Great Disappointment” experience. The Daniel 8:14 cleansing of the sanctuary prophecy did not point to Christ’s second coming but to the new phase of His redemptive work in the

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14 The words “hermeneutics” and “hermeneutical” in this essay are use as synonyms for “interpretation” and “interpretive.” The words “to understand” and “understanding” are used as close synonyms of “hermeneutics” and “interpretation.” However, these words are by no means identical in meaning. Hermeneutical emphasizes the principles of interpretation and understanding. Interpretation, in turn, underlines the process through which we know, and finally, understanding underscores the goal of this process. Vision as used in the writing properly belong to the special emphasis of hermeneutics, that is, it provides the general principles that guides us as we process information and ultimately attain understanding of Scripture and realities.

15 “Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed, or wisdom, is my rule, and not the Bible.” Joshua Himes, *Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology: Selected from Manuscripts of William Miller with a Memoir of His Life* (Boston, 14 Devonshire Street: Joshua V. Himes, 1842), 20, rule 5.

16 ———, *Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology: Selected from Manuscripts of William Miller with a Memoir of His Life* (Boston, 14 Devonshire Street: Joshua V. Himes, 1842), 20, rules 2 and 4.
most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary.\textsuperscript{17} This scenario had never once crossed their minds. The idea was both novel and attractive because it explained their questions and spiritual disillusionment; it also opened to their minds new ideas and vistas to consider. Soon, they were back to studying the Scriptures, systematically attempting to see how the newfound truth fit in with other Christian doctrines. Adventist historian Arthur White, describes the following six years as the “time of the development of a doctrinal structure, a time when the body of truth was being firmly fitted together, piece by piece. It was a time when those involved would have been ill-prepared to herald a message not yet understood in its fullness and its interrelationships.”\textsuperscript{18}

In our days, with our practical, mission-minded denominational culture, we may feel they were wasting their time. They had the truth and should have engaged in mission without delay.\textsuperscript{19} We think in this way because we have lost the passion and understanding of the vision that was moving them from the depths of their very beings. What was that vision? The vision was the groundbreaking yet simple truth that Christ was in heaven working out the last arrangements necessary for finishing His work of salvation. We now know this plain biblical truth as the sanctuary doctrine, one of the fundamental pillars of Adventism. While this is true, it also presents a problem. The unfortunate reality is that we now, at best, consider the sanctuary doctrine just another head knowledge doctrine. As such, we automatically file away under “irrelevant miscellaneous information” what the pioneers saw as their central theological and spiritual vision. At this point, you might be confused, perhaps even disturbed wondering, “What difference does it make if we call the sanctuary a doctrine or a vision?”

Adventist historian C. Mervyn Maxwell may help us to understand the colossal difference that exists between considering biblical teachings on the sanctuary to be mere doctrine versus working vision. He correctly perceived that for Adventist pioneers in this formative period (1844-1850) the fulfillment of prophecy was not simply another doctrine but a “hermeneutical tool.”\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{17} See, for instance, C. Mervyn Maxwell, \textit{Tell It to the World} (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1976), 49.
\textsuperscript{18} Arthur L. White, \textit{The Early Years : 1827-1862} (Review and Herald, 1985), 190.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, 192.
\textsuperscript{20} “Luther and some other reformers honored the historicist interpretation of prophecy, including the year-day principle; but Seventh-day Adventists pioneers, having arrived by the same route at the conviction that the second advent movement was a fulfillment of prophecy, used that fulfillment as a hermeneutical principle in the further development of their
Ellen White also understood the hermeneutical (interpretive) role of the sanctuary in Christian theology and spirituality. As a historical witness she identified and expanded the sanctuary doctrine’s hermeneutical role. In a summary statement she explains, “The subject of the sanctuary was the key which unlocked the mystery of the disappointment of 1844. It opened to view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious, showing that God’s hand had directed the great Advent movement, and revealing present duty as it brought to light the position and work of his people.” The “system of truth” that Ellen White and the pioneers discerned is contained within the pages of Scripture and consists of “a simple and complete system of theology and philosophy.” Evidently, the hermeneutical function of the sanctuary guided and determined the message (position) and the mission (work) of both our Adventist pioneers and Ellen White. It was the hermeneutical role of the sanctuary that led the church to discover and formulate “the invulnerable structure of truth to present to the world.”

c. What Does It Do?
To understand what the vision will accomplish, we must first understand the doctrine of the sanctuary as “hermeneutical vision.” As explained above (2.0) “vision” means “a mode of seeing or conceiving,” that allows us to envision what we are looking for or trying to understand. According to Ellen White, as they studied the Bible after the Great Disappointment, the sanctuary “opened to view” a complete system of truth to the understanding of the pioneers. This system of truth (the message) gave them the motivation to organize and propelled them to global mission. Maxwell expressed the vision role of the sanctuary using the technical term of “hermeneutical tool.” Basically, the sanctuary doctrine became the “hermeneutical vision” because it allowed Adventists to understand the

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message. Once established as scriptural, the fulfillment of prophecy in the second advent movement became a hermeneutical tool for helping establish the Sabbath, sanctuary, spiritual gift, true church, second advent doctrines, etc” C. Mervyn Maxwell, “A Brief History of Adventist Hermeneutics,” Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 4, no. 2 (1993): 214, 15, emphasis mine.
23 Ellen White, Christian Education (Battle Creek, MI: International Tract Society, 1894), 105.
24 Arthur L. White, The Early Years, 190, emphasis mine.
interconnected truths of the Bible and conceive them as a simple yet complex *system of truth*.

Neither the “hermeneutical vision” they used, nor the “system of theological and philosophical truth” they saw came from outside the Bible. On the contrary, both were already present and operative in the whole of Scripture. They were simply applying the *sola scriptura principle* inherited from Protestantism to its full potential. In so doing they became radical revolutionaries, charting a new course, and breaking new theological and philosophical ground. According to Arthur White, “All this was in ‘the scattering time,’ 1844 to 1850. Now they were prepared to enter the openings of ‘the gathering time.’ The message was clear. Doctrinal beliefs were for the most part well established. Wrote Ellen White on December 13, 1850, ‘We know that we have the truth.’”

Although they could not fully grasp the seismic shift their discovery entailed, the beauty, inner consistency, and spiritual power of their message was felt. This new systematic understanding of the truth about Jesus Christ was already propelling them to become the emerging Remnant Church eager to engage in global mission.

d. How Does It Work?

Today we realize that the formative vision of Adventism is what we now label “the doctrine of the sanctuary,” when used not merely as doctrine but as the guiding hermeneutical tool. How does a hermeneutical tool work? Before addressing this point, let us take a brief detour to address an even

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25 Arthur L. White, *The Early Years*, 193. Arthur L White quotes from the following passage. “Dear Brother Rhodes was with us in our last conference. It was good to see his face once more and cheering to hear him talk the plain cutting truth of God from the Bible. How plain our position is: We know that we have the truth. Brother Rhodes has now gone in company with Brother John Andrews to the eastern part of the State to hunt up the scattered sheep. We have received two letters from them. God is at work and is bringing souls from the rubbish to the clear light of truth. We have received cheering letters from different places. God is with Israel.” Ellen White, “Letter to Reuben and Belinda Loveland,” (Paris, Maine December 13, 1850), Lt 30.

26 “Those who received the light concerning the sanctuary and the immutability of the law of God, were filled with joy and wonder, as they saw the beauty and harmony of the system of truth that opened to their understanding. They desired that the light which appeared to them so precious might be imparted to all Christians; and they could not but believe that it would be joyfully accepted. But truths that would place them at variance with the world were not welcome to many who claimed to be followers of Christ. Obedience to the fourth commandment required a sacrifice from which the majority drew back.” White, *The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan During the Christian Dispensation*, 454.
more general issue: Why do we even need hermeneutical tools to read the Bible?

To answer this question, consider for a moment the process of reading. When we first learn how to read we assume the process is straightforward. We assume that when reading a book we all understand more or less the same thing. Consequently, if after comparing reading reports on the same passage we discover variances, we logically assume some readings are wrong and need correction to fully reflect the text. If we apply this naïve view of reading to the Bible and find variances between various reading reports we will have the same compulsion. For some reason, we tend to see our reading as right and others’ as wrong.

However, if we were to take time to explore the reasons different readers had for their divergent reports we may begin to understand that reading is not as simple and straightforward as we first thought. We will realize that “reading” is only one aspect of the larger human experience we know as “knowing.” If we were to study the process of knowledge long enough we would discover that all knowledge is interpretation. To read is to know and to know is to interpret. In other words, we cannot read without at the same time interpreting (usually unconsciously) what we read.

But the goal of reading is to understand what we read. Understanding always requires a context, without a context we cannot know or read. Like knowledge, contexts are always present and changing. Exegetes, who specialize in reading texts, know this well. They know that if we change or ignore the context our understanding of the text changes as well. Biblical exegetes have discussed and classified the contexts necessary to understand the biblical text in various ways. Among them they mention the philological, textual, literary, historical, and theological contexts. However, there are other broader contexts always present and guiding us when we read, think, and communicate. These are the ontological and metaphysical contexts usually studied by philosophers. The ontological (reality) and metaphysical (totality) contexts are closely related to the

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28 I use the technical word “ontological” to refer to the study of the nature of reality. In biblical interpretation and theology “reality” is always assumed. Simply put, when we say “God is” we either assume the “is” means “real” or “fictional.” As Adventists we usually do not think about this level because we assume God is real. Automatically, we interpret Scripture and theology within the context of reality. Yet, not all readers and thinkers do likewise. Non-Christians and an overwhelming number of Christians believe that the “is”
theological context exegetes, theologians, and pastors use to read Scripture, develop doctrines, and preach sermons.

Our brief detour comes here to an end allowing us to answer the previous question: why do we need “hermeneutical tools” to read the Bible and do theology? We need hermeneutical tools because reading and thinking are not simple but rather complex experiences that involve many components, among them a variety of interlocking contexts. The contexts we assume are hermeneutical or interpretive tools because they are the necessary presuppositions (or principles) required for a proper understanding of texts and doctrines. Usually we are unaware of the presuppositions we assume. So, to make sure we are heading in the right direction in our knowledge and understanding we must become aware of them through study and reflection.

With this in mind we can now turn our attention to the main question opening this section: how does the sanctuary doctrine work as “hermeneutical tool.” The answer is simple. In Scripture (and Adventist theology) the sanctuary plays the role of metaphysical context or presupposition. We usually refer to the metaphysical context as “the big picture” and identify it with the Great Controversy theme. For this reason the Adventist Vision plays the macro-hermeneutical role in the Church, that is to say, it provides the first most general principle of interpretation Christian denominations have always drawn from tradition. From now on in our study I will use the word vision with the added meaning of macro hermeneutical principles. That will facilitate the narrative and guide us through our journey. But how does the sanctuary “big picture” work as hermeneutical vision?

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29 I use the technical word “metaphysical” to refer to the study of reality as a whole. Thus, in seeking to understand the whole, metaphysics assumes and integrates ontology. In common parlance, we speak of “the big picture.” In short, metaphysics is the study of the big picture we assume as context to understand everything.

30 We may classify our presuppositions according to their inclusiveness in three levels, macro (philosophical), meso (theological), and micro (exegetical). The Sanctuary and the Great Controversy work, then, as macro presuppositions, doctrines as meso, and words and literary contexts as micro. The difference between these levels the extension to which they apply. Philosophical presuppositions apply to everything, theological (meso) to the places where that particular doctrine is assumes, and, literary context only the individual texts in which they appear. With this in mind we can see the macro presuppositions apply to the entire Bible, meso to the portions of Scripture where a doctrine is assumed, and micro only to particular texts.
Ellen White helps us to answer this question when she explains that the subject of the sanctuary was the key opening “. . . to view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious. . . .”\textsuperscript{31} In other words, the pioneers’ understanding of the sanctuary allowed them to see how the other truths of Scripture (doctrines) fit together in perfect rational harmony and spiritual beauty. They did not find that harmony and beauty in the understanding of doctrines advanced by the churches they had left behind. That systematic vision of the whole of Christ’s teachings in the Old and New Testaments was new to them, united them in spirit and propelled them to global mission.

In summary, the sanctuary as (macro-hermeneutical) vision provides the context necessary to connect all doctrines, teachings, biblical texts, spiritual experiences, practices, etc. The sanctuary plays this role simply because in His love God has chosen to live, abide and dwell with His people in a house (Exodus 25:8). Because in the universe all things “hold together” in Christ “who is the head of the body, the church,” (Colossians 1:17, 18 ESV) the sanctuary becomes the immediate context of all divine actions by which the Trinity relates with our universe and the church, from the time of its creation to today.

With the pioneers we could also see why the sanctuary should be the vision guiding our understanding of Christ’s works and, through it, the entirety of doctrines and reality. However, the sanctuary is not the ultimate, all-decisive hermeneutical presupposition (context), God is.\textsuperscript{32} This brings us to consider God’s being (ontological context) and its relation to the sanctuary (metaphysical context).

e. What Difference Does It Make?

At this point in our journey you may be tempted to think that I am writing from a theological ivory tower, utterly disconnected from everyday practical life (reality). I assure you that I am not. If you bear with me, I promise to show you how Scripture and the Adventist pioneers connected the sanctuary with reality (ontology).

\textsuperscript{31} White, \textit{The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan During the Christian Dispensation}, 423, emphasis mine.

\textsuperscript{32} Besides, the Adventist Vision as described in this essay includes more components also anticipated and used by the Pioneers and Ellen White that we are not including in this work in other to keep it as simple as possible. A full study of the Adventist Vision still lies in the future.
Ellen White herself experienced the practical role of the sanctuary as it works together with other “truths that are the foundation of our faith.” Adventists referred to these foundational truths, which included the sanctuary and the nonimmortality of the soul, as “pillars,” “landmarks” or “waymarks.” Looking back sixty years to their early experience she could not but acknowledge that these truths “have made us as a people what we are, leading us on step by step.” Earlier she highlighted their role as hermeneutical vision in the experience of “[t]hose who received the light concerning the sanctuary and the immutability of the law of God, [and] were filled with joy and wonder, as they saw the beauty and harmony of the system of truth that opened to their understanding.” Clearly, for them the sanctuary doctrine and other “pillar truths” were essential to their understanding of Scripture, as well as the entire range of Christian doctrines and their identity as Eschatological Remnant Church. However, unbeknown to them, the hermeneutical vision of the sanctuary involved a much deeper and broader theological revolution. To properly appreciate the magnitude of the difference the sanctuary as hermeneutical vision makes in Adventist theology let us consider its revolutionary role in some detail.

f. The Unintended Revolution

Admittedly, Seventh-day Adventism is not the first denomination to have studied and accepted the sanctuary doctrine. Among others, the English Puritans accepted and wrote about a literal heavenly sanctuary well

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34 “The passing of the time in 1844 was a period of great events, opening to our astonished eyes the cleansing of the sanctuary transpiring in heaven, and having decided relation to God’s people upon the earth, [also] the first and second angels’ messages and the third, unfurling the banner on which was inscribed, ‘The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.’ One of the landmarks under this message was the temple of God, seen by His truth-loving people in heaven, and the ark containing the law of God. The light of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment flashed its strong rays in the pathway of the transgressors of God’s law. The nonimmortality of the wicked is an old landmark. I can call to mind nothing more that can come under the head of the old landmarks. All this cry about changing the old landmarks is all imaginary. ———, *Counsels to Writers and Editors* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1946), 30.


before Seventh-day Adventism ever entered the stage.37 Because other faiths
have made references to the sanctuary and other Adventist doctrines before
the advent of our denomination, some among us feel uncomfortable
embracing the Remnant Church claim.38 In their minds such a sweeping
claim requires more than a few “distinctive” doctrines. They are absolutely
right. We need more, much more. For starters, we need to understand,
along with the pioneers, that the doctrines we now call “distinctive” are, in
reality, a biblical “hermeneutical vision”; but we will return to this
distinction later. First we need to consider something the pioneers did which
implicitly required a paradigm shift in Christian theology. Let me explain.

When on October 23, 1844 Hiram Edson realized that Daniel 8:14
pointed to the beginning of a new phase in Christ’s salvific work as High
Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, the ontological assumption on which the
entire scope of Christian theology had been built was not only rejected but
also implicitly replaced by its opposite. This long sentence requires
unpacking, so bear with me. As we saw earlier, Hiram Edson was the first
to unravel the cause of their disappointment by pointing to Christ’s ministry
in the heavenly sanctuary. This awareness permitted them to discover the
hermeneutical function of the biblical sanctuary and allowed them to use it
as the hermeneutical vision to understand Scripture and the entire range of
Christian doctrines. As we noted (2.b), they did not think of the sanctuary
and pillar doctrines as merely “distinctive” but also, and more importantly,
as their guiding “hermeneutical vision.”

Earlier (2.d), we identified the sanctuary and its function as the
metaphysical or articulating principle in biblical thinking. Now we should
keep in mind that to articulate we need something. The something the
sanctuary articulates is reality, which in technical jargon we refer to as
ontology. Simply put, the sanctuary interprets (explains) the totality
(metaphysics) of reality (ontology). This shows that the sanctuary as
“articulating vision,” which opened to view a complete system of truth
connected and harmonious, must assume realities to be articulated. At this
point, we need to identify the realities the sanctuary articulates.

Because the sanctuary is the house where God dwells (Exodus 25:8),
it is easy to see that this dwelling/sanctuary articulates the loving historical

37 Bryan W. Ball, The English Connection: The Puritan Roots of Seventh-Day Adventist
38 On a current assessment of the Adventist claim to be the Remnant Church see, for
instance, Fernando Canale, “On Being the Remnant,” Journal of the Adventist Theological
relationships between Christ the Creator and His creatures. That was easy, wasn’t it? Yet, there is more you need to know. God, humanity and the sanctuary are realities that, in some way, must interact. The sanctuary as building facilitates the articulation or relationship between Christ and His creatures possible and provides broad guidelines for it. However, for this interaction to occur in the sanctuary, God (ultimate reality) must be historical in nature. This runs in the face of the entire Christian tradition that views God (ultimate reality) as non-historical. In other words, while Scripture and Adventist theology (following the pioneers) assume God interacts with humans, creation and the sanctuary within space and time, Christians assume that He does it outside of the historical space-time continuum. Here we arrive at a major crossroads where the road diverges in opposite directions. Choosing the way of divine atemporality and spacelessness will lead to a vastly different destination than choosing the road that views God as engaging with humans in time and space. You can see this is not a minor difference, but a massive, all-embracing assumption determining the meaning of everything in theology and practice. Our understanding of creation, marriage, the Sabbath, the state of the dead, and certainly the sanctuary are intensely affected by the road chosen.

Have you ever asked yourself why Adventists are the only Christian denomination holding the doctrine of the sanctuary? After all, the sanctuary as the dwelling place of God plays a large role in Scripture both in the Old and New Testaments. We can trace the cause of this nullification back to the non-historical understanding of the ontological assumption working within Christian tradition. Church history shows that soon after New Testament times Christians began to incorporate practices taken from contemporary culture and the religions of their day. With the passing of time, a tradition developed that progressively departed from biblical teachings replacing them with pagan religious practices following a fateful pattern initiated in earlier times by Solomon and Jeroboam.


130
As Adventists, we are familiar with this unfortunate trend in Church history and feel called to complete the Reformation movement initiated by the Protestant embrace of the *sola Scriptura* principle. However, as a denomination we have not yet realized that the inner engine working and directing the development of Christian tradition is the non-historical understanding of ultimate reality (ontological context). In the years after Christ’s earthly ministry the acceptance of a non-historical interpretation of reality began to take root as the mindset of the early church leaders was increasingly derived from Greek philosophy, particularly from the teachings of Plato.

Throughout the centuries, Christians have held that the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle spell out the wisdom of God’s natural revelation while Scripture expresses God’s special revelation. As such, they believe that to get an accurate picture of God we need to draw from both sources. Following this strategy, Christians have applied Plato’s and Aristotle’s non-historical view of reality (Greek ontology) to God, using it as a hermeneutical tool to interpret Scripture and thereby construct their Christian doctrines. So while philosophers speak about the “timelessness” of God, theologians prefer to talk about His “eternity” and “Spirit,” yet these terms refer to the same timeless reality, which is incompatible with time and history. Succinctly, because God is eternal and unchanging, Christianity has assumed that in nature and life God cannot experience the past-present-future sequence that time and history require. Furthermore, since space presupposes time, to conceive of God’s reality as non-historical also demands His spacelessness. In other words, according to Christian tradition God’s reality is void of and incompatible with both time and space. While some readers might label these philosophical developments within Christianity as insignificant or worthless theological speculation, we must keep in mind that these teachings are the intellectual catalyst that led early Christianity to progressively depart from Scripture and follow human traditions. When Christians uncritically embrace the non-historical, spaceless view of God, they cannot but interpret Scripture’s language about God and His redemptive acts in history as mere metaphors and symbols. They do that because logic demands that if God is outside of time and space, He cannot act in a temporal sequence. In this simple but sweeping way, these macro-hermeneutical ontological presuppositions prevent them

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40 At the end of this section you will find an example of the way in which different view of reality—either temporal or timeless—produce opposite understanding of the Biblical sanctuary.
from understanding the reality of God’s biblical acts of salvation as a sequence that actually took place in created temporal history.

Let us consider how we might apply this macro-hermeneutical ontological presupposition to the Adventist view of the sanctuary that began in October 22, 1844. As Adventists, we assume that the sanctuary doctrine describes a real sequence of events taking place in space and time. Moreover, we have no doubt God Himself (the whole Trinity) engages and experiences a sequential series of real divine actions including the cross and Christ’s “heavenly High Priestly ministry.” However, most scholarly and educated Christians find this view risible, childish and an outgrowth of sheer ignorance. Without further thought they quickly dismiss it. For them the thought that God should act historically in time and space is as ludicrous as proposing the possibility of living without breathing. In other words, it contradicts their view of reality and natural law. So while all Christians agree that the sanctuary speaks about reality, they assume it is a spiritual—not historical—reality. In summary, we are safe to state that, by and large, Christian leaders view the Adventist sanctuary doctrine as sheer nonsense.

Can you see the macro paradigmatic shift the sanctuary as hermeneutical tool entails for Christian theology and practice? This difference springs from the ontological, macro-hermeneutical presupposition stealthily operating from within the sanctuary. Because of this “reality difference,” the Adventist vision entails a macro paradigmatic revolution involving the entire reinterpretation of Scripture, now read through the light coming from the sanctuary. This hermeneutical light promises to shed greater understanding on Christian doctrines, life and mission.

3. Losing the Vision

No doubt the sanctuary hermeneutical vision nested in the inner spiritual being of each early Adventist. This vision clarified their doubts, illuminated current issues, and promised a brighter future. It made them sit with God in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:6). “Now in the holy of holies they beheld Him, their compassionate High Priest, soon to appear as their King and Deliverer. Light from the sanctuary illuminated the past, the present, and the future. . . and as they should by faith follow their High Priest in His ministration there, new duties would be revealed.”41 Perhaps because it was such a delight to them to think and experience life from this blessed

41 Great Controversy, 424.
hermeneutical perspective, they assumed their treasured view of the sanctuary would naturally be passed along to future generations who would continue the revolution initiated by this vision. Sadly, that was not the case. As noted earlier (1.b), already by the 1888 conference the move from Scripture to tradition was subtly taking place. As full appreciation and commitment to the origin of the sanctuary vision weakened, so did its understanding, embracing and use among Adventists. If left unchecked, this process would lead to the fading and eventual vanishing of the biblical sanctuary as the hermeneutical vision of Adventism.

a. Growing Pains: Averting the Demise of the Adventist Vision

By the inception of the twentieth century, Adventism was facing an unprecedented theological crisis of seismic proportions threatening to replace its foundational hermeneutical vision. Adventism had faced attacks on the sanctuary doctrine before. In 1904 Ellen White reported that in the past fifty years the sanctuary doctrine was being attacked from inside Adventism. A year later, she ominously warned this trend would continue in the future. According to her, the pillars and sanctuary doctrine would be challenged from various sources including scientific theories, theories on the Word and on God, wrong interpretations of Scripture, special light “from God,” and of course, Christ’s archenemy, Satan. She was writing in the wake of the Kellogg Pantheistic Crisis.

42 “In the future, deception of every kind is to arise, and we want solid ground for our feet. We want solid pillars for the building. Not one pin is to be removed from that which the Lord has established. The enemy will bring in false theories, such as the doctrine that there is no sanctuary. This is one of the points on which there will be a departing from the faith. Where shall we find safety unless it be in the truths that the Lord has been giving for the last fifty years?” Ellen White, “Review and Herald,” May 25, 1905; White, Evangelism, 224.

43 Ellen White, Medical Ministry (eBook Copyright @ 2010: Ellen G White Estate, 1932), 87.

44 ———, The General Conference Bulletin: 1894-1913, Periodical Articles (eBook @ 2010 Ellen G White Estate, 1895), April, 6, 1903 par 27.


133
Although John Harvey Kellogg had been harboring pantheistic ideas for some time, the crisis took General Conference leaders by surprise. They felt blind-sided and apparently unaware of the incipient storm brewing within the medical and educational institutions in Battle Creek, Michigan. Kellogg and other leaders were seeking to accomplish a “great reformation” among Seventh-day Adventists by “giving up... the pillars of our faith, and engaging in a process of reorganization.”

The engine of this “reformation” was the pantheistic view of God as present everywhere. Pantheism radically reinterprets the ontological principle of the Adventist vision. When followed to its logical conclusions this philosophical conception of God sweeps away the Great Controversy (Atonement as History of Salvation), and disfigures the real biblical “Christ” beyond recognition. During a Sabbath afternoon visit to Kellogg’s home in the summer of 1902, W. A. Spicer (later to become president of the General Conference) learned, to his astonishment, of the doctor’s entrenched position. He correctly understood that pantheism and the Adventist sanctuary vision are incompatible and therefore mutually exclusive.

Ellen White also understood this incompatibility, though with much greater theological precision. She comprehended that the incompatibility between these two visions lay at the level of their ontological presuppositions. This is so because, as we noted earlier (2.1), the sanctuary assumes God is a historical being, while pantheism assumes God’s personal

49 White, Selected Messages, 1:204.
50 ———, Selected Messages, 1:203.
51 In a divinely revealed and providentially timed message addressed to the first General Conference Autumn council meeting in Washington, DC (October 1903) entitled, “Decided Action to be Taken Now,” Ellen White spells out the macro hermeneutical danger involved in the Pantheistic spiritualization of biblical truth and spirituality facing the Church. “It is something that can not be treated as a small matter that men who have had so much light, and such clear evidence as to the genuineness of the truth we hold, should become unsettled, and led to accept spiritualistic theories regarding the personality of God. Those doctrines, followed to their logical conclusion, sweep away the whole Christian economy. They estimate as nothing the light that Christ came from heaven to give John to give to His people. They teach that the scenes just before us are not of sufficient importance to be given special attention. They make of no effect the truth of heavenly origin, and rob the people of God of their past experiences, giving them instead a false science.” Ellen Gould Harmon White, Testimonies for the Church (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association), 7:37.
reality is spiritual; that is, it exists in a timeless and spaceless dimension (5.c.1). Ellen White realized this view implied exactly the same “spiritualizing” of Christ many Advent movement believers used to explain the great disappointment fifty years earlier, many of them stating that Christ’s coming had been spiritual.\textsuperscript{52} The spiritualization of Christ is an expression of the classical timeless-spaceless Greek ontology assumed in Christian theology since early times (5.b.2-3).

The effects of accepting pantheism would have had enormous vision repercussions. Far more than mere “reform,” this change of vision would have required a complete “redoing” of Adventism from scratch. Such a redoing would have replaced the principles of truth on which Adventism stood with a new philosophical foundation built on human traditions. Essentially, the acceptance of Kellogg’s views would have transformed Adventism into another modernist Protestant denomination, with an appearance of virtue but devoid of the truth.\textsuperscript{53} The biblical theological and spiritual revolution unleashed by early formative Adventist thinkers would have been aborted before having had the chance to fulfill its God-given mission of establishing “Christianity upon an eternal basis.”\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{52} When Ellen White read portions of Kellogg’s \textit{Living Temple} for the first time, she “recognized the very sentiments against which I had been bidden to speak in warning during the early days of my public labors. When I first left the State of Maine, it was to go through Vermont and Massachusetts, to bear a testimony against these sentiments. \textit{Living Temple} contains the alpha of these theories.” ———, \textit{Selected Messages}, Christian Home Library. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2006), 1:203.

\textsuperscript{53} “The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith, and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities, and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement. The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice, but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless. Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure” White, \textit{Selected Messages}, 1:204-05.

\textsuperscript{54} “As the end approaches, the testimonies of God’s servants will become more decided and more powerful, flashing the light of truth upon the systems of error and oppression that have so long held the supremacy. The Lord has sent us messages for this time to establish \textit{Christianity upon an eternal basis}, and all who believe present truth must stand, not in their

In an earlier stop we saw how educational and medical institutions are great resources that play a decisive grounding formative role in the life and mission of the Church (1.2.1-2). However, leaders and laypersons have come to think about them as mere tools designed to provide skills to future leaders. While this is true, we need to recognize they play a much deeper and pivotal role in the life and mission of the Church. Whether we realize it or not, something much more profound is taking place in Seventh-day Adventist educational and medical institutions: the shaping of the Adventist mind and spirit. For that reason we should see them as “ground zero” in God’s work. Let me explain.

Adventist institutions are “ground zero” in God’s work, not in its military sense of “place where an explosion occurs,” but in its derivative sense as “the center or origin of rapid, intense, or violent activity or change.” Since the spiritual center of the Christian church is Christ’s work of redemption, and “the work of education and the work of redemption are one,”55 we can easily understand why Seventh-day Adventist institutions are the source of its theological, spiritual and missionary development. They are the place where the biblical remnant church equips her leaders spiritually as disciples, theologians and missionaries. The church of the future flows from the educational system of the present. We should neither forget nor ignore this basic law of life (Galatians 6:7).

This fact and the Battle Creek/Kellogg Pantheistic Crisis described earlier (3.a) underline the decisive role our institutions play as “ground zero” in God’s remnant church. For these reasons we now turn our attention to consider the way in which they relate to the sanctuary hermeneutical vision that originated Seventh-day Adventism.

Though Adventism averted the mega hermeneutical crisis implicit in the pantheistic reinterpretation of God’s personality (Postmodern Vision, 5.c.1) the sanctuary doctrine as the hermeneutical vision of early Adventism continued to fade away, slowly but surely, throughout the first half of the twentieth century. While Seventh-day Adventism grew in members and institutions, successive generations of leaders no longer used the sanctuary as a hermeneutical vision. In fact, by the nineteen fifties Seventh-day

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Adventists used the sanctuary mostly as a doctrinal “badge” to distinguish themselves from other Protestant churches.

From grounding vision the sanctuary had become a “distinctive” doctrine. Imperceptibly, the vision of Adventism was fading away. Seventh-day Adventist leaders were progressively losing this vision not because they were rejecting or reinterpreting biblical teachings on the sanctuary but rather because they were no longer using it as such. The saying “use it or lose it” was proving to be true.

Thus, the problem now threatening unsuspecting Seventh-day Adventist leaders was no longer heresy but the even more dangerous fact that Seventh-day Adventism was rapidly losing its biblical vision, necessary tool to discern the difference between heresy and truth. This problem was aggravated in the sixties when our leading educational institutions (ground zero, 3.b), now coming of age, became full-fledged research universities. Since then, we have been playing with the big boys in the major theological and ecclesiological leagues without a clearly outlined strategy (vision) from which to organize our global spiritual and missionary game plan. A systemic disconnect between administrative, ministry, missionary, educational, and medical branches of the church followed and progressively has become the modus operandi among Seventh-day Adventist leadership. This systemic disconnect, demanded by the high specialization and diversification of knowledge taking place during the twentieth century, has intensified and accelerated the unavoidable consequences of earlier generations’ neglect and forgetfulness of the Adventist vision.

**c. Why Should We Care?**

You may be thinking, Okay, so we lost our vision, so what? We will use a new one. After all, to live is to change. Or perhaps you are thinking, you have your vision and I have mine. Certainly those are valid opinions. However, we must be aware that different visions tend to create divisions. If strength is found in unity, it is far wiser to find a common unifying vision. But do we then use your vision or mine? What would be our criterion to decide? Would it be practicality, reason, science, Scripture? Do you see my point? There is only one foundation that will stand the test of time and accomplish God’s mission: the Rock of God’s Word. To avoid

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further divisions, even splintering into various organizations, we must recover the biblical vision and make it operative in all our churches and institutions.

At this point, you may be wondering how losing the Adventist Vision affects the life of the Church, most notably its universities and medical institutions. The answer is simple. If the vision that originated, united and organized Adventism into a worldwide movement exists only in the books of history but not in daily operation, another vision—or visions—must be operating among us. This is because no one, neither believers nor the Christian church at large, can function without a vision. Every person interprets knowledge based on some vision, most often an unconsciously adopted one. If we are not using the biblical sanctuary vision, then the vision or visions we are using have been drawn, consciously or not, from our human culture. As such, we face the implicit problem of disintegration from within. In other words, division is evident not only in the various fields of specialization, but also, and more importantly, in the way we think, interpret the Bible, worship, and understand spirituality.

By way of example let us briefly consider the present controversy over women’s ordination taking place within Seventh-day Adventism. Committees were appointed, papers were written, and leaders met requesting the direction of the Holy Spirit over their deliberations. And yet, at the end of the day we still understand the Scriptural teachings on women’s ordination in diverse ways. Is the Spirit not present and guiding? I believe the Spirit is present and guiding. So why are we still not of one mind and spirit on this issue? Perhaps the Spirit wants us to realize we have a methodological/hermeneutical problem that affects not only this punctual disagreement but everything we are and do. I think God wants us to learn something far greater and important than the relatively small issue of women’s ordination. I think some involved in the discussions are individually arriving at this obvious conclusion. Might our present disagreement on women’s ordination be related to the systemic forgetfulness of the Adventist vision? What if engaging our churches, administration and institutions in the process of retrieving the Adventist vision would help us solve this potentially divisive issue and prevent many more that will no doubt press the Church in the future, diverting time, energy and funds from our real task of preaching the message to the world?

I believe wholeheartedly that recovering and implementing our lost vision is the key to overcoming many of our current difficulties. However, as a leader you may still be in doubt, believing that involving our church
administration, institutions and local churches in some “unpractical, brain knowledge” theological enterprise will reap little spiritual or missionary growth. Additionally, you might feel that diverting funds to such an enterprise would be an irresponsible waste of means that should instead be used in advancing the missionary work of the church around the world. If you find yourself thinking along these lines you have not fully understood yet the practical and logical repercussions for the unity and growth of the church should the entire force of dedicated Seventh-day Adventists around the world retrieve, enlarge and apply the Adventist vision in their current work assignments. In order to make this more evident, we will now explore the impact of the vision, whatever it be, on the practical life and mission of the church.

4. Thinking the Vision and the Mission

In this section we need to survey the causal correlation that exists between the vision and the life and mission of the church. We will accomplish this goal through an overview of the way in which we have related to the Adventist vision throughout history. A chart at the end of this section (Table 1: Periods and Vision Correlation) will help us visualize the causal relationship between the Adventist vision and church life in the hope that it, along with reason and the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, will motivate you to apply it in your sphere of influence as lay person or General Conference leader.

a. Methodology

My reflections on the causal relationship that exists between vision and mission (as seen in the table below) follow two main coordinates, one diachronic (through time) and the other synchronic (simultaneously occurring in all historical periods). I have chosen to order the diachronic sequence according to the statements by global leaders discussed above in the “State of the Church” section (1.b). I selected them because their privileged roles in the church allowed them the best vantage point to witness the global mindset in a way not available to most of their contemporaries. To round out the table and make it more useful, I have

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57 I have chosen to follow a ministerial categorization of the historical periods because in this study we are attempting to discover the causal relation that exists between theology, life and mission. Since the goal of theology is to ground and foster the life and mission of the church the best way to assess its worth is to consider its outcomes in the life and mission of the church.
added two more time periods, one at the beginning and the other at the end. At the top of the left column, then, the chart starts with (1) the “formative years.” It then moves to Ellen White’s reflections on the (2) “most wonderful laziness” in personal Bible study among leaders and laity as the real cause behind the theological controversies at the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference session. After that, it continues with pastor Neal Wilson’s 1988 report about the existence of widespread (3) “doctrinal illiteracy” and lack of prophetic conviction among Seventh-day Adventists. The next period below is (4) the “loss of identity” observed by pastor Jan Paulsen in 2009. In following is (5) the “neutralization” of Scripture, taken from Pastor Ted Wilson’s (2013) concern about forces neutralizing Scripture among Seventh-day Adventists.

Before I explain this chart, a further word on methodology is imperative to avoid misunderstandings. In describing different periods I will follow a systematic or “model” methodology rather than a historical one. In other words, this methodology does not seek historical precision but common traits shared by a significant number within a historical period. The goal of this method then is not to describe historical facts with scientific accuracy but to trace important theological and ecclesiological trends in order to better understand our present experience and be in a stronger position to minister to the worldwide church. Additionally, it is granted that within the complexity of history not all leaders, nor all church members, embraced these leading mindsets. However, to underscore the effect of each period on the church, it is beneficial to imagine the consequences should all church leaders and lay members embrace them.

The top row in table 1 includes three fundamental aspects of Church Theology (sola Scriptura, Adventist Vision, and biblical system), and three important aspects of Church Life (church unity, church mission, and church relations with other churches). I organized them from left to right according to the causal links that exist between them. This means that the first is the cause or ground of the second and so on, successively.

b. Most Wonderful Laziness

We are now ready to begin exploring the relationship between theological knowledge and church life as we follow the chart from top to bottom. As we proceed, I will attempt to show the causal relationships existing between the Adventist Vision (Scripture, Vision, System) and the

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58 History presents an inexhaustibly source for reflection that can be approached with many methods all of them reaching partial results.
three fundamental aspects of Church Life (Unity, Mission, Relations). Ellen White’s strong conviction that at Minneapolis\textsuperscript{59} the doctrinal problems stemmed directly from the absence of biblical spirituality and the presence of formalism among the leaders suggests that up to that point in time most leaders embraced and applied the Adventist Vision. Embracing the Adventist Vision led them to the discovery of the complete and harmonious system of biblical theology, which in turn produced strong personal spiritual experiences of union with Christ, which generated an undivided engagement in the mission of the church by all leaders and church members. Ellen White’s comments on the Minneapolis Conference also suggest that something new, detrimental to the life of the church, was sneaking in the church, reaching even the leadership. A new period had already begun. Something had changed from earlier years. Looking at the chart you will notice that the only explicit difference between the “formative years” and the period of “most wonderful laziness” appears under the “Church Unity” as a change from spiritual to doctrinal unity. However, as Adventists began to rely on the teaching of their leaders rather than on personal Bible study, an imperceptible change in the “Adventist Vision” from an explicit embracing and application to an implicit awareness may have been taking place. The major visible difference, then, was not theological (Scripture, Vision, System) but spiritual. To use a now-familiar term among Seventh-day Adventists, head knowledge/experience was replacing spiritual knowledge/experience.

Ellen White saw it clearly, to move forward they had to overcome the spiritual situation of the church. That is the reason for her almost solitary advocacy for the message of Justification by Faith proclaimed by Waggoner and Jones. Only when biblical spirituality had been restored could the church agree doctrinally and methodologically. But how could the church get the experience of justification by faith? What was the divine prescription to experience such spirituality among the leadership? Ellen White’s answer to this question was clear and simple: personal Bible study received with prayer and applied to daily life. Only through the personal discovery of divine truth as presented in Scripture can the Holy Spirit produce the righteousness/justification experience in us. This requires an individual, time intensive work. But Adventists had stopped receiving their spiritual food from Scripture. They were replacing the more painstaking

\textsuperscript{59} To gain a first hand knowledge of Ellen White’s highly negative evaluation of the 1888 Minneapolis conference see his extensive reflections in, White Ellen, \textit{The Ellen G White 1888 Materials} (eBook Copyright @ 2010: Ellen G White Estate, 1987).
“made from scratch” personal Bible study with the far easier “fast food” teaching of the leaders/General Conference (Butler). In so doing, something new and dangerous was sneaking into the church: tradition. We should note that this situation (that of depending on the teaching of men instead of individual study) has continued to operate in the church ever since, providing the basis for other (more visible) negative changes in the mindset and practice of Seventh-day Adventists.

c. Doctrinal Illiteracy

Resulting from this seemingly innocuous spiritual change, a very different church emerged a century later. By then the church and its institutions had grown in number and quality. Looking at the third row labeled “Doctrinal Illiteracy” we note the introduction of subtle changes. Apparently the unity of the early formative years no longer permeated the whole church. Pastor Neal Wilson’s pointed observation regarding “doctrinal illiteracy” indicates that church unity did not stand either on spiritual or doctrinal ground, but merely by force of the institutional organization. Moreover, if Adventists were ignorant of their doctrinal beliefs, they were likewise ignorant of the biblical system of truth, the Adventist vision and the sola Scriptura principle. Yet, the absence of these essential guiding principles in the minds of leaders and church members indicates that they had started to use their own sources, vision and system of thinking. In the vacuum of a solid biblical ground a new “Adventist” mindframe was quickly emerging from non-biblical sources. From within the everyday life of the church and its institutions (ground zero, 3.b), tradition was replacing Scripture.

Since what happens in the mind directs the actions (Proverbs 23:7) we see the results of this mind change directly affecting the life of the church. Church fragmentation was happening from within. The unity that was perceived was not spiritual or doctrinal, but institutionally grounded. Church mission and church growth were slow and uneven. Evangelization began to be directed only to the “unchurched,” implying that we need not evangelize and convert Christians of other denominations. This is a serious modification in the previous understanding of the global mission of Adventism (Three Angels’ Messages). Emerging from a mindset of tradition, another vision was silently replacing the original biblical vision in the mind of Seventh-day Adventist leaders (ground zero: administration and universities, 3.2). Keep in mind that the vision dictates how we interpret reality and therefore affects everything we think and do (2.c-d). If this trend
continues we will be seeing gigantic changes of “biblical” proportions being advanced from within Seventh-day Adventism in the near future.

d. Loss of Identity

Let’s move on to the next period whose main characteristic, according to pastor Jan Paulsen, is the loss of Adventist identity. By the turn of the twenty-first century, many who had grown up during the eclipse of Scripture became leaders in church administration and educational institutions (ground zero). This new generation developed a new conception of Adventism. Their relation to the church was not grounded in the transformation of mind and spirit (Romans 12:1-2) motivated by heart-searching Bible study (Matthew 7:24-28), but in a cultural attachment to community. Naturally, this group conceives of Adventism as a culturally evolving institution. Accordingly, they can no longer accept the early pioneers’ avowed identity of being the remnant church. Not surprisingly, an increasing number of Adventist administrative and educational leaders are no longer convinced that Seventh-day Adventism is the only true visible church of God. Articulated and empowered through the global Adventist educational system (ground zero) and disseminated by the global media ministries, these ideas are quickly permeating all levels of the administrative and educational systems in the global church.

In challenging the identity of Adventism as the remnant church this new trend is likewise rejecting the Adventist vision and the sola Scriptura principle from whence it comes. As anticipated by Ellen White this challenge comes from science and takes the form of theistic evolution. Because the understanding of the universe plays a vision role in human thinking, theistic evolution is not confined to the halls of academia but

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61 ———, “On Being the Remnant.”
permeates the whole system of church teachings and practice.\textsuperscript{64} Challenges to the vision lead to challenging the harmonious theological system the sanctuary opens to view.

These challenges, embraced by a sector of Adventist scholars and teachers, have belittled the \textit{sola Scriptura} principle, vision, and system of Adventism resulting in negative outcomes for the life of the church. When educators read them, they lose confidence in the biblical teachings of the church and feel motivated to change the contents of their teaching and preaching. Consequently, these new teachings change the mind of the students who, in time, become the leaders of the Adventist community. Out of these processes emerges a church doctrinally divided\textsuperscript{65} and spiritually dead.

When the unity of the church is damaged her mission is severely weakened, possibly even mutated, through extreme cultural contextualization, both abroad and in our own American culture. Church outreach slowly but certainly morphs from outreach to ecumenical dialogue as we sit at the same table and pews with other Christian denominations (and non-Christian religions) to learn from and worship with them. If universally embraced and followed to its ultimate conclusions this trend will put a complete stop to church growth. Our church will die or be absorbed into the ongoing Roman-Catholic-led ecumenical movement.

e. The Neutralization of Scripture

As we move forward in time to consider the next period, we arrive at our present situation. In his 2013 Status of the Church address mentioned earlier (1.0), Pastor Ted Wilson directed the attention of Seventh-day Adventists to serious issues facing the global church: Loss of identity, worldliness (secularization), disunity, and, spiritual complacency. With surgical precision and theological savvy, he identified the logistical origin of these maladies: the neutralization of Scripture. Though this is a serious, even potentially terminal, diagnosis, the good news is that. God has the power to reverse it and we have the key to His power through Bible study and prayer.

\textsuperscript{64} For an introduction to the way in which evolution as a macro hermeneutical presuppositions impacts Adventism see, for instance, Fernando Luis Canale, \textit{Evolution, Theology, and Method: Part 3: Evolution and Adventist Theology} (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 2004).

\textsuperscript{65} For an introduction to the theological divisions in our Church see, for instance, Canale, “From Vision to System: Finishing the Task of Adventist Theology Part 1: Historical Review.”
Let us turn our attention back to “Table 1: Periods and Vision Correlation” above, noting the “Neutralization of Scripture” entry. Here we are facing the future that lies directly before us, and which, as the church, we are building day by day. All the main characteristics of each precedent period are present and working within us. At the same time, we witness all around us a clear and continuing departing from the Adventist vision and even from Scripture whence the vision comes. Let us, for a moment, imagine the consequences of “doing business as usual.”

The logical consequences of allowing the neutralization of Scripture to continue unchallenged are not difficult to see. A process of “replacement” will follow the previous periods of “neglecting” and “challenging.” Scripture will be replaced by Christian tradition. The Adventist vision will be replaced by the Panentheistic Evolutionary vision—the updated and improved version of pantheism (5.c). The “complete and harmonious system” of biblical philosophy and theology will be replaced by the

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<td>Most Wonderful Laziness (1888)</td>
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<td>Doctrinal Illiteracy (1988)</td>
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<td>Neutralization of Scripture (2014)</td>
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</table>

145
complete and harmonious system of deep ecumenical theology. The life of the church will be impacted in like manner. The bond uniting Adventists will no longer be that of the historical Christ ascended to heaven and soon returning, but the uncertain ground of an ever-changing regional traditions. Adventism will repudiate the three Angels Mission, and, embracing the ecumenical mission, church growth will be sparse at best and institutionally driven. In the long run, Seventh-day Adventism as a denomination would cease to exist, most likely merging into the deep ecumenical embrace structured, organized, and led by the Roman-Catholic church.

f. Back to Scripture All Over Again?

The good news is that the future is open. We can choose to do something different to redirect the destiny of the Church. If, as we noted above (1.b), to neutralize means “to make ineffective” then to de-neutralize would mean, “to make effective.” If Pastor Wilson’s diagnosis is correct, and I think it is, we can expect that once the global church removes the obstacles hindering Bible effectiveness, its power for salvation (by means of the Holy Spirit) will be unleashed throughout the world. We must eradicate what hinders the full power of the words of God in Seventh-day Adventism. We need to recover what we began to lose at Minneapolis: the spiritual appropriation and application of Scripture to our personal lives first, and then to all levels and activities of the worldwide church. To put it simply, we must intentionally organize to upgrade Bible study from head knowledge to a spiritual heart understanding that transforms our lives personally, communally, and institutionally. Returning to Scripture (sola Scriptura) then is the only option open to the church to help her achieve spiritual unity and accomplish the final mission. Why? Because going back to Scripture will produce the revival and reformation that we have long sought.

Now the question arises, haven’t we already been diligently seeking revival and reformation? True, we have sought revival and reformation, but the results have been mixed, at best. Our church has still not experienced the revival and reformation sought. God has not answered our prayer. Why? Because we wrongly assume God will send the latter rain only by our asking. In so assuming we forget God’s oft-repeated prediction,

Erroneous theories and doctrines are also rational, consistent and harmonious, but not biblical, and therefore at the end reality will prove them to be wrong and deceptive. Only the biblical harmonious system of doctrines will prove to be true at the end. At the present time each human being must choose which system he or she wants to embrace and practice.
“Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but will not find me” (Proverbs 1:28 ESV). Why would a loving God not answer the requests of His children? God explains, “Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD, would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof, therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way, and have their fill of their own devices” (Proverbs 1:29–31, ESV). Later, we find the same pattern taking place in Hosea’s time as God explained to them, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me” 4:6 (ESV). Does this somber message apply to us? Could this pattern be recurring at the present time? I think this is precisely what is happening today, particularly when we consider where we once stood and the spiritual downward spiral we have already reviewed from our past history.

I think we would all agree, then, that to finish the mission we must engage God personally and heed to all His counsels and reproofs. We must listen attentively to the voice of God, a voice we find only in the sacred pages of Scripture. Therefore, the only way to change the direction of the church and finish God’s mission is through a personal and corporate return to Scripture, characterized by humbleness of mind and heart. We must heed God’s words and then, personally and corporately, live out the Adventist vision in everyday life. The question then is how? How can we live the Adventist vision personally and corporately in a way that would empower the global mission of the Church? We will consider these questions in a forthcoming article.

5. Conclusion

A divided Church cannot fulfill her mission. In our attempt to overcome theological and spiritual divisions within Adventism to strengthen its mission we considered the biblical content of the Adventist vision and its determinative role in creating theological unity and passion for mission. To better understand the way in which the vision operates within the community we examined its methodological function with special focus on its nature, mode of operation, and expected outcomes. To better appreciate our present situation we surveyed loss of vision and its consequences in Adventist history. We ended this first article with a clear sense that the way to unity and total mission engagement requires that Adventist leadership (corporation) and laity should go back to Scripture to retrieve anew its vision and embrace its mission. But how could we reverse the inertia of
many years of forgetfulness? We will explore this challenge in the next and final article of this series.

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The Legacy of Gerhard Hasel’s *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* Revealed in Old Testament Scholarship of the Last Four Decades

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**Introduction: A Description of Hasel’s *Old Testament Theology***

The first edition of Gerhard Hasel’s book *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* was published by Eerdmans Publishing House in 1972. It dealt with four major questions in the debate, each comprising a chapter: (1) methodology, (2) history, history of tradition, and salvation history, (3) the center of the OT and OT theology, and (4) the relationship between the Testaments. A fifth chapter provided Hasel’s own “multiplex” proposal for doing OT theology.

Hasel’s multiplex method involves seven basic proposals: (1) biblical theology must be a historical-theological discipline (not separating “what it meant” from “what it means”), and yet doing a work distinct from but complementary with the systematic theologian; (2) it must be both historical and theological from the starting point, allowing for the inbreaking of God into history (vs. the closed continuum of the historical-critical method); (3) OT theology “questions the various books or blocks of writings of the OT as to their theology” involving “a summary interpretation of OT writings or blocks of writings”; (4) the theologies of the OT books or blocks of writings should follow the

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chronological and not canonical sequence; (5) OT theology should “attempt to draw together and present the major themes of the OT”; (6) “the final aim of OT theology is to demonstrate whether or not there is an inner unity that binds together the various theologies and longitudinal themes, concepts, and motifs,” although this should not be done hastily nor prematurely nor should one make book or group of books the norm for what constitutes OT theology; and (7), an OT theology “must demonstrate its basic relationship to the NT or to NT theology.”

Hasel’s book *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues*, went through four editions, the 2nd revised edition appearing in 1975, the 3rd revised and expanded edition in 1982, reprinted in 1985, and the 4th revised, expanded and enlarged edition, in 1991. The fourth edition had grown from a slim volume of less than 100 pages (minus the indexes), with a two-page bibliography in 1972, to 208 pages of text and a forty-two page bibliography 1991. Along the way an initial chapter was added (chap. 1) tracing the beginnings and development of OT theology, and the discussion of each of the four major questions was expanded and updated. Hasel’s book was translated into several languages, including Korean (1984), Portuguese (1987), and Indonesian (1986).

I personally cut my scholarly theological teeth on Hasel’s book upon entering my doctoral studies in 1976, and have regularly used his work as a textbook when teaching Old Testament theology as a professor of OT interpretation at Andrews University Theological Seminary for the last 35 years.

For a number of years Gerhard Hasel’s book was being utilized by over ninety different seminaries and graduate schools in USA and beyond. Because of the popularity and success of this volume on OT theology, and because Gerhard had studied both OT and NT at Vanderbilt U., Mr. Eerdmans himself, from Eerdmans Publishing Company, came from Grand Rapids, MI to visit Dr. Hasel in his office at Andrews University, and asked him to write a companion volume, *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, and this appeared in 1978. The volume on NTT has also been translated into Korean (1982) and Portuguese (1988).

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2 Ibid., 91 (4th ed., 204).
3 Ibid., 93 (4th ed., 205).
DAVIDSON: LEGACY OF GERHARD HASEL’S OT THEOLOGY

Reviews of Hasel’s Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate

The reviews of Hasel’s OTT: Basic Issues appeared in the major scholarly journals of biblical studies. The ATLA index lists some twenty reviews, about half for the first (1972) edition, and the other half for later editions.

As might be expected, some reviews by critical scholars were mixed. For example, J. L. McKenzie writes in the Anglican Theological Review in 1977: “The first edition of Hasel’s work, published in 1972, was an attempt to put some order into that biblical discipline which is least structured and least fettered by an established traditional approach and method. I did not find the first edition successful in what Hasel set out to do.” But then, McKenzie immediately adds, “The second edition, I believe, is more definite in proposing how biblical theology should be done. I should like to see Hasel implement these proposals.”

The strongest criticism by critical scholars is leveled against Hasel’s veiled but nonetheless emphatic rejection of the presuppositions of the historical-critical method. His subtle hints were not lost on the perceptive critical mind. For example, McKenzie remarks about Hasel’s attempt to uphold the historicity of the biblical text:

If I am going to do the theology of the Old Testament, I must study the theology which created the narratives of the patriarchs and of the exodus. To me, being historical in these books is being critical. Hasel leaves me in doubt how he will be historical and theological in his treatment of the exodus, certainly a basic theme in the Old Testament.

Millar Burrows’ review in the Journal of Biblical Literature (1973) likewise takes issue with Hasel’s insistence on linking faith and history. He writes:

Hasel is thoroughly infected with the prevalent skepticism concerning scholarly objectivity. The most thorough historical and philological research can “never reach the heart of the matter unless one yields to the basic experience out of which the Biblical writers speak, namely

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6 Ibid., 226.
faith” (p. 88). How far must one give in? How far can it be done honestly? May not identification even prevent a correct understanding? There is much in the faith of ancient Israel that an interpreter committed to accept whatever he finds will be unable to see.  

However, Burrows is forced to admit that “He [Hasel] has made a serious, independent, and stimulating contribution to the discussion. Something like his multiplex approach may well be needed, though the validity and importance of the particular principles he selects are open to debate. His insistence on the rich variety of the OT and his repudiation of any attempt to compress it into a system are to be heartily commended.”  

As another sample, Lee Gallman, in his review of Hasel’s 1972 edition in Review and Expositor, takes issue with some of Hasel’s points, but nonetheless acknowledges that “This is a first class presentation whether one agrees with the author’s posture or not.”  

James Barr writes a review of Hasel’s book (first edition) in the Journal of Theological Studies, in which he compliments Hasel’s depth of knowledge:  “He has a good knowledge of the literature and of the issues and his book is helpful for its references alone. . . . He presents the main issues in the discussion quite well, in quite a catholic way and without serious bias.”  

At the same time Barr expresses his suspicions about Hasel’s own conservative position:  

His own position seems to be a rather conservative one: he is especially worried by the idea that any theologically neutral, descriptive work might be carried out, and he waxes angry at people who think that history is a closed continuum in which there is no room for transcendence (e.g. pp. 84f.). Why are such people wrong? Because they are stuffed full of dogmatism and philosophical presuppositions. Well, that is an easy way of getting rid of them. It would be better to give some reasons. At points like this, instead of giving reasons, Hasel has a tendency simply to insist, to say that it “must be stressed” that what he thinks is right. He has to learn, as many theologians have, that  

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8 Ibid.  
calling an opinion “positivist” (e.g., p. 33) does not in the slightest contribute to demonstrating that it is wrong.11

Barr ends the review on a positive note: “All in all, however, Hasel has given quite a good quick summary of the discussion for someone who has already done some groundwork in the subject.”12

Toward the end of his career, however, in defending himself against charges concerning his opposition to biblical theology, Barr lashed out in attack of those who had critiqued him, in his The Concept of Biblical Theology (1999): “I have never in fact thought or uttered some of the negative expressions I have found ascribed to me.” Hasel does not escape his claims of being misrepresented: “nor did I ever think most of the things that are ascribed to me by another late friend, Gerhard Hasel, in his widely-used survey Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate, 94-98: almost everything he says in these pages is wrong.”13

Despite differing presuppositions than Hasel, some critical scholars had nothing but praise for his work. As an example, in the review of Hasel’s book R. E. Clements (1973) writes in the Scottish Journal of Theology:

The task of writing an Old Testament theology has become a major area of concern in recent years, and what appeared even twenty years ago to be a well defined and straightforward task has become increasingly fraught with controversy. . . . Certainly this short volume from Professor Hasel of Andrews University, Michigan, is an excellent primer to the subject. It surveys with great clarity and with detailed references to current literature some of the main problem areas. . . . The volume is a most useful one, which is lucid in its presentation and well able to show where and why the going has been difficult.14

Turning to evangelical reviewers, Hasel’s book received high marks in most reviews. So, for example, Elmer Flack, in his long review of

11 Ibid., 183.
12 Ibid.
13 Barr, 235. See ibid, 666, n. 35, where Barr lists the areas where he rejects Hasel’s depictions of himself.
Hasel’s book in *Lutheran Quarterly* (1973), concludes: “Professor Hasel’s conclusions appear to be clear and convincing. With masterful technique, he has digested the materials of the leading scholars in the field and has analyzed the basic strengths and weaknesses of their respective approaches, all the while pointing out the vast complexity and confusion in present-day thinking. His book merits wide reading.”

In the opening sentences of his review of the first edition of Hasel’s book in *JETS*, Walter Kaiser waxes eloquent about the value of Hasel’s book:

> This book had to be written! With the future of the whole discipline of Biblical Theology at stake and the obviously pessimistic mood of current Old Testament theologians, it was time for a succinct reassessment of where the discipline had been and where it was headed. While the novice to the field may be slightly bewildered by the apparent plethora of names, positions, and intertwined issues, all others must admire the positive benefits which can be derived from this shrewd, terse and at times brilliant analysis of some extremely complicated matters.

At the beginning of his review in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Bruce Waltke uses a string of complimentary adjectives to introduce the value of Hasel’s book: “To show the comprehensive, digestive, critical, orthodox, ...

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As an aside, I was an MDiv student in Hasel’s Old Testament theology class when he invited Walter Kaiser to his class at Andrews University, and they publically “debated” (in kind fashion) their respective points of view regarding *Die Mitte* of Scripture. It is with regard to Hasel’s view on the “center” of the Old Testament that Kaiser takes issue. He writes: “Is there an inner unity that binds together the various themes, concepts and motifs of the Old Testament? After all, isn’t it the final aim of Old Testament Theology to demonstrate such an inner unity? Precisely so! Here is the heart of the whole matter, but sadly Hasel fails on the brink of success. He concludes that this search must be abandoned immediately. The Old Testament Theologian ‘cannot’ and ‘must not use a concept, fundamental idea, or formula as a principle for the systematic ordering and arranging of the Old Testament. . .’ (p. 62). Rather, he should take a ‘multiplex approach with the multi-track treatment of longitudinal themes’ (p. 93). However, this approach is also doomed from the start, for it too will fail ‘to demonstrate whether or not there is an inner unity that binds together the various theologies and longitudinal themes, concepts and motifs (p. 93).’” (ibid., 111). Kaiser suggests the promise theme as the most appropriate *Mitte* of the OT, and develops it in his OT theology.
accurate, and contemporary nature of the book the reviewer will summarize the content of the book.” After an unusually long review by the journal’s standards, agreeing with Hasel on almost every point, Waltke concludes with further words of appreciation and also of anticipation: “If Gerhard Hasel can now pursue his own method he should produce an exceedingly exceptional theology of the Old Testament. This reviewer anticipates his future works with great anticipation. The length of this review, which is very disproportionate to the length of the book, indicates the importance of the work.”

**The Legacy of Gerhard Hasel’s Old Testament Theology**

Waltke’s words of appreciation and anticipation provide an opportunity for expressing regret that Gerhard Hasel’s life was cut short so that he was not able to produce the comprehensive OT theology toward which his book pointed. However, he did point the way for others to follow.

**Hasel’s Own Further Contributions**

Gerhard himself contributed toward a further understanding of Old Testament theology, beyond his book *OTT: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, in numerous other articles/chapters on the subject. The published bibliography of his works compiled by his son Michael includes at least a dozen articles related to the nature of Old Testament and Biblical theology published before his death in 1994, and three more published posthumously:


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Hasel also presented numerous scholarly papers on the nature of OT and biblical theology at SBL, ETS, ATS, and at major universities and seminaries in various countries of the world. His bibliography is replete with book reviews of the major OT and biblical theologies and related books.


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20 Ibid., 373-383.
DAVIDSON: LEGACY OF GERHARD HASEL’S OT THEOLOGY

As far as actually “carrying out” his proposals for a “biblical theology,” Hasel himself gave samples of what an OT/biblical theology would look like. Hasel consistently summarized the basic task of OT theology as two-fold: a synchronic “book-by-book” (and block-by-block) approach, and a diachronic “thematic” approach. His final article on the subject, published posthumously, succinctly states the task this way: “A ‘canonical biblical theology’ has the dual task of (1) providing summary interpretations of the final form of the individual biblical documents or groups of writings and (2) presenting the longitudinal themes, motifs, and concepts that emerge from the biblical materials.”

Hasel points the way in both of these basic tasks. Starting with the thematic task, his doctoral dissertation, published under the title of The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah, gives stellar example of tracing a theme (or “idea” as he calls it) throughout the biblical canon. Hasel became the “expert” on the remnant theme in the Bible, and wrote major articles on this theme in Wordbooks and Theological/Bible Dictionaries. From personal conversation with Gerhard, I learned that for his dissertation he originally planned on tracing this remnant theme throughout the entire Bible, but constraints of space and issues with his major professor over historical-critical dating of Isaiah caused him to close his endeavors with Isaiah of Jerusalem. In the ensuing years since Gerhard Hasel published his dissertation on the remnant theme from Genesis to Isaiah, various dissertations, written mostly by his students or students of his students, have taken up this remnant theme and traced it through other parts of Scripture.

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Hasel’s scholarly works also tackled other themes of the Old Testament, with seminal articles or monographs on the Sabbath,\textsuperscript{25} covenant,\textsuperscript{26} divine judgment,\textsuperscript{27} creation/Flood/origins,\textsuperscript{28} and resurrection,\textsuperscript{29} to name a few.

Hasel also showed the way in writing the theology of a biblical book. His first book published after the release of the first edition of \textit{OTT: Basic Issues} (1972) was a commentary on the book of Jonah, which includes a theology of Jonah.\textsuperscript{30} Here he gives an example of what constitutes “a summary interpretation” of a biblical book. He engages in the full sweep of what he sees involved in (exegetical-) theological analysis, including arguments for the historicity of the book, an examination of the literary structure (a block parallelism) of the book, a synthesis of the book’s major themes, and its intertextual relationship with the NT.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{26} Gerhard F. Hasel, \textit{Covenant in Blood} (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1982).
  \item \textsuperscript{30} Gerhard F. Hasel, \textit{Jonah: Messenger of the Eleventh Hour} (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1976).\end{itemize}
DAVIDSON: LEGACY OF GERHARD HASEL’S OT THEOLOGY

Hasel was commissioned by Eerdmans to write the prestigious NICOT commentaries on the books of Hosea and Amos, where he no doubt would have set forth what he considered to be the theology of these books, but unfortunately his life was cut short before he could accomplish these objectives.31

Hasel’s Impact on Old Testament Theologies since 1975

Hasel is freely quoted in many of the OT theologies written in the last forty years since his OTT: Basic Issues first appeared. Walter Kaiser’s OTT (1978), for example, cites him in numerous footnotes, and states of Hasel, “to whom I am indebted in several places in this section for his fine analysis.”32

In his 2006 OTT, Eugene Merrill cites Hasel’s articles for further study on various issues of OT theology,33 appreciating, for example, his “helpful distinctions” regarding biblical and systematic theology in his opening footnote of the book.34 Likewise, Elmer Marten’s OTT favorably cites Hasel several times, especially in his section on “Doing Biblical Theology.”35

I had the privilege of researching for this article at the Tyndale House in Cambridge, England, where one has a wonderful library in Biblical Studies right at one’s fingertips. I spent a whole day going through their vast collection in the area of Old Testament and Biblical theology, and was delighted to see how many works cite Hasel as an authority, providing the “standard literature” on the history of research in Old Testament theology, and how many cite him favorably as pointing the way forward toward doing Old Testament theology. Several works credit Hasel for coining the expression “golden age of Old Testament theology” to refer to the period starting with Eichrodt’s OTT in the early

32 Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Toward an Old Testament Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 26, n. 16.
34 Ibid., 1.
A search of relevant journal articles on the subject of Old Testament theology has revealed the same basic results as the overview of books and monographs on the subject. Hasel is cited frequently as a standard in his synthesis of basic issues in the current debate over OTT. Even in very recent articles, there are references to projections Hasel made years before.

I will use one more example. Bruce Waltke’s Old Testament Theology cites Hasel numerous times. In his section “The Task of Old Testament Theology,” Hasel’s definition of the task of OTT is used to summarize Waltke’s own position:

> The late Gerhard Hasel rightly argued that “the task of biblical theology is to provide summary explanations and interpretation to the final form of these blocks of writing, with a view to letting their various themes emerge, to indicate their dynamic interrelationship, including their continuities and discontinuities with one another, and to expose the progressive revelation of divine matters.”

This full citation is given again, in its entirety, in Waltke’s summary of the task of OTT later in the book (p. 143). Returning to the section on the task of OTT, as he criticizes the history of religion approach, Waltke remarks, “the historians of religion have not heard Hasel’s complaint: ‘What needs to be emphatically stressed is that there is a transcendent or divine dimension in biblical history which the historical-critical method is unable to deal with.” Hasel’s work lives on as he has shaped the definition and task of OTT/BT in works on this subject that have been written, even though he never lived to write his own.

More subtle than explicit references to Hasel’s book and articles on OTT, the impact of his legacy is felt in the various OT scholars who have written OT theologies or articles about OTT since the early 1970’s, many of whom have given attention to issues he raised, and (more or less

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consciously) followed one or more of his suggested procedures. I look here particularly at the two-fold task Hasel outlined, of synchronic (book-by-book) and diachronic (thematic) approaches. Examples of Old Testament theologies paying particular attention to the book-by-book approach, include those by Paul House (1998),39 Bruce Waltke (2007).40 House not only follows the book-by-book approach, but like Hasel, sees “God” (“monotheism, the existence and worship of one true God”) as the dynamic unifying center. Unlike what Hasel might have approved of, House uses this theme of God to be the “grid” of his discourse on each biblical book, inquiring of each book what constitutes its unique message about God.

Old Testament theologies paying particular attention to tracing the themes of OT include, for examples, the works of William Dyrness,41 Themes in Old Testament Theology (1979), who traces fourteen themes, and B.S. Childs,42 who examines twenty themes. Here we can also include other scholarly works, too many to document, which trace single themes throughout the Hebrew Bible.

Under this category we also may put other OT theologies which have a single theme or complex of themes as the chosen center of their work, even though Hasel did not agree that a single theme, concept, or motif was capable of encompassing the breadth of the OT material. If we look at these theologies together as contributing toward demonstrating the flow of various themes throughout the material, then the ultimate purpose of Hasel’s vision may be seen to be advanced. I have catalogued 28 different centers proposed by OT theologians since the appearance of Hasel’s OTT: Basic Issues in 1972, and have proposed my own multiplex center, not as an organizing grid, but as the “orientation point” of an OT theology.43

40 Waltke and Yu, Old Testament Theology.
The Legacy of Hasel’s *Old Testament Theology* Carried Out by His Students and Their Students

As we have already noted above, several OT scholars, reviewing Hasel’s proposed method for doing Old Testament theology, spoke favorably of his basic multiplex approach, but wondered whether he could actually pull it off. For example, Christopher Mitchell, in reviewing the 4th edition of Hasel’s *OTT: Basic Issues*, states the following:

Previous editions of this work have served admirably as a remarkably comprehensive textbook that surveys the vast and diverse landscape of the field of OT theology. . . . Like many of the works authored by faculty members of the Andrews University Theological Seminary, it has gained acceptance among OT theologians across denominational lines.

In theory his proposal [for a multiplex approach to OT theology] is laudable for taking into consideration all the different types of approaches and synthesizing them. However, it remains to be seen whether anyone will be able to carry it out. . . .

Gerhard was not able to live long enough to have opportunity to produce the comprehensive OT theology toward which his book pointed. We cannot say whether he alone would have been able to accomplish the task he set forth. But his vision of such a task did not die with him. At his funeral service, in which I had the honor and privilege to deliver the homily (one of the most difficult sermons I have ever preached), I focused on the phrase from David’s lament in 2 Sam 1, “How have the mighty fallen!,” and along with others who gave eulogies, I developed the imagery of the “mighty oak which had fallen,” expressing the hope that the acorns from the fallen oak that took root under his branches, might grow up to carry on the work for which he gave his life. Many of us determined at Gerhard’s funeral that our mentor and Doktorvater should not have died in vain, that we would carry forward his dream of a comprehensive multiplex Old Testament theology.

So in the last part of this article, I wish to highlight in particular the work of Hasel’s students (and the students of his students), who have contributed and are continuing to contribute to the task of producing an Old Testament theology along the general lines of Hasel’s multiplex approach. I look at each of the seven facets of his proposal, and point to work already done in each area toward the furthering of Hasel’s vision.

(1) **Biblical theology vis-à-vis systematic theology.** At Andrews University Theological Seminary during the past few years a new interest has been aroused in inter-disciplinary work between biblical theologians and systematic theologians, with several doctoral students being trained in both systematic and biblical theology and their dissertations proceeding in an inter-disciplinary dialogue with both disciplines. We have several faculty members in systematic theology who have been trained in OT as well, and vice versa, and the fertile cross-pollination of thought between the two disciplines is very stimulating.46

(2) **The inseparability of history and theology.** Several of these same students and their faculty mentors are examining the macro-hermeneutical presuppositions of Scripture at the level of fundamental theology, building on the ground-breaking work of systematician Fernando Canale,47 (who, though in systematic theology, took classes under Gerhard Hasel), and applying these insights to biblical studies, in an attempt to critique the historical-critical approach to Scripture, and to ensure that the enterprise of both OTT and systematic theology is both historical and theological from the starting point, allowing for the inbreaking of God into history (vs. the closed continuum of the historical-critical method).48

(3) **Synchronic theology of OT books or blocks of books.** Several of Hasel’s former students (or their students) have written dissertations, articles, or monographs setting forth the theology of a given OT book or

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block of books. This includes the Pentateuch as a whole (Davidson, 2000), and the individual books of Genesis (Ferch, 1985), Joshua (Davidson, 1995), Esther (Rodriguez, 1995), Song of Songs (Davidson, 1989, 2007, 2010), Ezekiel (Davidson, 2010), Daniel (Doukhan, 1987, 2000), and Zephaniah (King, 1996), among many others. Still other scholarly works by Hasel's students (or their students) have examined one more prominent themes/motifs in a given book, including, among others, the resurrection motif in Hosea (Price, 1988), the last days in Daniel (Pfandl, 1990), “forgiveness” in the Pentateuch (Olafsson 1992), the name Israel in Hosea and Amos

50 Arthur J. Ferch, Genesis: In the Beginning (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1985).
51 Richard M. Davidson, In the Footsteps of Joshua (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1995).
57 Most of the contributors to the Andrews Study Bible were students of Gerhard Hasel (or students of his students), as are many of the contributors to the forthcoming one-volume Andrews Bible Commentary (Andrews University Press) and the multi-volume Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary (Pacific Press).
Davison: Legacy of Gerhard Hase’s OT Theology

(Diop, 1995); remnant in Jeremiah (Mulzac, 1995); creation in the Psalms (Gnanamuthu, 1996); the Michael figure in Daniel (Anderson, 1996); covenant in Amos (Siqueira, 1996); resurrection in Daniel (Stele, 1996); laying on of hands on Joshua (Mattingly, 1997); conquest in Joshua (Merling 1997); prayers in Daniel (Petersen, 1999); the cultus in Daniel (Vogel, 1999); creation in Isaiah (2001); judgment in the Flood narrative (Park, 2005); cultic allusions in the Servant Songs (Ha, 2009); the Sabbath in the Pentateuch (Frey, 2010); theodicy in Ezekiel (Wahonya, 2011); and the theology of the Servant Songs (Beaulieu, 2014).

64 Lewis O. Anderson, “The Michael Figure in the Book of Daniel” (PhD dissertation, Andrews University, 1996).
Last, but not least, in this area of book theologies, the OT theology course that has been taught for many years by Gerhard Hasel and some his colleagues at Andrews University Theological Seminary, both during his lifetime and after, has regularly followed the practice of having students write a theology of an OT book of their choice. I have personally archived hundreds of the best of these papers, covering all the books of the OT, and we are currently scanning them and publishing them on line for the benefit of others.

(4) **Chronological, not canonical, ordering of the theologies of books and blocks of writings.** Following in the tradition of Hasel, his students (and their students) generally adhere to the *sola-tota Scriptura* principle, and accept the “plain reading” of what the biblical authors claim for the date, authorship, and *Sitz im Leben* of the book without hypothetical reconstruction. However, with the rise of the new literary criticism and the canonical approach of B.S. Childs, many students writing their dissertations in areas of OTT at Andrews University have chosen to follow the canonical order in its final form (and bracket out questions of introduction).

(5) **Diachronic thematic approach.** According to Hasel’s proposal, OT theology should “attempt to draw together and present the major themes of the OT.” Various dissertations, articles, and monographs have furthered this work among students of Gerhard Hasel. It was Dr. Hasel who first encouraged me to write a theology of sexuality in the Old Testament, and it finally ignited into publication as *Flame of Yahweh* (2007). Other themes have been traced throughout the Hebrew Bible by Hasel’s students (and their students): substitution (Rodriguez 1979); desecration and defilement (Amorin, 1985); throne of God (Nam, 1985).
DAVIDSON: LEGACY OF GERHARD HASEL’S OT THEOLOGY

1989);81 the horn motif (Suring, 1980);82 fatherhood of God (Tasker, 2001);83 the “seed” motif (Ojewole, 2002);84 Sheol (Galenieks, 2004);85 the heavenly sanctuary/temple (de Souza, 2005);86 warrior Messiah motif (Kim, 2008);87 blindness (McAllister, 2010);88 the origin and causation of death (Castang, 2011);89 and the love of God (Peckham, 2012).90

(6) Inner unity of the OT theologies. Hasel argued that “the final aim of OT theology is to demonstrate whether or not there is an inner unity that binds together the various theologies and longitudinal themes, concepts, and motifs.”91 There has been fruitful ongoing research among students of Hasel (and their students) in examining the literary macrostructures of the Hebrew Bible that demonstrate a unity within the individual books, blocks of books, and the entire canon of what we call the OT. Dissertations at AU focusing upon, or providing a helpful unifying literary structure, deal with, for example, Gen 1-2 (Doukhan,

90 Peckham, “The Concept of Divine Love.”
Almost all OT dissertations in OT biblical studies at Andrews University have examined the literary structure of a passage as part of their exegetical-theological work.

Building on the work of John Sailhamer, I have examined the literary macrostructure of the OT revealed in the Pentateuch in its alternations between long blocks of narratives followed by a concluding poetic block, and a chiastic structure (Leviticus) in the middle, and in the other parts of the HB by the seams that bind the parts of the canon together. As mentioned above, I have also suggested a metanarrative or conceptual “orientation point” of all Scripture set forth in some seven different themes at the canonical introduction of Scripture (Gen 1-3), and confirmed in the chronological introduction of Scripture (Job) and its canonical conclusion (Rev 20-22).

The unity of the various parts of the Hebrew Bible has also been demonstrated by various intertextual studies, including, e.g., the allusions to the tower of Babel narrative in the book of Daniel (Baez, 2012), and many others already referred to above. Inter-textual work linking the various parts of the Hebrew Bible together is a regular procedure in the exegetical-theological dissertations at Andrews University Theological Seminary.

(7) **Relationship to the NT.** Finally, in Hasel’s vision, an OT theology “must demonstrate its basic relationship to the NT or to NT

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94 Wilfried Warning, “The Contribution of Terminology Patterns to the Literary Structure of Leviticus” (PhD dissertation, Andrews University, 1997; published as Literary Artistry in Leviticus [Leiden: Brill, 1999]).
97 Davidson, “Back to the Beginning,” 5-29.
DAVIDSON: LEGACY OF GERHARD HASEL’S OT THEOLOGY

dayology." There have been several studies done by Hasel’s students focusing on the relationship between the Testaments. Again, under Hasel’s guidance and encouragement, I wrote my dissertation which was published under the title *Typology in Scripture* (1981). Since then I have continued to wrestle with the relationship between the Testaments, in various articles. Several of my students have tackled this issue, including, e.g., Pentateuchal sacred times and indicators of their continuing validity (Cole, 1996); the law of clean and unclean foods (Lev 11) and indicators of its continuing validity (Moskala, 1998); indicators of typology within the OT itself, using the Exodus motif as a case study (Ninow, 1999); and creation-related (sexual, dietary, Sabbath) Pentateuchal laws and indicators of their continuing validity (Breja, 2011).

New Testament dissertations have examined the relations between the Testaments by looking at allusions to OT materials, including, e.g., allusions to the OT trumpets in Revelation (Paulien, 1987); and

104 Friedbert Ninow, “Indicators of Typology Within the Old Testament: The Exodus Motif” (PhD dissertation, Andrews University, 1999; published under the same title, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001).
allusions to Sodom/Egypt/Babylon in Revelation (Reynolds, 1992);\textsuperscript{107} allusions to Daniel in the Synoptic Gospels (Vetne, 2011).\textsuperscript{108}

Still other dissertations have shown the unity of the Testaments by tracing a single theme throughout both the OT and NT: e.g., the “divine Warrior motif” (Kim, 2008);\textsuperscript{109} the love of God (Peckham, 2012, see above); and divine integrity (Tchumba, 2012).\textsuperscript{110}

**Conclusion**

Based upon this brief literature review, I can confidently conclude that Hasel’s *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, was not written in vain. His analysis of the issues in OTT served for many years as a standard in understanding the development of this discipline and the many challenges involved in doing OT/biblical theology. Furthermore, Hasel’s proposals for actually doing OT theology, illustrated already by Hasel during his lifetime, have been taken seriously by many OT theologians, as they have carried out their theological enterprise in harmony with one or more of his proposals. Finally, the students of Gerhard Hasel, and the students they have mentored, are continuing the brobdingnagian task of producing the multiplex OT/biblical theology that Hasel envisioned. The legacy of Hasel’s *OTT: Basic Issues*, lives on, and its true extent will only be fully known in the hereafter, to the glory of God!

\textsuperscript{109} Kim, “The ‘Warrior Messiah’ Motif in Scripture.”
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Gerhard Franz Hasel
Life Sketch
1935-1994

Michael G. Hasel
Southern Adventist University

On behalf of the family, I would like to thank all those who are part of honoring my father, Gerhard F. Hasel today. It is a very meaningful experience for me to share this moment with you and I want to thank you, his students, colleagues and friends for planning this session and for the presenters who have taken time to prepare papers for this occasion.

Gerhard Franz Hasel was born in Vienna, Austria on July 27, 1935. His father was a minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Within a short time, they moved to Frankfurt, Germany together with his older brother Kurt and sister Lotte. In 1939 when World War II erupted in Europe, his father was drafted into the German army. Convicted with the position that he wanted to save life rather than take life, he threw away his pistol and carried a carved, wooden replica throughout the war into the heart of Russia. God protected the family in many miraculous ways during the following six years. Gerhard’s father would be one of seven to survive in his original unit of 1,200 men and in that group only one of three that were never wounded. Those early experiences with God, now documented in the book A Thousand Shall Fall, published by his younger sister Susi Hasel Mundy, left a lasting impression on him. He became convicted of two things during these experiences: (1) that God truly existed and (2) that His Word and promises were trustworthy. He wanted more than ever to be faithful to God in all things.

When it came time to enter the Gymnasium or high school, after the war, he longed to learn and apply himself to studies. But in the end, he decided that keeping the Sabbath was more important than attending
school six days a week. So instead of entering a university-directed education, he began a trade school to become an electrician. He was encouraged by his supervisor to enter an apprenticeship competition and eventually won the district, then citywide, and finally state-level competition in Hessen as an electrician apprentice, which gave him full scholarship studies at the Technical University in Darmstadt, one of the top research institutions in the country. He was destined to become a leading electrical engineer. But it was at this that he felt a strong call to pastoral ministry. Finally, he told the authorities that he would not accept the scholarship and instead enrolled in the small, Marienhohe Seminary run by the denomination in the same city of Darmstadt.

During the summers to finance his education he sold religious books, which in one summer earned him enough money to study abroad for a year. He sailed to New York and headed up to Atlantic Union College where he earned a BA in Theology and German. The following year he was invited to attend the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University where he completed an MA in Systematic Theology and a BD degree. It was during his studies in Michigan that he met Hilde Schafer. They were married in 1962. After a year as a minister in Boston, he was invited to Southern Missionary College, now Southern Adventist University, where he taught Greek, theology and Biblical archaeology classes in the Religion department. In 1965 he started commuting to Nashville where he took PhD courses at the Divinity School at Vanderbilt University. In 1970 he completed his PhD in Biblical Studies writing on the topic of the Remnant Motif. He had intended to write a theology of the remnant from Genesis to Revelation, but when he got to Isaiah, his committee informed him that 600 pages would suffice and he needed to bring his study to a close. The published book was later entitled, *The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah.* Walter Harrelson, James Crenshaw, and Lou Silberman were among his professors at Vanderbilt.

In 1967 he was invited to the SDA Theological seminary where he became director of the PhD/ThD programs, later chair of the Old Testament department and eventually academic Dean from 1981-1988 over a span of 27 years. During that time the seminary experienced strong growth and a diverse group of faculty were hired representing the international nature of the seminary that served the world church.
Over the course of his scholarship he published or edited twelve books ranging from Old Testament to New Testament theology, two books on hermeneutics and biblical interpretation. His last book, entitled *Speaking in Tongues*, was a careful study of the NT teaching on the gift of tongues and the modern glossolalia phenomenon. He was in the process of writing the NICOT commentary on Amos and Hosea for Eerdmans before his untimely death. His articles ranged broadly from studies in Genesis, Daniel, prophecy, canon, OT cosmology, soteriology in the OT, the sanctuary, covenant, Sabbath, and the concept of the remnant, among others. But he was probably best known in theological circles for his surveys of Old and New Testament theology both in book and article form which often contained subtitles like: Basic Issues in the Current Debate, Retrospect and Prospect, Current Issues and Future Prospects, and the like. In 1978 he was invited to hold a plenary at the Evangelical Theological Society. His topic, “The Future of Biblical Theology” was later published in a volume edited by Kenneth Kantzer. He continued to be actively engaged in ETS and eventually was involved in establishing the Adventist Theological Society for which he served as president from 1990-92 and long-time editor of its journal.

He was a regular contributor to the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* before it was translated from the German, contributing an article in almost every volume. I remember as a high school student typing out those articles in German on our new state-of-the-art Zenith computer with two floppy drives. He had not yet transitioned then to the computer. When he finished his fourth edition of *Old Testament Theology* for Eerdmans he remarked how much simpler it had become than writing it all out long hand and having his secretary later type it up.

Leaving scholarship for a moment, I hope I may take the liberty to describe what it was like living at home with Dad. I will never know how he wrote in his office while one of my sisters practiced piano on the other side of the wall, I was playing my trumpet across from his door, and with the squeaky violin of my youngest sister down the hall. But one thing we all learned from Dad was the importance of hard work, focus, and diligence—especially an attention for details. “Sticktoitiveness” was a word coined and used often in our home. Of course, when we were younger we never really knew what Dad did or what it all meant. When we were young, he was Daddy coming around the corner to surprise us and playing the tickle monster. When we were small he would lay on his
HASEL: LIFE SKETCH

back on the ground, place us on his feet and lift us high off the ground with our arms outstretched as we balanced in midair until we all fell into a pile laughing. He would love taking us to the beach or out camping for the weekend. We camped a lot. He enjoyed nature. One thing I will always remember will be the long summer trips with the Geoscience Research Institute looking for fossils in Wyoming or hiking to the Petrified Forest at Yellowstone National Park. One of his keen interests was the interface between science and the Bible. In part, it was the hunting of fossils that eventually led to my future interest in biblical archaeology. He was an avid photographer, who during his extensive travels for the church, would always come back with elaborate slide shows that we would watch on Friday evenings as a family. My favorites were always the pictures from ancient Babylon, Egypt, and Jerusalem. It seemed like the Bible came to life with him during our family worships in the evenings and the Word always became the Living Word of God.

Dad loved to surprise us. During one trip when he was in South America on a lecture tour for four weeks, it seemed like an eternity. We spoke once or twice by Ham radio. There were no computers or cell phones then. Somehow he got back early and hid in the closet and when we got home he jumped out and we all screamed and hugged him in surprise.

Dad was an optimist, a forward thinker, and he exhibited an enthusiasm for life lived to its fullest. He was a visionary. He would always say to us, “If you don’t make plans for something to happen, it never will.” Then he would tell us that this was what his mother always said.

He had the gift of careful discernment. Later as I was older, he would tell me, “Michael, you must always carefully evaluate where an idea comes from and then look where it may lead. Never jump into something without evaluating it carefully from beginning to end. An idea always came from somewhere and has a trajectory that will prove whether it will be worth hanging onto or not. Foremost, test all ideas by the Bible.”

I remember sitting in his hermeneutics class at the Seminary in the front row as he described the neo-orthodoxy of Bultmann and his demythologizing of Scripture. I still use those illustrations when I discuss the impact of historical-criticism on the Bible in my classes today. He was a strong defender of the Word of God and its normative role in every aspect of life.
For my father, the authority of the Bible in its totality was what constituted the Word of God. It needed to be studied by comparing Scripture with Scripture, and allowing the clearer texts to illuminate those that were less clear. Scripture, he believed, was a harmonious revelation of God to humanity. He wrote extensively on the authority of the Bible and on its inspiration and revelation.

In August, 1994, just over 20 years ago, we learned that he had been killed in a car accident in Utah. I had taken him to the airport that morning. He was to fly home the next day to spend time with family. He was attending a church conference of scientists and theologians on Faith and Science where he would present his last paper on the “Days of Creation in Genesis 1: Literal ‘Days’ or Figurative Periods or Epochs of Time?” In a sense, he died defending the integrity and authority of the Word that had been such a central part of his life for so many years. On his tombstone near Lake Chapin, where we enjoyed so many memories, are the words from Isaiah 40:8: “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God stands forever.”

Today I believe, if he were here, he would still be a devoted student of the Word of God. He would continue to be engaged in the retrospect and prospect discussions in Biblical Theology for to him that is where life centered. There would be issues he would continue to engage in, and there might also be increased concern at the fragmentation of some of the core biblical principles in theology he so diligently sought to uphold. But then again, he might remind us of the plaque that hung for so many years on the entrance wall of his boyhood home in Frankfurt, Germany, during the war years, where these words of Jesus were etched in wood: “and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

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The Hasel-Kaiser and Evangelical Discussions on the Search for a Center or *Mitte* to Biblical Theology

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.
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It is a privilege to contribute this essay on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of Dr. Gerhard Hasel’s sad and untimely death (1935-1994) in an automobile accident in 1994. He was a leader in the field of Biblical Theology and a real friend to me personally, as I profited from my numerous interchanges with him. For example, he kindly invited me to teach one of his Biblical Theology classes at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan and I reciprocated by inviting him at that time to teach my Biblical Theology class at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. The students at both schools loved this living dialogue between both of us and freely entered into the question and answer session as they watched the expressions on each of our faces in response to questions they knew were sure to arouse some controversy between the two of us, despite the rather large areas of agreement we shared in Biblical studies.

One of the areas of Biblical Theology where we had some of our strongest disagreements, however, was in the area of what, if anything, constituted the center (German *Mitte*) of Biblical Theology. In fact, Gerhard clearly announced the following response in answer to that inquiry:

The question whether the OT has something that can be considered its center (German *Mitte*) is of considerable importance for its understanding and for doing OT theology. The matter of the center

43
plays an important and at times even decisive role for presentations of OT theology.\textsuperscript{1}

Despite this significant acknowledgment of the importance of this issue of the unity of the Bible and Biblical Theology, he preferred to speak of a multiplex approach for doing Biblical Theology, for to his way of thinking, limiting the contents of the whole Old Testament to the single idea of a center was inadequate as a method of structuring the entirety of Biblical Theology. Here is how he put it:

[the multiplex approach] avoids the pitfalls of structuring a theology of the OT by means of a center, theme, key concept, or focal point but allows for the various motifs, themes, and concepts to emerge in all their variety and richness without elevating any of these longitudinal perspectives into a single structuring concept, whether it be communion, covenant, promise, kingdom of God, or something else. The multiplex approach allows aside from this and in the first instance that the theologies of the various OT books and blocks of writings emerge and stand next to each other in all their variety and richness.\textsuperscript{2}

Gerhard did not go on to identify what he felt those pitfalls were exactly. One could see how a “pitfall” would emerge, however, if it involved importing a concept from outside (\textit{ab extra}) to act as the center for all of Scripture. But what if such a “center” presented itself from within the body of Scriptural text itself? What if that internal concept showed how cohesive and unified the plan of a single mind and purpose, \textit{viz.}, that from God himself, was as it embraced the entire multiplexity of issues into one coordinated whole and developing a unified plan to the entire corpus of Scripture? Nevertheless, even Gerhard could not remain entirely comfortable with this multiplex solution, for on the very next page in his \textit{Basic Issues} book he showed some sympathy for the concept of a unifying center. He taught:

The final aim of the canonical approach to Old Testament theology is to penetrate through the various theologies of the individual books and

\textsuperscript{1} Gerhard Hasel. \textit{Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate}, 4\textsuperscript{th} edition, Revised and Expanded (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 139.

\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., 113.
KAISER: HASEL-KAISER AND EVANGELICAL DISCUSSIONS

groups of writings and the various longitudinal themes to the dynamic unity that binds all theologies and themes together. ³

Precisely so! Thus, in spite of the fine set of cautions that Professor Hasel raised, we are never told just how the various theologies of the various Biblical books stand next to each other or form one cohesive whole. Indeed, he does recognize that the mere identification of the several longitudinal themes by themselves is not the totality of the task of the work of the Biblical theologian. But then what would such a quest, as he had otherwise conceived of it, result in?

What is most regrettable, of course, is the fact that Gerhard never got a chance to produce his own complete Biblical Theology which would have demonstrated just how he would illustrate and employ such a coordination of the multiplex themes with all of their variegated variety. Fortunately, there was an article he wrote, which was published posthumously, but even in this article he focused more on some of the cautions he had raised in his earlier works⁴ than he did on setting forth a how a complete Biblical Theology using his method would work. Nevertheless, he did survey a wide range of suggestions for a center to the theology of the Bible, but he found that the very fact that there were so many suggestions showed that there was little or just plain no consensus on any one theme for the center. Such a quest was beyond the boundaries of good Old Testament scholarship he concluded, to our disappointment. Nevertheless, he did add that if one was to respect the integrity of the contribution of each of the Biblical books, a multiplex approach for a center had to be central to this quest. In addition to all of this, Gerhard was worried that any attempt to identify a center would have the effect of excluding some significant Biblical materials and would have resulted in a canon within a canon. This, of course, is where we tended to disagree, for it would not be necessary for God himself to omit part of his own teaching if along with that teaching he still had charted a clear course that marked his goal, purpose and plan in its entirety! But before I restate my case for such a center, what

³ Ibid., 114.
modifications or criticisms, in the views of someone like myself, must be made over the case made for the multiplex approach?

**Critiques of a Multiplex Approach**

The key question that must be put to those evangelicals, who like Gerhard reject an organizing center for a Biblical Theology (and their number among conservative scholars is quite large indeed), must be this simple question: What then gives the Bible its unity and wholeness to its message? If we contend, as some do, for a discipline called “Biblical Theology” (in the singular number), as opposed to a renamed discipline entitled “Biblical Theologies” (the plural number), this must imply that there is some way in which all the material is organized around some central principle, theme, purpose, idea, or person. If we assert that there is some type of unity to the word of God, as most evangelicals eventually do in one way or another, then what will serve as that integrating and unifying plan and structure for the whole canon of Scripture? Will there not need to be some kind of overarching unifying structure that not only will link the individual books, but also one that will link the two testaments as well? What will show that it is but one book with a single plan or goal and purpose even though it is spread out of some 1400 years in three languages with some 40 writers from three continents: Africa, Asia, and Europe?

To be more specific, how are we to look at the Old Testament? Do we see a continuity linking the Old Testament promises and fulfilments in the New Testament? How shall we read the Old Testament if it is isolated from the New Testament? Should we read the Abrahamic narratives without regard to the Apostle Paul? And if we introduced Paul into the discussion of these patriarchal narratives as a new way of looking at these narratives, would we be misrepresenting them and misleading God’s people? Did Jesus’ coming change what was represented in the Old Testament stories into a more spiritual, allegorical or mystic meaning of the text that ended the divine promises to a rebellious Israel and now made them over to the Church? Did the various books and writers of Scripture have any kind of organizing mind, plan, purpose and goal within them that each writer knew by virtue of revelation from God the Father?

As far back as the middle of the twentieth century, H. H. Rowley had already addressed this problem in his 1953 book *The Unity of the Bible:*
Kaiser: Hasel-Kaiser and Evangelical Discussions

There is no automatic spiritual growth of mankind, and the Bible nowhere tells the story of such growth. It records how men of God, acting under a direction which they believed to be of God, mediated ideas and principles to men. It does not tell how men by the exercise of their minds wrested the secret of life and the universe from a reluctant Unknown, but how God laid hold of them and revealed himself through them. If there is any truth in this, then a unity of the Bible is to be expected. If God was revealing Himself, then there should be some unity about the revelation, since it was the same Being who was being revealed.5

Surely the words of our Lord Jesus to the Samaritan woman must shape the “theological heart of the Bible” when he told her that “salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:23). Even though the discipline of Biblical Theology is in the best position to track such a development through the Biblical text, the irony is that in most of the early practitioners of Biblical Theology, the emphasis was dominated by the study of the multiple themes of Scripture with presuppositions that were antithetical to the possibility of viewing it as a unified whole.6 For in the eyes of the greater number of teachers and scholars, the Bible’s diversity was too prominent a feature in the Bible to allow for the possibility of a unified whole. That emphasis has carried on from the height of the Biblical Theology Movement in the 1950s and 70s up to our own day!

Accordingly, few, if any evangelicals, want to argue that the Bible does not have something of an overall unity. Few would totally disallow a case for any form of unity or organizational structure to the whole corpus of Scripture! Indeed, would not disallowing such a supposition against a general unity of the Bible seriously affect the argument for the presence of the divine mind, purpose, and plan of a God for order and forethought throughout the whole of Scripture? Surely, God had not left the materials of revelation to be scattered over the pages of Scripture in

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some haphazardly or disorganized way despite the multiplicity of themes and emphases. Instead, Scripture would imitate the same orderliness and purpose that was endemic to the very nature of the character and person of God himself.

Gerhard’s legitimate concerns over whether the declaration of some overarching unity to the Bible would possibly lead to the exclusion of some texts of Scripture, or that it might develop a canon within a canon, is one that all Biblical scholars should be concerned about and therefore agree on. Gerhard’s concern for retaining the integrity of each Biblical witness is certainly to be applauded. As opposed to some aspects of this concern, however, we would express our concern over those who seem to rush to obtain an incorrect Christological re-interpretation or re-presentation for every Old Testament text by incorrectly using a New Testament as the basis for re-establishing a new meaning for what it thought the Old Testament had originally meant to say. Each Old Testament text, however, must first be allowed to say what the author, who stood in the counsel of God, obtained, as we must remind ourselves over and over again, from the Lord who gave us his revelation, rather than our intrusively and arbitrarily projecting a “Jesus-only” message from every text in the earlier part of the canon. Not every Old Testament text is about Jesus! Some of those texts were meant to reprove, rebuke and to teach!

Others, such as Charles Scobie, agreed with Gerhard Hasel in proposing a Multi-thematic Approach that identifies longitudinal themes, motifs, and concepts. But Scobie likewise failed to show how his organization of this multitrack approach to Scripture resulted in any clear epochs or broadly synchronic structures which showed a progressive development of any alleged structure or epochs in a plan of God. What was missing was any treatment of the various epochs of Biblical revelation that showed how the various corpora were diachronically integrated and resulted in clearly identifiable stages in the promise and propose of God. The “Promise-plan of God” showed the best prospect for being the basis for detecting how this salvation from the Jews could become a coherent whole in the discipline of Biblical Theology.

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How the Unity of the Bible is Built Around the Promise-Plan of God

From one end of the Biblical story to the other, Scripture reveals that the Living God uniquely called the world into being by the word of his mouth and then he called the Jewish people to be his chosen instruments to bring the good news about God’s redemption to the world. This message of creation and salvation he purposely located on the land bridge that Israel formed geographically between the continents of Africa, Europe and Asia as the setting and the place where he would position his people Israel both in history and in the end day. The choice was solely one that the Living God made—there were no meritorious works or reasons for such a choice other than his own graciousness and mercy. That divine decision also continues to remain firm, especially despite Israel’s apostasy and downright faithless treachery, which might otherwise have signaled a renunciation of one or more of those divine choices. In fact, the nations of the world would themselves already benefit from the divine work of creation, would further benefit from God’s choice of Abraham and his line, for Abraham and his descendants were the ones God had designated to be the channel through whom all the nations would be blessed with the good news of the gospel (Gen 12:3; Gal 3:8).

Paul himself announced that this word given to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 was nothing less the “gospel” itself, God’s “good news” (Gal 3:8). Moreover, Abraham was the first one to be evangelized by his exercise of faith and trust in this coming “Man of Promise” (Gen 15:6; Gal 3:8), when he was promised that one of his own “seed” would embody the substance of God’s plan and he himself would be the object of faith in that “good news.”

The continuity of this message of creation and the message of the promise of the “Seed” throughout the whole Bible was the real key to the question of unity, for Jesus did not signal a sudden metamorphosis of the text from something old to something new; instead, he claimed that the meaning the text had seminally back in the time of the patriarchs, and for all those who followed them, was the identical basis for any and all who would subsequently be justified by faith. Yeshua (Jesus) was the One whom the prophets would later on point to as the sole object of their faith.

Paul’s interpretation of this text was not a new signal for the New Testament community to assign a change or an alternate meaning to what
had been claimed by each writer of the Old Testament. The use of the Old Testament text by the new converts, all the way up to the time of Christ and the apostles, and on into our own day, was consistently the same and it matched just how the writers of the older testament had expressed it. The Bible had only one perception of reality; it represented a single conceptual understanding of the God, in whose current and ultimate rule and reign over everything, and in his promise of salvation to all who trusted him, would embody one continuous plan for all mortals. The promise involved representing a wide variety of diversity of the doctrines taught, but that did not deter this divine plan from making the main thing the main thing in the plan of God—the promise of God about his coming Messiah who would rule and reign and save all who trusted him.

This is not to say that the current emphasis, or concurrence of those in scholarship, is one where all are agreed on the case for the unity of the Bible; scholarship has probably sided more with the case for the diversity of Scripture, as its leading principle of our day—even among evangelicals! Gerhard Maier put it this way:

> It is difficult to speak of a “center” of Scripture today, because the rubric “center of Scripture” is often separated from the “unity of Scripture.” While the two were closely identified at the time of the Reformation, the Enlightenment disentangled them. Indeed, the “center of Scripture” practically replaced the lost “unity of Scripture.”

Nevertheless, it has been my habit in some 56 years of teaching Biblical Theology to follow the path laid down by Willis J. Beecher in his 1902 Stone lectures at Princeton Seminary, later repeatedly published as *The Prophets and the Promise*. Beecher defined the promise this way:

> God gave a promise to Abraham, and through him to mankind; a promise eternally fulfilled and fulfilling in the history of Israel; and chiefly fulfilled in Jesus Christ, he being that which is principal in the history of Israel.

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This promise had ten distinctive features:

1. The Promise-plan of God is found throughout the entire Scripture and not just in selected passages as is differently understood in an alternative view known as the promise-fulfillment rubric/scheme. While the Old Testament uses a constellation of words such as “oath,” “word,” or “pledge,” the New Testament settled on using “promise” in its verbal, nominal or adjectival forms in almost every New Testament book except five of the twenty-seven books.

2. The Promise-plan of God is regarded in Scripture as a single plan even though it is repeated and unfolded through the centuries with numerous specifications and forms, but always with the same essential core. It became the content of the word given in Eve about her “Seed,” the essence of the covenant God cut with Abraham, the word God gave to David about a “house, throne and kingdom,” the promise of the Holy Spirit, the inclusion of the Gentiles in the people of God, the promise of Yeshua’s death, burial, and sure resurrection, and many more similar doctrines that were all embraced under the single rubric of the “Promise.”

3. The New Testament writers consistently equate this single, definite promise (it invariably occurs with the definite article) as the one made with Abraham, when God called him to leave Ur of the Chaldeans.

4. While the New Testament may occasionally speak of “promises,” using the plural form of the word “promise,” they do not mean thereby to weaken the case for a single, definite promise of God, but only to note that the one definite promise-plan of God has enormous number of doctrines that are justifiably attached to the plan.

5. The New Testament writers view this promise as being composed of many specifications and doctrines that are all embraced in that one single plan.

6. The promise made to Eve, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David is represented as being partially fulfilled in their time (for example in the exodus), but there was much yet to be realized in the distant future beyond the times of these first recipients.

7. The New Testament writers not only declare the promise-plan of God can be seen throughout the whole Old Testament, but they adopt the Old Testament phraseology as their own way of speaking of God’s revelation to them. Hence, they talk about the “Seed,” the “people of God,” the “dynasty of David,” the “day of the Lord,” etc.
(8) Both the Old and New Testaments teach that the promise of God is irrevocable and is operating eternally. It hallmark was that it was to be “everlasting/eternal.”

(9) The New Testament makes a strong connection between the promise doctrine and the New Covenant that God would make with “the house of Judah and the house of Israel.” Though there never was a covenant specifically given to the Church, the Church participates in that same New Covenant when they by faith are grafted into the one olive tree, which has its roots in the promise God gave to the patriarchs, and in the trunk of the olive tree which is Israel, wherein some of the natural branches have been lopped off temporarily because of their lack of faith, but all of which can be re-grafted in once again by faith along with the wild branches of the believing Gentiles.

(10) The culmination of all these doctrinal specifications is wrapped up in the first and second coming of Jesus Christ. He is the heart and focus of this one definite plan.

Conclusion:  

It is especially important to begin, then, as Jesus did with the Samaritan woman: “Salvation is from the Jews.” Even more importantly, it is of critical significance that the Gentile Church recognizes that the New Covenant was not made with the structure of the New Testament Church; we repeat, God never made a covenant with the Church. Nor did he place a condition that Israel had to fulfill in the covenant he originally made with Abraham or David in order for them to inherit the blessings of the promise except they must believe; instead, he promised the perpetuity of the contents of his covenant with “the house of Israel and the house of Judah” on into eternity. Thus, disobedient Israelites may be cast outside of his grace, but that does not mean God will forever abandon his promise to Abraham or David. God’s plan remains secure and sure for all eternity!

11 See a fuller description of this argument in Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Recovering the Unity of the Bible: One Continuous Story, Plan and Purpose (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009).
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Christ, the Son of the Living God:  
The Theme of the Chiastic Structure of the  
Gospel of Matthew

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Many scholars have looked for meaning among the various themes in the book of Matthew through an analysis of literary structure with a special emphasis on chiasms. Ethelbert Bullinger, John Breck, S. Joseph Kidder, and Tyler J. VanderWeele point out many small chiasms which are evident in particular paragraphs of Matthew’s gospel. Yet there is also a larger chiasm which encompasses the entire book. Much insight can be gained from considering the chiastic structure of Matthew as a whole. It is through

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1 Chiasms or chiastic approaches are a literary structure used to emphasize and reveal the depth of a specific passage through reverse parallelism of similar or contrary elements. Chiasms can stand alone or overlap in various ways. Large chiastic structures may include several smaller ones. The end of one chiasm may also form the beginning of another. One section of a chiasm (usually the first or last) may be a smaller version of a larger chiasm. Chiastic structures are by nature rather tightly constructed, yet nothing prohibits a writer from composing an incomplete chiasm or one that is not a perfect mirror image parallel. For more information about chiasms and their relevance in the Bible see John Breck, “Biblical Chiasmus: Exploring Structure for Meaning,” Biblical Theology Bulletin 17, no. 2 (1987): 70-74.


a focus on this larger chiasm that we are able to draw out the major themes and theology of Matthew.

While there is not much research done regarding a chiasm of the book of Matthew as a whole, tradition points to Matthew 13 as the center of the book. For example, Tyler J. VanderWeele\(^6\) builds off B.W. Bacon\(^7\) and C.H. Lohr’s\(^8\) chiastic structure with the pivotal point being Matthew 13, the discourse of “the Parables of the Kingdom.” He bases his central theme on the observation that the literary style of the Torah and Matthew, both of which can be divided into five books, is made up of narrative and discourses.\(^9\)

However, other views regarding the chiastic structure and center of the book of Matthew have started to be explored. For example, Mako A. Nagasawa\(^10\) puts the center as the Third Discourse in which Jesus compares the Kingdom to a household. James B. Jordan\(^11\) sees the center of Matthew as the decision of the Pharisees to kill the innocent Servant of the Lord (12:14-21) as this is at the heart of his chiasm. Yet, a case can be made that the proclamations of Peter and God the Father, that Jesus is the Son of God in Matthew chapters 16 and 17, is more in line with the overarching themes of Matthew who spends much time telling us who Jesus is.

Of significance for the readers of Matthew is that Jesus, the Messiah, is not only of royal Davidic lineage, but also the divine Son of God on a mission of redemption. The intent of this article to is consider some of the themes and theological views present in the Gospel of Matthew based on a chiasm of the full book.

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\(^6\) VanderWeele, 669-673.
\(^9\) VanderWeele, 669.
**Matthew’s Audience**

Matthew begins his writing with a genealogy, showing how Jesus is a descendant of both Abraham and David. Matthew’s desire is to make clear to his Jewish readers that the Old Testament prophecies related to the Messiah had been fulfilled in Jesus. Matthew employs about fifty quotations from the Old Testament; the book of Isaiah in particular has exercised a great influence on Matthew’s gospel. We may very well characterize the gospel of Matthew as the gospel of fulfillment.

Matthew’s gospel also serves an apologetic purpose which tries to refute the accusations put forward by opponents of the Christian faith. Thus, the birth narrative (in particular Matt 1:18-25) defends Jesus against charges that His birth was illegitimate and the information concerning the bribing of the Roman guard at the grave by members of the Jewish Council (information exclusively reported in Matthew 28:11-15) forms a refutation of the accusation that the disciples had stolen Jesus’ body. This exposition on the facts of Jesus’ life shows the divine nature of His origins and ministry. Only the divinely appointed Messiah would be able to stand as the sacrifice for all mankind.

**The Chiastic Structure of Matthew’s Gospel**

Now let us look at a detailed chiastic structure of Matthew as a whole:

**A Jesus’s Birth and the Beginning of His Kingdom Ministry (1-4)**

- The genealogy and birth of Jesus 1:1-25
- Mary was chosen to be the mother of Jesus 1:18
- An angel of the Lord told Joseph of Jesus’ miraculous conception 1:20
- Proclamation of Jesus as Immanuel: “God with us” 1:23
- Kingship of Jesus acknowledged by Magi 2:1-12

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14 Ibid. Also, Felix Just has prepared a chart showing where Matthew uses quotations from the OT. He lists 13 instances of Matthew quoting or alluding to Isaiah. See his website for more detail: http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Matthew-OTQuotations.htm (accessed June 23, 2014).
The Magi give expensive gifts to Jesus 2:11  
Herod plotted to kill Jesus seeing Him as a threat to his throne 2:13-23  
God directs Jesus to be taken to Egypt to avoid His death 2:13-21  
Baptism of Jesus 3:1-3:17  
Jesus is tempted three times in the wilderness by Satan who tries to make Jesus doubt His identity as the Son of God and shortcut His mission of sacrifice to save the world 4:1-11.  
Jesus begins His teaching ministry, calls the disciples, and starts His healing ministry 4:12-25

B Sermon on the Mount: The Laws of the Kingdom (5-7)  
- Blessings on citizens of the Kingdom 5:1-12  
- Guidelines for living in the Kingdom 5:13-6:18  
- Instruction on the use of personal resources for the Kingdom 6:19-34  
- Signs that point to the characteristics of citizens of the Kingdom 7:1-23  
- Instructions on how to have a firm foundation in the Kingdom 7:24-28  
- Parable of the wise and foolish builders

C Jesus' Authority Proven through Healings, Miracles, and the Giving of Instructions on How to Serve in the Kingdom (8-12)  
- Acts of healing (throughout chapters 8-9)  
- Men invite themselves to be disciples and are warned of the cost of discipleship 8:18-22  
- Jesus calls Matthew the tax-collector 9:9-13  
- Two blind men proclaim Jesus as “Son of David” 9:27-31

16 While it does not fit chronologically in Matthew’s chiasm, the Baptism of Jesus and His transfiguration are linked. God’s statement at the Baptism of Jesus in Matthew 3:17, “And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased,’” is repeated verbatim at the Transfiguration in Matthew 17:5: “While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!’”
KIDDER: CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD

- Jesus’ summons the twelve disciples and sends them out on His authority 10:1-10:42
- Jesus instructs His disciples to take care of the “Little Ones” 10:42
- John questions Jesus as Messiah, Jesus answers by affirming John as Elijah 11:1-19
- Jesus notes that it is the “babes,” not the wise, who will reveal Jesus as the Son of God 11:25-26
- Matthew shows that Jesus was the Servant in whom God delights and fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 42, reaffirming the authority of Jesus 12:15-21

D The Parables about the Kingdom, Miracles Performed (13:1-16:12)
- Kingdom of God parables: instructions on how to live in the Kingdom 13-16
- Mustard Seed Parable 13:31-32
- Woman asks for healing for possessed daughter 15:21-28
- Disciples rebuked for lack of faith 16:5-12

E Confirmation that Jesus is the Son of God, Ruler of the Kingdom (16:13-17:13)
- Peter proclaims Jesus as the Messiah, Son of God 16:13-20
- God, the Father, proclaims Jesus as His Son 17:1-13

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17 While it does not fit chronologically in Matthew’s chiasm, the term “little ones” is a literary link. The term is only used in two chapters of Matthew, 10:42 (Section C) and 18:6,10,14 (Section D’). The reference is regarding the spiritually immature as well as the physically immature.
18 The NIV uses the term “little children” and the NASB uses “infants.”
19 It is interesting to note that in the NKJV, Matthew 1:1-16:12 comprises 540 verses (50%), Matthew 16:13-17:13 contains 29 verses (3%), and Matthew 17:14-28:20 contains 502 verses (47%). Matthew contains 1,071 verses in total. This finding lends itself to the conclusion that Matthew 16:13-17:13 is the center of the book.
20 John the Baptist compared to Elijah 17:10-13.

153
D’ Parables and discourses on how to behave in the Kingdom (17:14-20:28)

- Man asks for healing for possessed son 17:14-21
- Disciples rebuked for lack of faith 17:17, 20
- Mustard Seed Parable 17:20
- Jesus instructs His followers to humble themselves like children and to care for the “Little Ones” 18:1-1421
- Instructions and parables on forgiveness and how to live as disciples in the Kingdom 18:15-20:28

C’ Jesus’ Authority Proven through the Triumphal Entry, Cleansing of the Temple, and the Telling of Parables on How to Serve and Behave in the Kingdom (20:29-22:46)

- Two blind men proclaim Jesus as “Son of David” 20:29-31
- Triumphal entry and the cleansing of the temple affirm Jesus’ authority 21:1-14
- The authority of Jesus is questioned by the Pharisees 21:15-16a
- Jesus reminds the Pharisees that the infants and babes will reveal the Lord through their praise of Him 21:16b
- Parables about discipleship 21:27-22:40
- Jesus quotes Psalm 110 to show that David knew the Christ to be Lord who given authority by God 22:44-45
- Pharisees finally stop questioning Jesus’ 22:46

B’ Olivet Discourse: The Signs of the Coming of the Kingdom (23-25)

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21 See footnote 17.
**Kidder: Christ, the Son of the Living God**

- Woes on those who don’t live according to the Kingdom 23:1-39
- Watching for the signs of the coming of the Kingdom 24:1-51
- Instructions on how to be firm in faith as you do not know time or hour 25:1-13
- Parable of the wise and foolish virgins
- Instructions on the use of Kingdom resources 25:14-30
- Guidelines for living in the Kingdom 25:31-46

A’ The End of Jesus’ Earthly Kingdom Ministry, His Death and Resurrection (26-28)

- The Lord’s Supper 26:17-35
- Jesus prays three times in Gethsemane while affirming His identity as the Son of God by praying “My Father”, and accepts His mission of sacrifice to save the world 26:36-46
- Jesus goes to Jerusalem to allow Himself to be led to His death 26:47-68
- Peter denies Jesus three times 26:69-75
- Kingship of Jesus rejected, chief Jewish leaders plot to kill Jesus 27:1-32
- The crucifixion and resurrection (rebirth) of Jesus 27:33-28:15
- Joseph of Arimathea gives Jesus a rich tomb 27:57-60
- An angel of the Lord told the Marys of Jesus’ miraculous resurrection 28:5-6
- Two Marys proclaim the resurrection of Jesus 28:1-10
- Jesus continues His teaching ministry by sending the disciples to all the world 28:16-20
- The proclamation by Jesus: “I will be with you always” 28:20
Observation and Analysis on the Chiastic Structure of Matthew A. Past and Future (1-4, 26-28) 22

Jesus’ Birth and Resurrection:
The genealogy of Jesus, in Matthew 1:1-17, brings us up from the past, while the commission in 28:16-20, moves us into the future. Matthew’s genealogy is a summary and continuation of the ones found in the Old Testament for David, Abraham, and Adam. The commission given by Jesus is His call to bring people from all nations into His kingdom and family. The genealogy of Jesus in Matthew highlights His place in the royal line of David, while His resurrection reaffirmed Jesus’ divine sovereignty over sin. The resurrection can also be seen as a New Birth for Jesus in which He is able to rightly claim His heavenly throne.

An Angel’s Message and the Marys:
The birth narrative of 1:18-25 can be analyzed as having three parts: Mary is chosen, an angel appears with a message, and Jesus is born. In the same way, the resurrection narrative of 28:1-10 presents two Marys, an angel appears with a message, and then Jesus appears in His resurrected body.23

22 It has been noted that Matthew was written to present Jesus as a new and priestly Moses, the savior of God’s people from earthly and spiritual bondage. Hence, the early chapters of Matthew recapitulate the history of the Pentateuch and set up the themes of “rest” (Matthew 11:28-30) and “deliverance” (as shown throughout Matthew 4, 8, 9, 11, 12, etc.)

1:1-17—genealogies; Genesis (beginning of life; first book of the Pentateuch)
1:18-25—birth of Jesus; birth of Moses (introduction of saviors)
2:1-23—gifts of the magi, descent into Egypt; exodus from Egypt (wealth; reward)
3:1-17—baptism of Jesus; Red Sea crossing (faith journey)
4:1-11—40 days wrestling in wilderness; 40 years in wilderness (deprivation; punishment)
4:12-25—begins preaching the Kingdom; initial conquests in Numbers (start of ministry; leading into the Promised Land)
5-7—Sermon on the Mount; Deuteronomy (how to achieve life; last book of the Pentateuch)


23 John 1:1-18 only presents one Mary, and that is Mary Magdalene.
“God with Us”:
Joseph is told to call this new child Immanuel, which Matthew reminds us means “God with us” (1:23). This connects with Jesus reminding His disciples that He will continue to remain “with you always, even to the end of the age” (28:20). The presence of Jesus was not a one-time event, but was ushered in by His birth and lasts throughout eternity.

Rich Gifts and the Acknowledgment of Kingship:
On the occasion of His birth, the Magi in 2:11 give rich gifts to Jesus, whom they called “King of the Jews” (2:2), which will sustain the family while in Egypt. Similarly, the wealthy Joseph of Arimathaea provides a rich tomb for Jesus (27:57-61) which gives temporary shelter for His body. The myrrh given by the Magi foreshadow Jesus’ death as myrrh was commonly used for anointing the dead.

Also like the Magi, Pilate indirectly affirmed Jesus as king. Pilate asked if He was “King of the Jews” (27:11) and had this title engraved on a plaque and put on His cross (27:37).

Plots to Kill Jesus:
Herod wanted to use the Magi, who were looking for the “king of the Jews” (2:2), in his plot to kill baby Jesus whom he saw as a threat to his authority. He wanted the Magi to lead him to the baby so that he could carry out the death sentence. The Magi took another route home because they were divinely warned (2:12) of Herod’s plot against the innocent Jesus, since Jesus had not yet fulfilled His mission.

Much like Herod used the Magi, the chief priests needed to use Pilate in their plot to kill Jesus who they saw as a threat to their authority. They wanted Pilate to carry out the death sentence after they led Jesus to him. Pilate tried to get out of it, knowing Jesus to be innocent (27:24). Pilate was unable to avert the plot to kill Jesus as Jesus’ death would fulfill the mission of the Messiah.²⁴

Just as Herod sought to prevent Jesus’ birth, the Jews sought to prevent His disciples from claiming His resurrection by persuading Pilate to guard the grave of Jesus (27:62-66).²⁵

²⁴ Note that the attempt to eliminate and finish off Jesus is found at the beginning of Matthew (chapter 1), the middle (chapter 12) and the end (chapter 27).
Avoiding and Embracing Death:

In 2:13-21, we find Joseph taking his family down into Egypt to hide from Herod who attempted to kill Jesus. Jesus’ descent into Egypt for protection has a direct relationship with His ascent into Jerusalem for His destruction. After His experience in Gethsemane Jesus readily goes out and meets those coming to arrest Him (26:47-68).

Baptism and the Lord’s Supper:

While acknowledging the connection of the voice from Heaven in both the baptism and transfiguration of Jesus (3:17, 17:5), there is a strong connection between the function of baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

Before He officially starts His ministry, Jesus takes part in John’s baptism of repentance and forgiveness of sin (3:1-17). This symbolic ordinance of baptism is still practiced by those who desire to give an outward testimony of their acceptance of Jesus, repentance, and acknowledgment of the power of Jesus to forgive sins.

During the Lord’s Supper, which is instituted at the end of His ministry (26:17-30), Jesus speaks of His betrayal by His disciple and compares the bread and wine to His body and blood “which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (26:28). The Lord’s Supper remains a large part of the Christian experience. As with baptism, this ordinance is a renewal of one’s commitment to Christ and acceptance of forgiveness that came with His sacrifice.

The Wilderness Temptations and Prayers in Gethsemane:

After His baptism Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness. He is preparing “himself spiritually for the events to come” by spending time alone in prayer and fasting. He is then visited three times by Satan in an attempt to persuade Jesus to give up His mission and loyalty to God by making Him question His identity (4:1-11). Jesus stands up to Satan and

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26 A comparison of these two sections, the baptism of Jesus and the transfiguration of Jesus, reveals their parallels. Both begin with the witness of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God. In Matthew 3:13-17, John the Baptist acknowledges the righteousness of Jesus and the need to be baptized by Him. In Matthew 16:16, Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ, “Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’” Also, in both sections Jesus hears the voice of God saying “This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17 and 17:5).

KIDDER: CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD

accepts His role as the divine Messiah. Jesus exercises His authority over Satan, sending him away so that the ministry on Earth can begin.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prays three times for God to change the course He must take (26:36-46). He is praying for the spiritual, emotional, and physical strength He will need to carry out His mission. There is no doubt for Jesus regarding His relationship to God; He calls out to “My Father” (vs 39, 42, 44). After this third prayer Jesus has fully accepted His ministry and role. He then leads His disciples to His arrest knowing that His death would soon follow.

The Public Ministry of Jesus and the Disciples
Jesus, now secure in His calling, begins His teaching ministry, calls the disciples, and starts His healing ministry (4:12-25).

After His resurrection, Jesus’ ministry is to continue on through His disciples. As part of the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20, they are instructed to teach and make new disciples carrying the ministry of Jesus to all the world.

B. The Sermon on the Mount and the Olivet Discourse (5-7, 23-25)

Blessings and Woes:
The blessings for the citizens of the Kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount (5:1-12) correspond to the woes given on those who do not live according to the Kingdom (23:1-39).

Guidelines for Kingdom Living:
Guidelines for living in the Kingdom are found in both the Sermon on the Mount as evidenced in 5:13-6:18 and the Olivet Discourse in 25:31-46.

The Use of Resources:
The instructions on how to use personal resources for the advancement of the Kingdom in 6:19-34 matches with the instructions for how to use the resources of the Kingdom in 25:14-30.

Signs of Citizenship and the Coming of the Kingdom:
Further connections can be seen in the signs which point to the characteristics of those who are Kingdom citizens in 7:1-23 and the signs which signal the coming of the Kingdom in 24:1-51.
Standing Firm:
Yet another parallel is the call to keep a firm foundation and stay firm in faith which is found in the parable of the wise and foolish builders (7:24-28) and the parable of the wise and foolish virgins (25:1-13).

C. The Authority of Jesus and Service in the Kingdom (8-12, 20:29-22:46)
Authority of Jesus Affirmed:
In Matthew 8:9 the centurion likened Jesus’ authority to his own and in 9:8 the people have acknowledged the authority of Jesus because of His healings. Likewise, in Matthew 21:1-11 the people once again affirmed the authority of Jesus by calling Him the son of David who comes in the name of the Lord. They also accept His authority to cleanse the temple in 21:13-14 and come to Him for healing.

Discipleship:
Those who have asked to follow Jesus are warned of the cost of discipleship in 8:18-22. Shortly after this Matthew the tax collector is called by Jesus to follow Him (9:9-13). This section parallels Jesus’ parables about discipleship in 21:27-22:40.

Blind Men Proclaim Jesus to Be the Son of David:
Jesus heals two blind men in 9:27-31 who call Him the son of David. This is mirrored by the two blind men who were healed by Jesus after crying out to Him as the son of David. 20:29-31.

Jesus Gives His Authority to the Disciples and is Questioned by the Pharisees:
The disciples are given authority by Jesus and sent out with instructions on how to use this authority at the beginning of chapter 10. This is countered by the Pharisees refusal to accept the authority of Jesus as Messiah. They keep testing Him, hoping to discredit Him (21:15-16a).

Care of the “Little Ones”:
In section C Jesus instructs His disciples to take care of the “little ones” in 10:42. This same idea is reflected in section D’ where in Matthew 18:1-14 Jesus instructs His followers to humble themselves like children and to care for the “little ones.” While acknowledging that the placement of these texts do not follow a strict chiastic structure, their connection is still
relevant and does not unravel the greater chiastic structure of the book of Matthew.

*Jesus Settles Questions Regarding His Authority:*

John the Baptist questions Jesus as the Messiah and Jesus answers by affirming him as Elijah in 11:1-19. This leads John to stop questioning Jesus. Similarly, in 22:46 after Jesus quotes Psalm 110 and asks about how One can be both son and Lord to David, Matthew states that no one questioned Jesus anymore.

*Babes Reveal Jesus as Lord:*

Jesus notes that many things have been hidden from the wise, but are revealed to “babes” in 11:25-26. Again, in 21:16b Jesus reminds the Pharisees that the infants and babes will reveal the Lord through their praise of Him.

*Old Testament Prophecies Are Fulfilled in Jesus:*

Matthew often remarks on Old Testament prophecies to show that they are fulfilled in Jesus. In 12:15-21 he cites Isaiah 42 to acknowledge that Jesus is the Servant in whom God delights and has been given authority as such. Later in Matthew 22:44-45, it is a Psalm of David that is used by Jesus Himself to show that the Christ is to be Lord, One granted authority by God.

**D. Miracles and Parables of the Kingdom (13:1-16:12, 17:14-20:28)**

*Kingdom Living:*

Matthew 13 contains six parables that are introduced with the phrase “The kingdom of heaven is like…” These are intended to help the listeners understand more about what it is like to live in the Kingdom. Jesus later uses parables as part of His discourse on forgiveness and how to live as disciples in the Kingdom (18:15-20:28).

*A Mustard Seed:*

One of the Kingdom parables uses the example of how a tree can grow out of something the size of a mustard seed (13:31-32). In 17:20 Jesus again

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28 Starting with the genealogy of Jesus in the first chapter and ending with the Great Commission in the last chapter (28:18), Matthew affirms the authority of Jesus on Earth and in heaven throughout his gospel.
uses the example of the small size of a mustard seed to emphasize the great power that comes with faith.

*Parents Ask for Healing:*  
Matthew 15:21-28 tells the story of a Gentile woman who comes to Jesus to ask for healing for her demon possessed daughter. Because of her faith, Jesus complies. Then in 17:14-21 a man comes to Jesus asking for his demon possessed son to be healed. He was rewarded with healing because he had faith in the ability of Jesus even though the disciples had failed to heal the boy.

*Rebuked for Lack of Faith:*  
The disciples are rebuked in 16:5-12 for not having faith in Jesus’ ability to provide bread for them even after they had witnessed the miracle of the feeding of the 4,000. Their lack of faith was hindering their understanding of Jesus’ teachings. Again, they are rebuked in 17:17, 20 told that it was their unbelief which was the reason they could not heal the demon possessed boy.

### E. Jesus as Messiah, Son of God

Throughout his gospel, Matthew has been building a case for a divine Messiah who has come to save His people. The miracles, teachings, and fulfillments of prophecy as well as the testimonies of those He came in contact with demonstrated various elements of the royal and divine purpose of Jesus. At the heart of this gospel, Peter was able to come to an understanding of Christ’s true identity, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (16:16).²⁹ At the transfiguration, God confirms the confession of Peter that Jesus is indeed His Son (17:5).

#### Concise Chiastic Structure of Matthew

The concise chiastic structure below reinforces the focus of Jesus as Christ the King, the Son of God.

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²⁹ It has been noted that Matthew’s preference of the term “kingdom of heaven” (32 times) over “kingdom God” (used only in 6:33, 12:28, 19:24, and 21:31, 43), is out of respect for his Jewish Christian readers. Matthew is able to avoid using the sacred name of God by using a word closely associated with God, in this case “heaven.” Therefore, much significance can be placed on Matthew being the only one of the synoptics to have Peter call Jesus “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16). See Turner, 41-42 and Evans, 90-91 for a more detailed rationale of Matthew’s lack of use of the phrase “kingdom of God.”
A. Announcements about King Jesus’ birth, exile into Egypt and life in Nazareth (Matt 1:1-4:16).  
   B. Jesus’ proclamation of the Kingdom of God (Matt 4:17-16:12).  
   C. Jesus proclaimed to be Christ, the Son of God (Matt 16:13-17:13)  
   B’. Jesus’ instruction for how to live in the Kingdom of God (Matt 17:14 - 25:46).  
A.’ Announcements about King Jesus’ suffering, death and resurrection (Matt 26:1 - 28:20).

We can summarize this gospel in two words: “royal” and “messianic.” Matthew’s purpose is to present Jesus as the long expected Messiah. He is the king who has been sent to rule His people. There is from start to finish a royal aspect. The intent of the first Gospel is to declare the good news of prophetic fulfillment in the Messiah. That which was foretold long ago by the prophets has at last come about.

Matthew points to Jesus at the very beginning as Immanuel who is born to a virgin (Matthew 1:23; Isaiah 7:14) in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:6; Micah 5:2), coming up from Egypt (Matthew 2:15; Hosea 11:1) to live in Nazareth (Matthew 2:23; Isaiah 11:1). After the confirmation by Peter as to Christ’s true identity, Jesus tells His followers that He must suffer (Matthew 16:21). Hence, He is also the fulfillment of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. Some other shared attributes of Jesus and the Suffering Servant are healing of the sick (8:17), rejection by those He came to serve but acceptance by Gentiles (12:16-21), dying with transgressors for the purpose of intercession (26:28), and burial by a rich man (27:57-60). Clearly this Suffering Servant of Isaiah must be Jesus the Messiah and therefore the rightful King. Matthew’s impression of Jesus is that He is of royal lineage, possesses divine authority, and has the privileges and rights of the powers of God. The Matthean motif, as it relates to Jesus, is His inherent relationship to the Old Testament. By presenting Jesus as the Messiah, the Suffering Servant,

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30 According to Biblegateway.com, the theme of the king and kingdom of God and kingdom of Heaven is mentioned 47 times in Matthew. For a detailed listing of these verses see footnote 41.

31 Part of these proclamations include parables (see especially chapter 13).

32 Compare Matthew 28:18-20 with 2:2, 6, and 11. These verses clearly show that Jesus is king.

and King, Matthew is showing that Jesus is not a contradiction to Judaism but rather the climax and completion of Judaic faith.34

The Five Discourses of Matthew
There are five major discourses systematically placed by Matthew that emphasize the theme of the Kingdom of God. We find these in five ‘blocks,’ three of which are found in the Galilean period.35

- The Sermon on the Mount: The Laws of the Kingdom (5-7)
- The Duties of the Leaders of the Kingdom (9:35-10:42)
- The Nature of the Kingdom: The Parables of the Kingdom (13)
- Greatness and Forgiveness in the Kingdom (18)
- The Olivet Discourse: The Signs of the Second Coming of the King (24, 25)36

These blocks start with the Sermon on the Mount which lays out the duties and attitudes that will be evident in those who are citizens of the Kingdom. They close with the parallel section of the Olivet Discourse which details out the signs of the physical coming of the Kingdom at Jesus’ return. The heart of the message that Matthew wants to pass on to his readers is that Jesus is the Messiah and with Him the Kingdom of God has ‘broken into’ the world.38

35 Identical wording concludes these five edifying passages connecting them with the narrative passages that follow. We find these expressions at the start of the narrative passages:
Matthew 7:28: “When Jesus had finished saying these things. . .”
Matthew 11:1: “After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples. . .”
Matthew 13:53: “When Jesus had finished these parables. . .”
Matthew 19:1: “When Jesus had finished saying these things. . .”
Matthew 26:1: “When Jesus had finished saying all these things. . .”
36 Van Den Brink.
38 Van Den Brink.
Theological Themes Embedded in the Gospel of Matthew

Now that we have outlined the chiastic structure of Matthew, let us look at some of the major themes which it highlights. Matthew’s principle interest of the fulfillment of God’s purposes in and through Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, governs four theological themes.

1. Jesus the Messianic Son of God

The first theme prominent in Matthew’s Gospel is the picture of Jesus as the Christ, the Messianic Son of God, as this is the center element of the chiasm of the book as a whole. Matthew was intentional to include support from God the Father, Jesus, and His followers recognizing that Jesus is rightfully the Son of God.39

At the start of His ministry, God acknowledges Jesus as His Son. Matthew 3:16-17 states, “When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” Later, at the transfiguration, God again acknowledges His relationship with Jesus. “While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!’” Matthew 17:5. Both of these passages allude to the Messianic royal Psalm 2 (specifically verse 7) and the Servant introduced in Isaiah 42:1.

Jesus repeatedly referred to God as “My” Father.40 In Matthew 10:32-33, “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.” Here Jesus is showing His connection with His Father. Later on, Jesus understanding His role as Son of God, submits Himself to the will of God in Matthew 26:39, “He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, ‘O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.’”

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39 Jesus is called the “Son of God” four times before Peter’s confession in Matthew 16:16 (4:3,6; 8:29; 14:33) and four times after the confession (26:63; 27:40, 43, 54).
40 Jesus very plainly emphasizes that He was the reflection of His Father in John 14:7-10.
Even the followers of Jesus and those who watched Him came to understand His true origins. Those who saw Him walk on water worshiped Him calling Him the Son of God (Matthew 14:33). Later Peter espoused this same thought. “Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven,’” Matthew 16:16-17. Jesus affirmed Peter calling Him not only Messiah (Christ), but also Son of God. Matthew later records the cry of the centurion, “So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, ‘Truly this was the Son of God!’” (27:54).

As the Son of God, Jesus was able to serve as God’s agent on Earth. As such, He was given authority to share intimate knowledge and instruction regarding the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5-7) and power over nature as seen in many healing including raising people from the dead (9:23-26), the calming of the storm (8:23-27), walking on water (14:22-33), and cursing of the fig tree (21:18-22).

The acknowledgment of Jesus as the Son of God by Jews, Gentiles, and His Father points to the universal nature of Jesus as the Messiah whose sacrifice was for the benefit of all mankind. God is pleased with His son Jesus who became a servant to fulfill the will of His father.

2. Jesus the King

The kingdom of God and the kingship of Jesus are referenced throughout the entire the book of Matthew. Matthew starts his gospel with the genealogy of Jesus (1:1-6); emphasizing His kingship by showing that He is the son of David. He then stresses that Jesus is of royal lineage by pointing to the Magi who came from the east to worship and pay homage to Him as a king. Matthew, in chapter two, starts with very plainly stating that Jesus is king. He writes: “After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, ‘Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him,’” Matthew 2:1-2, NIV.

[41] Using Biblegateway.com, I was able to find 47 references in total where the kingdom of God, kingdom of heaven, and king as it refers to Jesus are mentioned in the NKJV (Kingdom of God, 5 references: 6:33; 12:28; 19:24; 21:31, 43; (kingdom of heaven, 33 references): 3:2; 4:17; 5:3, 10, 19 (twice); 20; 7:21; 8:11; 10:7; 11:11, 12; 13:11, 24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47, 52; 16:19; 18:1, 3, 4, 23; 19:12, 14, 23, 20:1; 22:2; 23:13; 25:1, 14; (Jesus as King, 9 references): 2:2; 5:35; 21:15; 25:34; 27:11 (twice), 29, 37, 42.
In the story of the birth of Jesus, the apostle Matthew uses three prophecies from the Old Testament as hooks on which to present his message, the first of which clearly speaks of “the One to be Ruler in Israel” Micah 5:2. These are His birth in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:5-6 and Micah 5:2), that He would come out of Egypt (Matthew 2:15 and Hosea 11:1), and the slaughter of the innocents (Matthew 2:17-18 and Jeremiah 31:15). “The foundation of the Gospel of Matthew is the Old Testament with its Messianic and Kingdom promises. Jesus the Messiah is truly the promised King. He is legally the royal king of Israel.”

It is through the triumphal entry and the subsequent show of His authority that Jesus attempts to show the people that He truly is the promised King. Matthew reminds us in 21:5 that Jesus took care to follow the formula laid out in the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 for the way in which the king would enter the city. The people understood this sign by declaring Him to be the “Son of David. . . who comes in the name of the Lord,” Matthew 21:9. His next task was to assert authority in the temple by driving out the money changers and healing the blind and lame (21:12-17).

The themes of king, kingship, and authority are intertwined. Matthew 7:29 says, “for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” In 21:21-23, Jesus’ authority is questioned. The author refutes this by closing with the words of Jesus: “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen” (Matthew 28:18-20).

Matthew understood the Old Testament prophecies as sign posts pointing to Jesus as Christ, the Son of the living God that is also King,

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43 Though Matthew uses the prophecy that Jesus will be from Nazareth as another fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy (Matthew 2:23), it is not in the OT.
44 Pounds.
45 The words “all authority” are a kingship metaphor emphasizing power and dominion. Further studies in scripture show that there are 93 verses in the NIV Bible that use the word authority. There are a multitude of texts that equate authority with power and ruler-ship. Here are some sample verses: Genesis 41:35; Nehemiah 3:7; Esther 9:29; Isaiah 22:21; Daniel 4:31, 7:6; Matthew 9:6,8; 10:1; 20:25; 21:23,24,27; Mark 1:22, 27; 2;10Luke 22:25; John 5:27, 7:28, 16:18, 17:2; 1Timothy 2:2,12; Revelation 2:26, 27; 12:10; 20:4.

167
granted the authority of Heaven. He, as King, is the cornerstone of the Kingdom (21:42).

3. Jesus the Suffering Servant
Another major theme in Matthew is that of the Suffering Servant from Isaiah 42 who will deliver all nations. Matthew 12:17-21 tells readers:

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

“Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, 
My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased!
I will put My Spirit upon Him, 
And He will declare justice to the Gentiles. 
He will not quarrel nor cry out, 
Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. 
A bruised reed He will not break, 
And smoking flax He will not quench, 
Till He sends forth justice to victory; 
And in His name Gentiles will trust.”

This theme of the Suffering Servant is seen throughout the Gospel. Matthew 8:17 points the readers to Isaiah 53:4. In Matthew 16:21 and Matthew 20:17-19 Jesus makes it plain to His disciples that His suffering and death is inevitable but they should have hope because of His resurrection (see Isaiah 53:11-12). Jesus is confirming that He understands His role to be that of Isaiah’s Suffering Servant. “From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day,” Matthew 16:21.

It is only thorough the suffering and condemnation of Jesus that hope is brought to the nations. Through the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus, He asserts His authority as the giver of Salvation to all who seek Him.

4. Jesus’ Abiding Presence
Another aspect of Matthean Christology is the affirmation of Christ’s abiding presence. At the beginning in the birth narrative, Matthew cites Isaiah’s prophecy of Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14, see Matthew 1:23). The significance of this name is made clear in the phrase “God with us” (1:23;
Isaiah 8:10). Matthew then closes his book with Jesus’ final words to His disciples, “I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (28:20). The gospel starts and ends with the affirmation that Jesus will always be with us. This is one of the beautiful elements of the chiastic structure of Matthew. The abiding presence of Jesus can be seen throughout this Gospel. In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus invites all to come to Him and accept His promise of rest. He is a continual source of relief and comfort. Jesus also promises the disciples that His presence is not bound by the confines of His physical form or location, “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (18:20). This was additional confirmation of His lasting presence. Matthew wanted his readers to know that Christ is with His people for all time (cf. Ephesians 1:22-23).

One of the reasons Christ has gifted us with His abiding presence is to provide God’s children with protection and perseverance. Opposed to the kingdom of heaven is the kingdom of this Earth ruled by Satan (Matthew 4:8-9; 12:26), from whom those with faith in Christ are delivered (12:27-28). While Satan is powerless before the Spirit of God (12:28), nonetheless he will actively work through mankind to hinder and counterfeit the work of God (13:38-39). This is why Christ stays with us through the Holy Spirit. It is through the Spirit that we will be able to defend our faith in the midst of persecution. “But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you” (10:19-20).

Matthew saw that much of what Jesus had taught the disciples was applicable to believers of every age. Of great importance in this regard was the commission to make disciples of all nations (28:19). It is because Christ has promised to be God with us (1:21-22; 28:16-20), that we are able to continue His work of making disciples and espousing the commands of God to all nations. Matthew gives a clear priority to the fundamental promise of God being with us in Christ (1:21-22; 28:16-20) because God’s omnipresence and grace are necessary for the work of Jesus to continue until His second coming.

**Conclusion**

By looking at the chiastic structure of the book of Matthew as a whole, rather than as multiple smaller chiasms, we can see the overarching central message of the book which is that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. Matthew links the Old and New Testaments to show that God has appointed
His beloved Son to be the Messiah under whose authority will come the salvation of all nations. Matthew leaves no doubt that the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus all point to Him as the Messiah, Son of God, both King and Suffering Servant. No one else could take on this role; it is only because Jesus was also the Son of God—born of the Holy Spirit and resurrected by the Father—and rightful King that He was able to justify us and take our punishment.

Additionally, prominent in the broader chiastic structure of Matthew are the four major themes of Jesus as the Messianic Son of God, Jesus as the King, Jesus as the Suffering Servant, and Jesus’ Abiding Presence. The chiastic structure shows that Matthew had intentionally wove all of the above themes together in a systematic parallelism and symmetry to show the work of God which was fulfilled in His beloved son Jesus Christ. It was the Son of God who came to be one of us, died on the cross, was resurrected for the forgiveness of our sins, and is seated as King on the right side of the Father. Out of love for all the nations of the Earth, Christ, Emmanuel, promised to be with us to the end of the ages.

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46 Specifically Isaiah’s prophecies of the Suffering Servant found in chapters 42 and 52-53.

47 Isaiah notes that the Suffering Servant is given king-like authority: “Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles” (42:1) “and kings will shut their mouths because of him” (52:15, NIV).
Archaeology and Old Testament Biblical Theology: Their Interface and Mutual Informativeness

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Distinguished Professor of OT Studies Emeritus  
Dallas Theological Seminary  

Introduction  
I consider my invitation by the administration and faculty of Southern Adventist University to deliver the annual Gerhard F. Hasel Lectureship to be an unusual honor and privilege since I have long known and admired the respected scholar and churchman for whom the series is named. I began teaching Old Testament theology at Dallas Theological Seminary in 1977 and recognized very early on that if I was to have any grounding at all in the discipline as it evolved and found expression at that time there was a sine qua non without which I could not dispense.  
That, of course, was Gerhard Hasel’s Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate, at that time in its 2nd edition. From 1977 until my retirement from the Seminary in the spring of 2013 I leaned so heavily on that edition and the two that followed that I nearly wore them out. When I received the sad news of his untimely decease, one of my first thoughts was, Who will pick up the mantle of the great prophet and keep us informed concerning the field of study we both loved so much?  
Professor Hasel had a great interest in both biblical archaeology and biblical theology, especially the latter, and thus it was not difficult for me

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to pick a topic by which the two disciplines could be re-examined, particularly in their relationship the one to the other. A further impetus to my choice of topic was my awareness that his gifted son Michael is on the faculty of this fine institution and in his own right is gaining wide recognition for excellence as a scholar in the area of archaeology, recently at Khirbet Qeiyafa and now at Tell es-Safi (Gath?). Between them they bridge the disciplines about which I shall speak, namely, archaeology and biblical theology. The following offering pays tribute to Hasel the elder, a man beloved, admired, and sorely missed by his colleagues near and far for the example he set in life and ministry.

Foundational Methodological Principles
I wish first to deal with biblical theology, which is made distinctive by the adjective “biblical.” Hasel astutely observed with regard to biblical theology’s relationship to systematic theology in particular that “the Biblical theologian draws his categories, themes, motifs, and concepts from the biblical text itself,” as compared to the systematic theologian who “endeavors to use current philosophies as the basis for his primary categories or themes.” This definition was not intended as a trivializing subordination of systematic theology, for Hasel goes on to say in the same context, “the Biblical and systematic theologians do not compete with each other. Their function is complementary. Both need to work side by side, profiting from each other.”

A possibly useful metaphorical analogy from the mining of precious metals or stones is that biblical theology provides the raw materials from the mine of biblical truth with which systematic theologians can create beautiful and perfectly shaped theological propositions. However, they must never exceed the limits to which the materials can be pressed nor, on the other hand, fail to make fullest use of their potentials. Or again to speak analogically, biblical theology is the seedbed from which grows the full fruition of biblical revelation organized in a systematic, non-contradictory, and understandable manner. For the conservative theologian of either kind, the Scriptures of the Hebrew and Greek Bibles are the inerrant Word of God, a revelation to be trusted in whatever it intends to say, whether about

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history, science, philosophy, sociology, or any other discipline. This includes biblical archaeology which, after all, is an attempt to discover all the evidences possible of the fields of study just suggested and to discern how these evidences comport with the testimony of the Old and New Testaments.

Archaeology of the Levant was first undertaken by persons closely connected to the church and the Scriptures who in some instances had the clear agenda of “proving” the Bible by their discoveries. By the early 20th century the field was taken over largely by scholars who, under the guise of “objectivity” and “the scientific method,” undertook their work with no concern for proving anything (or so they averred), but pursued their labors only for its own sake as a scientific enterprise. From that time until now these two pursuits, with the same objectives respectively, have been engaged in unearthing the “Holy Land” and neighboring areas. A magnificent endeavor close to the heart of Adventism has been the Madaba Plains project in central Jordan led by Adventist scholars such as Siegfried Horn, Douglas R. Clark, Lawrence T. Geraty, Oystein S. La Bianca, and Randall W. Younker. Their major work has centered around Tall Hisban, Tall Jalul, and Tall Umayri, the latter with its wonderful four-room house, and all of which have revealed important historical information such as the fact that the Transjordan was occupied and with major settlements in the Late Bronze era (ca. 1500-1200 B.C.), contrary to previous surveys and the claims of critical scholarship.


3 The great cuneiformist and Assyriologist A. W. Sayce, though not himself on a mission of “proving” anything, made the comment 120 years that “we cannot fail to be struck by the fact that the evidence of oriental archeology is on the whole distinctly unfavourable to the pretensions of the ‘higher criticism.’ The ‘apologist’ may lose something but the ‘higher critic’ loses much more.” A. H. Sayce, The “Higher Criticism” and the Verdict of the Monuments (London: SPCK, 1894). See also Ziony Zevit, “The Biblical Archaeology versus Syro-Palestinian Archaeology Debate in Its American Institutional and Intellectual Contexts,” The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions, ed. James K. Hoffmeier and Alan Millard (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 3-19, especially 8-12.

is the matter of authority. Conservatives generally cede authority to the Bible as God’s Word and therefore hold the sacred text to be without historical, scientific, or theological error. Scholars who claim that the Bible at best is only the witness of an ancient people to these perceived realities are quite ready to claim objectivity for themselves and to label those who differ as ‘obscurantists,’ ‘pre-suppositionists,’ and, worse still, “fundamentalists”\(^5\) In any event, authority from this point of view is to be located in archaeological and other scientific research whereby ancient times can be closely examined by themselves and for themselves without the tendentious intrusion of dogma.

Most ideally, I suppose, archaeology ought indeed to be pursued without the objective of proving anything, finding satisfaction in whatever the spade turns up. If it should substantiate claims made by the Bible, all well and good; if it does not, and, in fact, shows the Bible to be in error, so much for that. But life is not that way. All conscientious scientific researchers look for some thing or some way to validate hypotheses or to reinforce provisional or even hoped-for results. A case in point is the disappointment experienced by NASA scientists that signs of life cannot thus far be detected on Mars.\(^6\) Should not the scientist simply go about his work dispassionately with no emotional attachment to what he is doing? Why does he really care whether life exists on that planet or not? The answer, of course, is that in any field of research, including archaeology, the personal preferences and unavoidable emotional investment of the researcher in each case will cloud or inform or even distort the methods the individual employs and the conclusions he or she eventually reaches.

The bottom line is that both texts and tells must be informed by “exegesis,” that is, subjected to the most rigorous and objective investigation possible so as to arrive at a proper understanding of what each

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\(^5\) Thus, even William Dever, a respected and relatively moderate scholar, who peppers his work with direct or ‘side-blows’ attacks against conservatives who emit the slightest hint of theological presupposition. See his *What Did the Biblical Writers Know & When Did They Know It?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 27, 46, 58, 61, 107, and 263.

\(^6\) [http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2426424/NASA: “Disappointment: the Curiosity Rover has scanned Mars for methane every day but has not found any, which probably means it does not support life.”](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2426424/NASA: “Disappointment: the Curiosity Rover has scanned Mars for methane every day but has not found any, which probably means it does not support life.”)
is “saying.” Obviously, the materials thus examined are vastly different: Texts work with words, clauses, sentences, and larger literary contexts whereas archaeology works with architecture, artifacts (chiefly pottery), and, in rare cases, with inscriptions. In the latter case, these, like biblical texts, must also be “read” through a process of decipherment, transcription, and interpretation in terms of genre, dating, and comparison to similar texts in the same or different languages. It is fair to say with regard to archaeology that mute as well as inscriptive remains can be as mishandled, misinterpreted, and bent to ideological presuppositions as readily as can biblical writings and with the same disastrous results.

A contemporary example involves an evangelical archaeologist (hereafter Mr. X) who claims to have found the site of ancient Sodom, destroyed, according to the Old Testament, in the time of Abraham (Gen 18:20-33; 19:29). Most conservative scholars date Abraham to the end of the 3rd millennium before Christ and the beginning of the 2nd, that is, ca. 2000 B. C. Mr. X, however, has dated the destruction of his site, which he adamantly holds to be Sodom, at ca. 1600 B. C., 400 years later. Rather than conjecture that his dating of the destruction layer may be incorrect or that the site is not Sodom after all, he has argued that the biblical chronology is at fault or, at least, has been misinterpreted by those who place Abraham at an earlier period.

In making his case, he construes the 480 years of 1 Kings 6:1, which mark the period between the exodus and the laying of the foundations of Solomon’s temple in 950 B. C., to be a multiple of 40 and 12, a position that is almost de rigueur to those committed to a late exodus date. The 40, to him, is an artificial number used to indicate the length of an ideal generation; however, a normal, literal generation is more likely 25 years or so. Thus, the text, in his view, is really saying that there was actually 300 years between the exodus and the temple, the former, on alleged

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8 See below Excursus 1.
archaeological grounds, now being 1250 B.C.\footnote{This is arrived at by the general consensus that a radical socio-political adjustment occurred in Iron Age I (1200-900 B.C.), a development brought about by an inner revolt of Canaanites who threw off their old oligarchies, moved to new sites characterized by the so-called “four room house” and other features reflecting socio-economic change, and who in time became identified with the Israelites under Joshua. See notably Norman K. Gottwald, \textit{The Tribes of Yahweh} (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1979), 556-563. More lately, see Niels Peter Lemche, \textit{Ancient Israel: A New History of Israelite Society} (Sheffield, UK: 1988), 88-117; and Robert B. Coote, \textit{Early Israel: A New Horizon} (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1990), 71-72, 83-93, 170-173.}\footnote{The 450 years consists of the date of Abraham’s death ca. 2000 B.C. minus the 115 years that elapsed before Jacob migrated to Egypt and the 430 years of Israel’s Egyptian sojourn (545 years in all) or 1446. Mr. X allows only 215 years for the sojourn thus bringing the date of Abraham’s death down by that amount to 1785, still too early to harmonize with 1600.} Even with this adjustment, Abraham, who died 450 years before the exodus (by this scheme at 1785), would have been off the scene as late as 1600.\footnote{The 450 years consists of the date of Abraham’s death ca. 2000 B.C. minus the 115 years that elapsed before Jacob migrated to Egypt and the 430 years of Israel’s Egyptian sojourn (545 years in all) or 1446. Mr. X allows only 215 years for the sojourn thus bringing the date of Abraham’s death down by that amount to 1785, still too early to harmonize with 1600.} Clearly Abraham by this reckoning could not be contemporary to the destruction of Sodom in 1600, so Mr. X proposes that the entire patriarchal period must be moved forward to the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1550 B.C.) and beyond, into the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1550-1200). This necessitates an entirely new set of dates for the great patriarchs with Abraham in old age at least as late as 1600, Isaac much less than the attributed age of 180 at his death, and Jacob likewise much younger than 147 at his decease. The reason is that Moses and the exodus, the conquest of Canaan under Joshua, and the period of the judges must all be compressed between the date of the death of Jacob and the commencement of David’s kingship at 1006. At the very least, this necessitates an exodus date no later than 1250, a date acceptable to Mr. X.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names of Patriarchs and Events</th>
<th>Text References</th>
<th>MT</th>
<th>LXX</th>
<th>SP</th>
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<td>Foundation of Solomon’s Temple</td>
<td>1 Kings 6:1</td>
<td>967/66</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reign of Solomon</td>
<td>40 yrs (1 Kngs 11:42)</td>
<td>971-931</td>
<td>40 yrs</td>
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To compound the complexity (a necessity if Mr. X’s postulation is correct), he reduces the ages of the patriarchs, regarding the figures as artificial, again a change mandated by his 1600 B.C. destruction of Sodom. Though he does not provide even hypothetical figures, a proposal such as halving the numbers to more reasonable life-spans would yield something like the following: If Abraham died at half the age attributed to him (87 rather than 175), perhaps 20 years after 1600, he would have been born in 1667 or so. Isaac, at the same truncated age of one-half the biblical figure of 180 years (that is 90), might have been born perhaps when Abraham was 90, or in 1577, and Jacob, when his father was 30 years old, in 1547. But Mr. X had already proposed that Jacob entered Egypt with the Hyksos, usually dated around 1730 B.C., thus eradicating either that suggestion or a birthdate that late.

A second scenario, with 1730 as a point of departure and working backward and again arbitrarily halving the years attributed to the patriarchs, Jacob was 68 in 1730 (b. 1798); Isaac 30 when Jacob was born, living 50 more years after that, and dying at 90 in 1648 (b. 1738); Abraham, 50 years old when Isaac was born, was himself born in 1788 and died 38 years later, in 1750, far short of 1600 and the destruction of Sodom.

This tedious recitation of chronology demonstrates the resorts to which an archaeological benchmark, when taken as absolute, forces radical transformations of biblical data in the interest of preserving the authority of the benchmark as opposed to the authority of the biblical text read at...
face value. Surely it is more prudent—at least for the Evangelical—to reassess the archaeological data in light of Scripture rather than vice versa.

The Relevance of Bibliology to Biblical Theology

I began my classes on biblical theology for many years with the quip, “A defective bibliology will inevitably result in a defective theology,” a principle I still maintain. The reasons are many: (1) theology, especially biblical theology, is inextricably tied to the Bible; (2) how one views the nature of the Bible will determine to what extent it has theological authority; (3) the seriousness with which one takes the data of the Bible in every way it speaks has a direct relationship to the role those data will take in shaping a proper biblical theology; and (4) a legitimate biblical theology must be subordinated to the Bible itself when and if the Bible is properly interpreted and properly applied. It is incumbent on the theologian to have a mastery of as many of the sub-disciplines of biblical scholarship as possible. These include (1) a knowledge of the languages of the Bible (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek); (2) familiarity with the historical and cultural world in which the Old Testament texts were composed; (3) a comprehensive overview of the contents of the Bible and a grasp of how its integral parts intersect to create a single grand narrative of salvation history; and (4) a knowledge of the historical-critical approaches that profoundly affect popular conceptions of the nature and authority of the Bible; and (5) a sense of how the methods employed fundamentally shape biblical-theological outcomes.

This is particularly the case with the diachronic method of doing theology, that is, the method that traces the theme or themes of the Bible throughout their historical, linear development. The principle involved is sometimes referred to as “progressive revelation” since it operates with the assumption that God revealed himself and his purposes gradually through the course of biblical history as the recipients of that revelation became

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increasingly able to understand its truths and to live by them. The afore-mentioned prerequisites to undertaking the challenge of creating a diachronic theological system become more understandably critical when its linear dimension comes into play.

However, the weakness of the diachronic method when applied to the Old Testament lies precisely in the fact that the flow of the biblical narrative cannot always be discerned in the non-historical literature of the material. This is notably the case in the poetic and wisdom literature and even in the prophets. In the former collection, many of the psalms have no clues as to their authorship and/or setting and much of the wisdom material likewise lacks such helpfulness, especially Job and Proverbs. Some of the prophets are difficult to date (e.g., Obadiah and Joel) and others seem not to follow chronological sequence, Jeremiah being a good case in point. Therefore, these sections at least are difficult to square with a consistently diachronic approach.

In some models of biblical theology, a more systematic path is followed, one hardly different from systematic theology in that it, like systematic theology, is built along synchronic lines. It prefers to disregard rigid historical and chronological strictures and to isolate themes or categories around and within which theological interpretation can be organized. The perceived deficiencies in this model is what led to the diachronic method in the first place since it seemed that to flatten out theology without respect to the times and circumstances of the people who first produced and heard the sacred scriptures was to disregard ordinary pedagogical principles of learning that included the notion that truth or facts can only gradually be assimilated as learners become more and more mature and capable of absorbing accumulating revelatory information. A

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14 The most influential early voice in appealing to an alternative to the systematic (or dogmatic) approach was that of Johann Gabler in his famous inaugural address to the faculty of the University of Altdorf in 1753. It was titled “About the Correct Distinction of Biblical and Dogmatic Theology and the Right Definition of Their Goals.” For convenient access to an English translation, see The Flowering of Old Testament Theology, ed. Ben C. Ollenburger, Elmer A. Martens, and Gerhard Hasel (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 492-502.
rather recent media res approach, ‘canonical theology,’ is so-called in that it undertakes the task of deriving Old Testament biblical theology from the canonical order of the ancient Jewish tradition of the tri-partite sequence of Pentateuch (tôrâ), Prophets (nêbî’îm), and Writings (kêtûbîm).¹⁵ A theology based strictly on this principle has the advantage of (a) eliminating consideration of the details of progressive revelation, on the one hand, and (b) a forced presupposed and perhaps alien system onto the Procrustean bed of the text. However, this method also presupposes that the canonical shape reflects not only hoary Jewish tradition but also that the tradition was essentially divinely inspired. This is an assumption about canon formation never even hinted at in Jewish literature. Thus, although canonical theology bridges the yawning canyon between diachronic and synchronic methods, it has its own dogma that disallows complete objectivity. In sum, the approach that views the Old Testament as a gradually unfolding record of God’s self-disclosure seems best and least likely to cater to any given theologian’s own predilections or preferences. Hasel, who opted for what he called a “multiplex approach” that, for the Christian, must also embrace the New Testament, put the matter as follows:

A multiplex approach leaves room for indicating the variety of connections between the Testaments and avoids an explication of the manifold testimonies through a single structure or unilinear point of view. The multiplex approach has the advantage of remaining faithful to both similarity and dissimilarity as well as old and new without in the least distorting the original historical witness of the text in its literal sense and its larger kerygmatic intention nor falling short in the recognition of the larger context to which the OT belongs.¹⁶

With this brief consideration of bibliology and biblical theology and their interdependence as a foundation to our larger topic, it is appropriate now to step back and give thought to the interface between archaeology and Old Testament biblical theology.

¹⁶ Hasel, Old Testament Theology, 207.
Archaeology and Old Testament Biblical Theology

Three considerations must come to the fore in the attempt to bridge these two separate and distinct disciplines, namely, (1) an absolutely unbiased and objective archaeological methodology; (2) a view of the Old Testament that its texts themselves take and that is their claims to be the Word of God; but also as documents that they must be subjected to the most rigorous and objective exegetical and interpretive approaches possible; and (3) the obvious fact that the nature and character of the Bible itself determines both the content and shape of biblical theology (a matter dealt with above). Only then can the interface between the ‘soft’ science of theology and the ‘hard’ science of archaeology be credible and mutually beneficial. The following steps are proposed if such results are to be achieved:

1. So-called “biblical archaeology” cannot make the case that because it is archaeology done for the church or for the glory of God it can bypass the normal standards of objectivity and personal disengagement. Whatever has proved to be acceptable method in the pursuit of archaeological method in general should be applied also to biblical archaeology no matter the outcome. If the result appears to weaken or even totally undermine the case for a biblically-based interpretation of a text, then both the interpretation and the archaeological conclusions should be held in abeyance until a definitive harmonization or compelling reinterpretation of the data on either or both sides of the case can be achieved.

2. The Bible should not be considered a priori an illegitimate step-child unworthy of consideration as a trustworthy historical document despite its primary purpose and function as a religious composition and even self-claim to be divine revelation. The reasons for this trust (among others) are (a) its generally agreed upon historiographical literary genre and (b) its remarkable record of conformity to known historical persons, places, and events obtained through centuries of painstaking efforts by secular archaeologists, epigraphers, philologists, editors, and historians.17 The

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17 On this point, see the classic work of the moderate scholar W. F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1957): “So many corroborations of details have been discovered in recent years that most competent scholars have given up
persistence of cynics and skeptics in their denial of these established facts and the logical corollary that the Bible almost uniquely falls short of the standards expected of an historical artifact remains puzzling to scholars, like our honoree, who gave and give the Scriptures pride of place.

Three Recent Interfacings of Archaeology and the Bible

Time constraints demand brevity and specificity in achieving the mutual inter-connectedness and interdependence of archaeology and the Bible that is the major thrust of this address. Hence, the three examples presented here are limited to the historicity of Israel’s United Monarchy period and especially of David and his reign. As to the latter, he is the principal figure in the books of 1 Samuel 16 through 1 Kings 2 and 1 Chronicles 3:1-9; 11:1-29:30, an astounding 59 chapters or 7.7% of the entire OT or 87 pages of BHS out of 396 for the entire corpus of history books or 22% (5.5% of the entire OT). This is by far the most devoted to any biblical character. Yet, the majority of modern critics either question or flatly deny David’s very existence. A logical adjunct to this is the same skepticism about the reality of a royal palace in Jerusalem of the scope and scale fitting a king of the Bible’s description of David and his realm. Therefore, the following rather recent discoveries are adduced in support of the biblical narrative:

the old critical theory according to which the stories of the Patriarchs are mostly retrojections from the time of the Dual Monarchy” (p. 241). Good scholar and all, Albright was far from being a reliable prophet, for the critics have hardly surrendered the ground. Even so as late as 1996 the minimally minimalist scholar Volkmar Fritz conceded with some small caveat that “biblical tradition has presented Solomon as a great builder; this he certainly was, according to evidence based on archaeological research, even though he may not have been the splendid ruler who appears in biblical tradition.” “Monarchy and re-Urbanization,” The Origins of the Ancient Israelite States. Ed. Volkmar Fritz and Philip R. Davies. JSOT Supp, 228 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 195. Even the maximally minimalist critic Niels Peter Lemche reluctantly concedes that “If archaeology is correctly used, it is an inexhaustible source of information for understanding the history of Israel.” He then appears to contradict his own assertion by claiming that “What it is not able to do is to inform us about individual historical events,” forgetting, it seems, the hundreds of secular texts that do this very thing. Niels Peter Lemche, Ancient Israel: A New History of Israelite Society. JSOT Bib Sem 2 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), 73.
1. The Tell Dan inscription (ca. 850 B.C.)
2. The City of David project in Jerusalem (early 10th century)
3. The fortress at Queyafa (OT Shar’aim?) (early 10th century)

The Tel Dan Inscription
Wrapping up a day’s work at Tel Dan in the dig season of 1993-94, an associate of Avraham Biran, the lead archaeologist, noted in the slanting rays of the late afternoon sun an irregularity in one of the stones that lined the gateway of the ancient site. Closer inspection revealed a worn inscription which, upon close study soon after, proved to be an Aramaic royal inscription from the reign of Hazael (841-801 B.C.) who at the time was at war with Israel to the south (2 Kgs 8:12-13; 10:32-33; 12:17-18). Of special interest is the fact that the Aramean referred to his southern enemy not as Israel but as “the house [i.e. dynasty] of David” (bêt dâwî). Though by that time the nation was known more commonly abroad as Israel, it was also designated as the “house of so and so,” an example from the same period being the nomenclature “House of Omriâ” after the powerful father of Ahab, King Omri. For it also to bear the name “House of David” would therefore not at all be irregular. Against the arguments by some that the existence of a “House of David” need not be proof that such an individual actually lived is undercut by the analogous fact that the Omri of “House of Omriâ” can hardly be denied historicity.

The Khirbet Qeiyafa Inscription
For many years a prominent site that lay near the proposed boundary between Israel and Philistia gave promise of yielding important information of some period or other of Israelite history. Many scholars identified it as

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18 With vocalization the name is to be read as bêt dâwî. In light of this reading, Andre Lemaire subsequently revisited the famous Mesha Inscription from about the same period (aka Moabite Stone) and read the dâwî of line 9 of that text “David” as well (cf. 2 Kgs 3:4-27).

19 The common Neo-Assyrian name of Israel is bît i umrî(a); cf. James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 280, 281, 284, 285. The latter two references come from the reign of Sargon (721-705 B.C.). Omri died in 885 so for 160 years or more Israel retained his name, at least in some circles. Therefore, it is not impossible that it should be called “House of David” in other contexts in the days of King Hazael of Damascus (841-801), 130 or more years after David’s death (971).

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ancient Shaaraim, “the place of two gates.” Recent excavation has not only confirmed this identification because of the double structure formation of the gates but also as an important outpost from the United Monarchy, probably the first half of the 10th century. Most remarkable is the discovery of an inscription in archaic Hebrew, now considered the oldest of its kind ever found in that language. Though no well-known persons are mentioned in the inscription, it does refer to Philistine cities and suggests the kind of uneasiness along the border reflected also in biblical texts of the United Monarchy period (cf. 1 Sam 13:1-7; 14:1-48; 17:1-54; 31:1-10; 2 Sam 5:17-25; 21:15-22). In fact, Shaaraim itself is mentioned in Samuel 17:52, though only as being on the route to Gath from the Valley of Elah following David’s despatch of Goliath. The significance otherwise is that the site’s massive fortifications and public buildings bespeaks the kind of project only a powerful and wealthy nation could install. That could be only in the period of David and Solomon.

The City of David Project

Since 2005 Eilat Mazar has conducted a comprehensive, large-scale excavation of the spur of land between the Kidron and Central (or) Tyropoean valleys just south of the Old City of Jerusalem, the so-called “city of David.” She has begun her work where Kathleen Kenyon, Yigal Shiloh, Ronny Reich, and Eli Shukron left off excavation primarily in areas adjacent to the location where she has focused her work. On the basis of the monumental architecture, pottery, and other cultural indicators, Mazar has concluded that “the Large Stone Structure [of Iron IIA of the early 10th

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20 Christopher Rollston, “What’s the Oldest Hebrew Inscription?” BAR 38/3 (2012): 32-40, 66-68. Rollston is not certain that Qeiyafa is older than the Gezer, Tel Zayit, and Izbeth Sartah texts and, in any case, thinks it is Phoenician, not Hebrew. This is contrary to the view of Émile Puech, who considers it to be the oldest Hebrew exemplar. See Puech in “L’Ostracon de Khirbet Qeyafa et les début de la roiauté en Israël,” RB 17/2 (210): 162-184. More work needs to be done on this technical philological matter before consensus can be achieved, but in any case it does not affect the question of the content of the inscription.

21 For its border location in the Shephelah only some 15 miles SW of Jerusalem, see William Schlegel, Satellite Bible Atlas. Historical Geography of the Bible (Jerusalem: William Schlegel, 2011), Map 1-2.


23 Mazar, 11.
century] should be identified with King David’s Palace, built by the Phoenicians” and “it is a testament [sic] to the power of the ruling authority behind the endeavor.”24 Her opinion has only been reinforced in reports subsequent to 2009.25

Conclusion

The interface of archaeology and biblical theology provides an excellent example of mutual interaction and the possibility, at least, of mutual enlightenment in the study of either or both these fields of inquiry. They are but two disciplines among many that could and perhaps should be addressed in tandem. The logical and epistemological issues at hand are not primarily ones of method—though obviously digging and reading are two different kinds of exercise—but of authority, priority, and, commitment.

If there is a cardinal sin in the adversarial comparative method it is that of presupposing the outcome before one begins and doing whatever is necessary to predetermine the outcome by whatever means possible. In the case of the Bible and archaeology, so-called “biblicists” are frequently accused of trying to “prove” the Bible by finding artifacts and formations that can be bent in the direction of providing that very proof; whereas, on the other hand, biblical scholars or historians of a more iconoclastic tradition can be said to be looking for evidence that undermines the “superstitious” or “fundamentalist” ignorance of those who regard the Bible as absolute truth, no matter the subject on which it speaks. While these may be caricatures in some sense, an element of ideological reality undergirds each.

A second concluding point is that neither archaeology nor biblical scholarship should be undertaken by amateurs, that is, dilettantes who may be eager to do the hard work of each discipline but who are inadequately trained by learning and experience to do so. It is commonplace on a dig for a square supervisor to yell “stay off the balks” or “don’t trip over the strings” or “use a patiche and not a spade.” Likewise, students of the Bible who know little or nothing of the languages, literatures, and theology of the

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24 Mazar, 64, 65.
25 See for a report on a large hoard of gold coins from the site http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2416658/Dr-Eil...10/24/2013. Also found was a 3,000 year old jug, clearly from the Davidic/Solomonic period.
MERRILL: ARCHAEOLOGY AND OT BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

Bible ought to avoid the pontification common to young scholars in particular but completely out of bounds for the ingenuous who may have grand motives but who can do great exegetical and theological harm. Of them one could also warn about the balks, the strings, and the inappropriate use of the wrong tools.

However, solid training and impeccable method are not enough and here is where the two undertakings may have to part company. I speak of what is at stake the very most, namely, truth and the kind of truth to be found in an ultimate sense only in God and in his revelatory word. Truth, of course, must be distinguished from mere fact, no matter how compelling, because facts are not self-interpreting any more than the Bible is. Pottery, tombs, and implements also must, like Scripture, be subject to exegesis, as we stated early on, for they lie before us mute and meaningless unless they can be put into some kind of context that itself is not constructed in a petitio principii manner. Moreover, there is no life in pottery and other artifacts, no redemptive quality, no access to God, and here is where the novice can outstrip the scholar whether of the academy or the tell. Did not Paul ask of us, “Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world (1 Cor 1:20NIV)?”

Archaeology and biblical theology may, and indeed, should interface, but where doubt lies as to truth and authority we do well to hearken to a man who lived in the archaeological period, as it were, and I refer to Joshua. Permit me on a closing note to take paraphrastic liberties as follows: “Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the archaeological conclusions reached on the other side of the River, or the gods of secular scholarship in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord of the Word of our God” (Josh 24:15 NIV with some redaction).

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Narrative Structure of Daniel 8: A Text Linguistic Approach

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1. Introduction

In general terms, believers in the inspiration and revelation of the Hebrew Bible have used the grammatical-historical method to decipher the meaning of the Biblical Hebrew text since the Reformation.¹ In spite of this method’s lengthy existence, it has not yet reached its full potential of usefulness because the Biblical Hebrew verbal system has not been thoroughly understood.

It is well known that Hebraists believed and taught since the Middle Ages that Biblical Hebrew is a tense-based system. This theory lost its credibility at the end of the nineteenth century because it did not fully convince the majority of Hebrew Scholars that it matched the reality of the biblical text.² It was replaced by Ewald-Driver’s view that Biblical Hebrew is an aspect-based system.³ This theory began to crumble in less than a century because it did not accurately represent the actual usage of Biblical

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¹ Alfred Jepsen, “The Scientific Study of the Old Testament,” in Claus Westermann (ed.), trans. by J. L. Mays, Essays On Old Testament Hermeneutics (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1963), 254, 255. Jepsen quotes from Luther’s Isaiah lecture of 1527 as follows: “In order to expound the prophet a two-fold knowledge is necessary. First grammar, and this can be esteemed a most potent thing. The other thing is even more necessary, to wit, a knowledge of history. . . .”


Hebrew verbal forms. A common complaint against these grammatical theories has been their focus on the sentence rather than on the level of the text.

1.1 Beyond a Sentence-based Grammar

Biblical Hebraists, who continued working persistently at the level of the sentence, indirectly propelled the investigation of the Biblical Hebrew verbal system at the level of discourse. This approach is known in Europe as Text Linguistics and in America as Discourse Analysis. Since the 1970's advocates of this approach have applied it to the study of the narrative structure of Biblical Hebrew with good results. However, to the best of my knowledge, this approach has not yet been applied to the analysis of the vision report of Biblical Hebrew. This situation has impelled this author to test the methodology of text linguistics in the study of the narrative structure of Daniel 8.

1.2 Terminology Distinctions

The terms “text” and “discourse” have been used in a variety of ways. In popular use, the term “text” usually conveys the meaning of written language, whereas in academic circles “text” is a “sequence of well formed sentences,” or “a logical sequence of linguistic signs between two significant breaks of communication,” or “a written language that has...”

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4 Roy Heller, Narrative Structure, 10; see also Waltke and O’Connor, An Introduction, 464, 470; F. J. del Barco, Sintaxis Verbal en los Profetas Menores Preexilicos (Madrid: Departamento de Estudios Hebreos y Arameos, 2001), 17.
7 Heller, 19-20.
8 Heller, 19-20; Van der Merwe, 15; del Barco, 15.
9 Dawson, Text Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew, 21.
cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality, and intertextuality.\textsuperscript{11}

The term “discourse,” in popular usage, has usually been restricted to the spoken language, whereas in text linguistics “discourse” may refer to a text between two significant breaks, or a complete literary work, or a character’s speech within the narrative (direct speech or direct discourse).\textsuperscript{12}

In this paper, the term discourse will be used to indicate a complete literary work and direct speech.

1.3 Aim and Basis of this Study

This study will use the theoretical model of Text Linguistics to delimit the text of Daniel 8 into two types of communication (narrative and discourse), two levels of communication (foreground and background), and two types of narrative organization (inner-paragraph and extra-paragraph comments) in order to discover the final structure of this vision report. This approach has been used in the study of the narrative structure of the Hebrew Bible for more than four decades. It has its basis on the conviction that tense, aspect, or any grammatical category of the Hebrew verbal system can be properly analyzed and observed “on the linguistic level beyond that of the sentence.”\textsuperscript{13} Moreover, it also has its basis on the conviction that “the use of differing verbal forms in narrative does not [. . .] mark changes in tense (which is consistently past), but rather changes in aspect and changes in narrative organization (initiation or conclusion of narrative blocks or the providing of offline commentary).”\textsuperscript{14}

This investigation will attempt to verify the viability of Heller’s proposal concerning the usage and function of clause types according to three discourse categories of Biblical Hebrew\textsuperscript{15} and Heller’s classification


\textsuperscript{12} Dawson, Text Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew, 21; Alba-Juez, Perspectives on Discourse, 6.

\textsuperscript{13} Heller, Narrative Structure, 428-482.

\textsuperscript{14} Idem, 430.

\textsuperscript{15} Type of communication: narrative and direct speech (Heller, 25). Level of communication: foreground and background (Heller, 430-432). And type of organization: inner-paragraph comments and extra-paragraph comments (Heller, 432-441, 451).
of discourse text types into: Narrative Discourse, Predictive Discourse, Expository Discourse, Hortative Discourse and Interrogative Discourse.\textsuperscript{16}

2. Procedure of this Study

The first step of this investigation is to determine the boundaries of the text of Daniel 8. Then the “narrative text proper” (narrator’s text) will be split up into WAYYIQTOL clauses (foreground) and non-WAYYIQTOL clauses (background). The “direct discourse text” (character’s speech text) will be separated into a third group and will be classified according to text types. In other words, this investigation will set two columns for two distinct narrative clause types (WAYYIQTOL and non-WAYYIQTOL) and one column for all discourse text types (e.g. Narrative Discourse, Predictive Discourse, Expository Discourse, etc.) of the Hebrew text of Daniel 8. The first group, comprised of WAYYIQTOL clauses (foreground), will be placed at the right margin of page.\textsuperscript{17} The second group, comprised of non-WAYYIQTOL clauses (background), will be fixed to the left of the first right margin. Finally, the third group, comprised of direct speech, will be placed to the left of the second right margin. After these three groups are set up into their respective columns, the narrative text will be delimited into paragraph blocks and will be classified into two types of paragraphs: inner-paragraphs comments and extra-paragraph comments. Then, the results of the structural analysis will be presented in this paper in a descriptive manner.

2.1 Text Type and Boundaries of Daniel 8

Several scholars have classified Daniel 8 as a vision report.\textsuperscript{18} This text type is similar to the narrative prose of Biblical Hebrew. They are similar in the fact that both were built with the same building blocks (clause types) and according to the same grammatical conventions of Biblical Hebrew. That is, both convey a story of the past and both are composed of two writing materials: narrative proper (the narrator’s text) and direct discourse

\textsuperscript{16} Idem, 457-480.
\textsuperscript{17} Hebrew sentences are written from the right margin to the left.
However, narratives and vision reports are not identical. They differ in the fact that a narrative was usually written in the third person, whereas the vision report of Daniel 8 is written in both the first and the third person. A narrative by nature is past oriented, whereas the vision report of Daniel 8 deals with future realities. A narrative presents a story that happened in the past, whereas Daniel 8 reports a vision that was seen in the past but expected to happen in the future.

The text of Daniel 8 starts at verse 1 and ends at verse 27. These boundaries have been established on the basis of two factors: discourse features and clause type functions. Daniel 8:1 starts with a dating formula that provides the date in which Daniel saw a vision. Dating formulas, in Biblical times, served to introduce a historical narrative or a vision report (cf. 1Kings 15:33; 16:8, 23; 2Kings 8:25; 13:1, 10; 14:1, 23; 15:1, 8, 17, 23, 27, 32; 16:1; 17:1, 6; 2Chr 13:1; 6:3; Je 52:30; Dan 1:1; 7:1; 9:1; 10:1; Hag 1:1; 2:10). This literary convention served as a signal to the reader that a story or vision report was about to be recounted. Since Daniel 8:1 starts in this fashion, it is an indication that a new story or vision report will begin. Additionally, the text of Daniel 8 starts with an independent X-QATAL clause, whose function is to mark the beginning of the text that presents the seer’s name, the vision event and the place of the event. These factors support the conclusion that Daniel 8:1 is the beginning of the vision report. Likewise, the end of the vision report was established on the basis of discourse features and clause type functions. One notes that the initiation of the segment in Daniel 8:27 is marked by an X-QATAL clause. It is followed by three WAYYIQTOL clauses that provide sequential information until the end of the paragraph. Then, after verse 27, Daniel 9:1 starts with a dating formula that signals the reader that a new story or vision report will be recounted. The evidence is clear that Daniel 8:27 is the epilogue of the vision report, set between two strong breaks.

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2.2 Prologue (Dan 8:1-2)

The boundaries of the prologue are marked initially by an X-QATāL clause and terminally by another X-QATāL clause. This segment is composed of two WAYIQTOL clauses and several non-WAYIQTOL clauses that provide background information on the time, the event, the seer’s name (Dan 8:1) and the place of the vision (Dan 8:2). These clauses do not propel the story forward, but provide setting information.

Between the prologue (Dan 8:1-2) and the epilogue (Dan 8:27), Daniel’s account of his vision (Dan 8:3-14) and Gabriel’s explanation of the vision (Dan 8:15-26) appear. Thus, the prologue and the epilogue serve as a frame to both Daniel’s account of his vision and Gabriel’s explanation of the vision.

2.3 First Section: Daniel’s Account of the Vision (Dan 8:3-14)

The first section of Daniel 8 (Dan 8:3-14) consists of five paragraph blocks (Dan 8:3-4; 5-8; 9-10; 11-12; 13-14). The first paragraph is an

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21 The clause types that constitute the prologue of Daniel 8:1-2 are: two X-QATāL clauses in the first verse and in the second verse two unchained WAYIQTOL clauses, a WAYHY temporal clause, a nominal or verbless clause and an X-QATāL clause. These clause types provide information about the time, the vision event, the name of the seer (Dan 8:1) and the place of the vision (Dan 8:2). The unchained WAYIQTOL provides punctual information and the Verbless clauses provide static information in contrast to dynamic information.

22 The setting or prologue of the text of Daniel 8 is composed of the following clause types: The prologue initiates with a complement verbless clause, followed by two QATāL clauses (8:1b). The verbless clause provides the date in which Daniel saw the vision. The following Qatal clause presents the subject of a passive clause in first position or focus (the vision) and the name of the person who saw the vision (Daniel). For more information on the function of clause types see, R. E. Longacre, “Discourse Perspective on the Hebrew Verse,” 178-180; Heller, Narrative Structure, 53, 54, 59. The first WAYIQTOL clause in Daniel 8:2a has the function of making a punctual reference to the “vision” event. Then a temporal clause (Dan 8:2b) informs the reader that while Daniel saw the “vision” he was in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam (8:2b). Then a WAYIQTOL clause (Dan 8:2c) reiterates that Daniel saw [the “vision”], whereas the following X-QATāL clause affirms that it happened while he was on the bank of the River Ulai (Dan 8:2d). All these clause types have their proper function. The verbless clause provides static or general information; the unchained WAYIQTOL provides punctual information; whereas the HAYA verbal form provides existential information and marks the original boundary of the prologue. None of these clauses provide foreground information, including the unchained WAYIQTOL.
“extra-paragraph comment,” that serves as an introduction (8:3-4), three are “inner-paragraph comments” (8:5-8, 8:9-10; 8:13-14) and one is an “extra-paragraph comment” (8:11-12).

2.3.1 First Paragraph (8:3-4)  

After the prologue (Dan 8:1-2), a WAYYIQTOL clause (Dan 8:3:a) signals the beginning of the paragraph and vision account (Dan 8:3-14). This clause in conjunction with the following clause, form an introduction-formula that initiates the vision account: “I lifted up my eyes and I saw” (Dan 8:3a, b). This introductory formula was a literary resource or language convention that a prophet could use to initiate his account (cf. Gen 31:10; Ezek 8:5; Daniel 10:5; Zech 2:1, [Eng 1:18]; 2:5 [Eng 2:1]; 5:1, 9; 6:1). Then the narrator introduced the first symbolic participant (a ram) by means of the Hebrew particle wehinneh (נבר) + a participial clause (Dan 8:3c). This syntactical pattern was another language convention or literary resource that an author utilized to introduce an actor in a dream or vision report (cf. Gen 37:7a; Dan 8:5b, 15c; 10:5; 12:5a). After this introduction, a series of five non-WAYYIQTOL clause types describe the ram’s two horns (Dan 8:3d-g), the ram’s butting (nagah) toward the west, the north and the south (Dan 8:4h) and the fact that no beast could stand before the ram and deliver from its power (Dan 8:4i-j). Finally, the narrator used two WeQATAL clauses to indicate that the ram did its will and grew arrogant (Dan 8:4k-l). The last of them marks the end of the paragraph.

The boundaries of this paragraph are determined on the basis of the initial WAYYIQTOL and the final WeQATAL clauses. This delimitation is confirmed by the thematic scope of the ram that covers the two verses of

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23 Idem, 57.

24 Heller, Narrative Structure, 57, 58, 431–441. The first paragraph of Daniel 8 has two WAYYIQTOL, one QATAL, one QIQTOL and two WeQATAL clauses. In addition, the paragraph has three participial and three verbless clauses. The fourth paragraph, on the other hand, has three QATAL, one YIQTOL, one WeYIQTOL and two WeQATAL clauses.

25 Solitary or unchained WAYYIQTOL clauses may signal in Daniel 8 the beginning or the ending of a paragraph, or may provide punctual background information. Only WAYYIQTOL chains of at least three clauses are the backbone of the story.

26 Participial clauses present ongoing situations, actions or states. In this case, it describes the standing of the ram on the banks of the River Ulai.
the first paragraph (Dan 8:3-4). Thus, both methods of delimitation corroborate the established boundaries of the first paragraph are correct.

The paragraph thematic outline consists of: (1) the presentation of the ram or first actor, (2) its identity (3), its activity, (4) its supremacy, and (5) its arrogance.

2.3.2 Second Paragraph (8:5-8)

The beginning of the second paragraph is marked by an X-QATAL clause (Dan 8:5a) and its end is signaled by a WAYYIQTOL clause (Daniel 8:8c).

This paragraph introduces the second symbolic participant of the vision account (a male goat) by means of the Hebrew particle wehinneh (וְהָנֵנָה) + a participial verbal form (Dan 8:5b). It depicts the male goat coming from the west (Dan 8:5b), without touching the earth. It came toward the ram, which was at the river Ulai, and it ran against it with a furious rage (Dan 8:6). 27 Then, through five foreground clauses and two negated QATAL clauses, 28 the paragraph advances the story indicating that the male goat (1) charged against the ram, (2) struck it, (3) broke its two horns, (4) left it without strength, (5) cast it toward the ground, (6) trampled upon it, and (7) none could deliver it from the goat’s power (Dan 8:7). After these foreground clauses, the narrator comments that the male goat magnified itself very much (Dan 8:8a), but when it was strong, its great horn was broken (Dan 8:8b) and four prominent [horns] came up in its place toward the four winds of heaven (8:8c).

Since this paragraph has a WAYYIQTOL chain of at least three clauses, the function of the non-WAYYIQTOL clause types of this unit is to provide “inner-paragraph comments.” 29 on actions presented by the WAYYIQTOL clauses, “but do so apart from the sequentiality of the foundational narrative and do not brake that sequentiality.” 30

27 According to Heller, individual QATAL clauses may function as comment clauses when they appear in a clause that is semantically parallel with a nearby QATTAL or WAYYIQTOL clause within an “inner paragraph comments.” See Heller, Narrative Structure, 441.

28 On the negated QATAL propelling the story forward, see Heller, Narrative Structure, 279 (note 64), 387 (note 67) and 437 (note 14).


30 Idem, 441.
The initial X-QATAL clause and the final WAYYIQTOL clause mark the boundaries of this paragraph. This delimitation is confirmed by the thematic scope of the male goat that defeated the ram, which covers four verses of this segment (Dan 8:5-8). Both methods of delimitation attest the boundaries of the second paragraph are correct.

The thematic outline of this block is similar to the thematic outline of the first paragraph: (1) the presentation of the male goat or second participant, (2) its identity, (3) its foreground activity, (4) its supremacy, (5) its arrogance, (6) its big horn state of brokenness, and (7) the replacement of it by four visible [horns].

2.3.3 Third Paragraph (8:9-10)

The beginning of this paragraph is explicitly marked by an independent QATAL clause. This has the function of discontinuing the previous story and of introducing the new participant of the third scene. In contrast to the preceding presentations, this introduction has no indication of surprise (no hinneh particle) possibly because the narrator already knew the actor from his previous vision (cf. Dan 7:8).

The narrator propels the story forward by means of four WAYYIQTOL clauses. They depict the little horn performing four consecutive activities without any interruption or comment. It is said that (1) it grew geographically toward the south, toward the east and toward the beautiful land (Dan 8:9); (2) it grew cosmically up to the host of heaven, (3) it threw down some of the host or stars, and (4) trampled upon them (Dan 8:10). The last WAYYIQTOL clause of this verse marks the end of the paragraph.

The thematic outline of this block consists of: (1) the presentation of the little horn or third participant, (2) its foreground activity without comment and (3) its supremacy.

2.3.4 Fourth Paragraph (Dan 8:11-12)

The beginning of the fourth paragraph is marked by means of an initial X-QATAL clause. It has the function of breaking the sequence of the

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31 Heller, Narrative Structure, 432.
previous story line. Following, six clause types provide “extra-paragraph comments” to the vision account.\textsuperscript{32} They do not move the story forward, but provide a set of comments apart from the sequence of the preceding WAYYIQTOL chain of the narrative. These clause types occur between two “inner-paragraph comments”\textsuperscript{33} of the vision account or between the third and fifth paragraphs of the first section of Daniel 8.

In this segment the narrator informs the reader that the little horn magnified itself up to the Prince of the host. Then he, by means of two passive QATAL and one passive YIQTOL clauses,\textsuperscript{34} adds that three possessions of the Prince of the host were damaged. They are: (1) “the regular [cultic service],”\textsuperscript{35} (2) “the sanctuary” and (3) “the host [of heaven].”\textsuperscript{36} Finally, the narrator states that as a consequence of the preceding actions (4) the little horn cast the truth to the ground, it did [its will] and prospered (8:11-12).

According to Heller, the extra-paragraph comment provides background information about 1) “multiple actions that occurred before the larger narrative framework of the preceding and following paragraphs,”\textsuperscript{37} or 2) “actions that either form the basis of a following story, or occur throughout a story but are not tied to the sequentiality of the narrative, or are the eventual outcome of a preceding story.”\textsuperscript{38} In view of these alternatives, one may ask: Can we determine specifically to what period of history the actions of the fourth paragraph refer? Do they refer to actions that occurred before or throughout the narrative of Daniel 8:10? Or are they the outcome of the preceding story of Daniel 8:10? To answer these questions, it is necessary to know if there are thematic or linguistic connections between the fourth and the third paragraphs or between the fourth and the fifth paragraphs. Then we may determine the chronological relation that exists between them.

\textsuperscript{32} QATAL, YIQTOL, WeYIQTOL and WeQATAL clauses. See Heller, \textit{Narrative Structure}, 451, 455.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{34} Passive clauses usually demote the agent and promote the grammatical subject (patient).
\textsuperscript{35} The Hebrew word is an ellipsis of “the regular cultic service.”
\textsuperscript{36} The Hebrew word is an ellipsis of “the host of heaven.”
\textsuperscript{37} Heller, 451.
\textsuperscript{38} Heller, 455.
Since the little horn is the subject of a masculine verbal predicate in the first independent clause of the third and fourth paragraphs (Dan 8:9b; 8:11a), there is no doubt they have the same subject and therefore are closely connected. Moreover, both paragraphs finish their account of the little horn with feminine verbal forms that predicate its actions (Dan 8:9b, 10:abc; 8:12bcd). In addition, there are some linguistic links between the third and the fourth paragraphs that show their connection. One of them is between the word “host” of the phrase “host of heaven” in Daniel 8:10a and the word “host” in the phrase “prince of the host” in Daniel 8:11a. In this context, the “host of heaven” and the “Prince of the host” relate to each other. That is, the leader of the “host of heaven” is the “prince of the host.” Another linguistic link exists between the “anarthrous host” in the fourth paragraph (Dan 8:12a) and the arthrous “host of heaven” in the third paragraph (Dan 8:10a). They are related because the “anarthrous host” in Daniel 8:13e suffered the same fate that the “host of heaven” of Daniel 8:10a experienced. That is, the little horn trampled upon them (Dan 8:10d; 8:13e) because they belonged to the prince of the host. These linguistic links open the possibility that the events of both paragraphs are simultaneous or overlapping. However, we must wait for more information before we come to a final conclusion.

The thematic outline of this paragraph has the following order: (1) the little horn’s arrogance, (2) its damages against the properties of the prince of the host, and (3) its success. The end of the fourth paragraph is marked by a WeQATAL clause.

2.3.5 Fifth Paragraph (8:13-14)

The initial marker of the fifth paragraph is a default WAYYIQTOL clause. This segment continues the sequence of the story. Here the narrator introduces two new actors that engage in a dialogue. One of them approached the other requesting some specific information. He asked:

(ID)

“How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled—the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, and the surrender of the sanctuary and of the host that will be trampled underfoot?” (Dan 8:14 NIV).
This question reveals the angel’s concern regarding the actions of the little horn against the (a) “regular [cultic service],” (b) “the sanctuary,” (c) the “host” and the truth (Dan 8:11-12). It also reveals the angel’s desire to know about the end of the vision or the ceasing of the “criminal action” against the Prince, his properties, and his covenant people.40

The response to the former question was: (PD) “until 2300 evening-morning(s), then the sanctuary will be cleansed” (Dan 8:14). That is, the answer assured to the former holy being that the criminal actions against the Prince and his properties would come to their end as soon as the sanctuary became cleansed. The Hebrew verb nisdaq (to be righteous), in this answer, is pregnant with meaning. It is a multivalent lexeme that belongs to the semantic domain of ethics, namely, jurisprudence and social behavior. The temporal expression “2300 evening-morning(s)” is more ambiguous, but it can be understood in light of two known Israelite calendars: (1) the calendar system of literal days (cf. Lev 23:15-16) and (2) the calendar system of Jubilee in which a day represents a year (cf. Lev 25:8, 9). In light of these two calendar systems and in light of the context of the vision report, the temporal locution makes more sense if we take it as symbolic time rather than literal days. Therefore, the temporal period of “2300 evening-morning(s)” refers to 2300 years. According to Daniel 9:25, the beginning point of this period would be the decree to rebuild Jerusalem in 457 BC.42

This paragraph has linguistic connections with the preceding fourth block. Both are linked by the following lexical terms: host/host (Dan 8:12a; 39

The Hebrew word “host” is indefinite in Dan 8:12a and 13d.
8:13d), regular [cultic worship]/regular [cultic worship] (Dan 8:11b, 12a, 13a), sanctuary/sanctuary (Dan 8:11c, 13d, 14c) and rebellion/rebellion (Dan 8:12a, 13c). Similar linguistic links are present between the third and the fourth segments. Therefore, we can assert that these three paragraphs of Daniel 8 constitute a literary unit because they deal with the same subject, the same actions, and the same objects.

The end of the fifth paragraph is marked by a WeQATAL clause. According to Longacre, the WeQATAL verbal form may mark a pivotal or climactic event. In this case, it marks the climactic dialogue that finally provides the resolution to the aggressive perpetration of the little horn toward the Prince, his host and his cultic properties.

3. The Second Section: The Explanation of the Vision (Dan 8:15-26)

The second section of Daniel 8 is comprised of two paragraphs. The first introduces a new actor that came to help Daniel understand his vision, and the second presents Gabriel’s explanation of the vision account.

3.1 The First Paragraph of the Second Section (Dan 8:15-18).

The beginning of the new paragraph is marked by the Hebrew WAYHI temporal clause in Dan 8:15a. This paragraph introduces a new participant, with the particle wehinneh (וְחִנָּה) + a participial clause (Dan 8:15b). He received the following audible order:

(HD)
“Gabriel, make this man understand the vision (הָגַם הַ зрения)” (Dan 8:16d).

When Gabriel approached Daniel, the latter was so terrified that he fell to the ground (Dan 8:17abc). Then Gabriel said to him (Dan 8:17d):

(HD)
“Understand, O man, that the vision (הָאָרֶץ) [shall end at or refers to] the time of the end” (Dan 8:17e).

One notes above that Gabriel used the Hebrew word *chazon* (ךְזָן) (Dan 8:17e) instead of the Hebrew word *mar’eh* (מרֶה). Before him, Daniel had also used it to express his desire to understand the vision (Dan 8:15a). Besides Daniel, a holy being had also used it (Dan 8:13) in his inquiry about the end of the vision. In these previous cases the Hebrew word *chazon* referred generally to the vision account of Daniel 8:3-14 (cf. 8:1, 2) but more specifically to some actions in Daniel 8:9-12. On the other hand, the Hebrew word *hammare’h* (חַמָּרֶה) in Daniel 8:16d denotes the vehicle of divine revelation and the content in Daniel 8:13, 14 (cf. Dan 8:27; 9:23; Dan 10:1, 7, 8, 16). Therefore, we can safely say that Gabriel’s use of the Hebrew word *chazon* (ךְזָן) in his latter speech to Daniel refers generally to the whole vision account (Dan 8:3-14), but specially to some specific actions in Daniel 8:9-14. This interpretation is supported by Gabriel’s general explanation of the vision account (cf. Dan 8:20-26) and his reference to some events of Daniel 8:9-14 in Daniel 8:23-26, 9:24-27 and 11:21-12:4.

The final marker of this paragraph is a WAYYIQTOL clause in which Daniel indicates that Gabriel helped him to come out of his shock (Dan 8:18d).

### 3.2 The Second and Last Paragraph of the Second Section (Dan 8:19-26)

The second paragraph of this section begins with a quotation formula that introduces Gabriel’s speech as is illustrated below:

> And he said:

(PD)

“I am going to inform you what shall be in the latter time of the indignation (Dan 8:19b), for [the vision shall end at or refers to] the appointed time of the end” (Dan 8:19c).

Gabriel’s mission is clearly stated. He came to inform Daniel about the event or events that would occur “in the latter time of the indignation.”

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term “indignation,” in this predictive discourse, suggests that the vision of Daniel 8 would end with the execution of God’s judgment against the little horn (cf. Dan 8:25c; 11:45) and with God’s wonderful salvation in favor of his people (cf. Dan 12:1-3).

Gabriel’s explanation uses a series of verbless clauses, with some embedded clauses (Dan 8:20-22), that are predominant clausal forms for Expository Discourse (ED). According to Gabriel:

ED

“...The two-horned ram signifies the kings of Media and Persia” (Dan 8:20).

“...The he goat signifies the kingdom of Greece” (Dan 8:21a).

“...The large horn signifies the first king” (Dan 8:21b).

The four horns signify four kingdoms that will arise out of a nation, but not with his power.” (Dan 8:22b).

Note that Gabriel gave only the meaning of the animal symbols, but without any information about their activities. Note also the last clause of Daniel 8:22 which emphasizes the diminished power of the four sub-kingdoms of Greece in comparison with their former united empire. This avoids any misconception regarding the referent of the little horn that would be greater than any of the previous kingdoms.

(PD)

The first two lines of Gabriel’s predictive discourse (Daniel 8:23a) establish the time frame for the appearing of the little horn in the historical arena; it would appear in the latter time of the four sub-kingdoms of Greece (Dan 8:23). This poetic verse, contrary to the explanation of the ram and male goat (Dan 8:20-22), lacks any mention of the little horn (Dan 8:23). In spite of this fact the preceding verse relates to it.


The embedded clauses add some clarification on the symbols of Daniel 8.
The second poetic verse indicates that the impudent king would be mighty, but not by his own strength (Dan 8:24a), thus contrasting the superiority of this king with the weakness of the four horns of the male goat. It also asserts that the impudent king would destroy extraordinarily (Dan 8:24b). This prediction of destruction, in light of other visions (Dan 9 and 10-12), may include the destruction of the Jewish temple, the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem. One support of this interpretation is the manner in which this verse ends that is identical to the ending of the fourth paragraph of the vision account (Dan 8:12cd). That is, the pair of verbal forms in Daniel 8:24b mark the end of the first stage of the impudent king’s reign as the verbal forms in Daniel 8:12cd mark the end of the first stage of the little horn in the fourth paragraph of the vision account (Dan 8:11-12).

The first line of the third poetic verse indicates that the impudent king would destroy the mighty men and the holy people (Dan 8:24c). This poetic line is at the center of six poetic lines that Gabriel used to explain the symbol of the little horn, from its beginning to its end. From this poetic line (Dan 8:24c) backwards, there are three poetic lines to the beginning of the little horn (Dan 8:23b) and from this poetic line forward, there are three poetic lines to the demise of the little horn (Dan 8:25b). The phrase “holy people” of this poetic line (Dan 8:24c) is parallel to the phrase “holy people” in Daniel 7:25, which relates to God’s people of the Middle Ages. This fact entails the content of the third poetic verse to refer also to the Middle Ages, a period in which the impudent king, by his cunning, would make deceit prosper in his hand (Dan 8:25a).

The fourth poetic verse indicates that the impudent king would magnify himself in his heart (Dan 8:25b), would destroy without warning (Dan 8:25b), would stand up against the Prince of princes (Dan 8:25c), but would finally be broken without hand (Dan 8:25c). If the phrase “holy people” in Daniel 8:24c refers to God’s people of the Middle Ages, then the two poetic lines of Daniel 8:25bc relate to the actions of the little horn during the “time of the end.”

After his predictive discourse on the little horn, Gabriel used a verbless clause (ED), with an embedded clause, to affirm that the vision (מגיהמגיה) of the evening-morning(s) is true (Daniel 8:26a). Then, he commanded Daniel to keep the vision (ביש) secret for it was for many days (HD; Daniel 8:26b).

Gabriel’s explanation of the symbols in Dan 8:20-26 followed the same outline of the vision account in the first section (Daniel 8:3-14): the ram,
the male goat, the male goat’s big horn, the male goat’s four horns, the little horn, and the time prophecy of two thousand and three hundred evening-morning(s).

Up to this point Gabriel had told Daniel that either the events of the vision were to conclude at “the time of the end” or some events of Daniel 8:9-14 relate to “the time of the end” (cf. Dan 8:17d). He also added that the impudent king (1) would destroy astonishingly, (2) would destroy the holy people and (3) would destroy many without warning (Dan 8:23-25). According to the verbal forms and the poetic units of the discourse, the latter actions would not happen in a single event but would occur sequentially in three different stages.47

Gabriel’s explanation to Daniel provides support for the view that the vision would conclude at the time of the end, but it creates a problem for the view that the actions of the extra-paragraph comments in Daniel 8:11-12 are simultaneous with the event of the preceding story (Dan 8:10). This problem requires an investigation of Gabriel’s second explanation in Daniel 9:24-27 to determine if it offers a solution.

One notes that Daniel 9:24-27 provides information regarding the construction of Jerusalem, the appearing of a Messiah, the purpose of his coming, the time of his coming, the destruction of the temple and the destruction of the people of Judah during the first stage of the little horn. The time-prophecy of Daniel 9 covers part of the period of Medo-Persia, the period of Greece and part of the period of Rome. It helps us understand

47 The linguistic links that exist between Daniel 8:9-14 and Daniel 8:23-26 are the following: **First stage**: (1) a little horn went/a king shall stand up (Dan 8:9b; 8:23b); (2) it trampled upon some of the host/he shall destroy awfully (Dan 8:10a and 8:24b); (3) the sanctuary was cast down/he shall destroy awfully (Dan 8:11c and 8:24b); (4) it did its will and succeeded (Dan 8:12cd and 8:24b). **Second stage**: (1) a host was given/he shall destroy the holy people (Dan 8:12a? and 8:24c). **Third stage**: (1) a host was given/he shall destroy many (Dan 8:12a? and 8:25b); (2) it magnified itself/he magnified in his heart (Dan 8:11a and 8:25b); (3) it magnified up to the prince/he will stand up against the prince of princes (Dan 8:11a and 8:25c). The information of Daniel 8:23-26 belong to four poetic units of two lines each verse: (1) 8:23ab, (2) 8:24ab, (3) 8:24c-25a, (4) 8:25bc. The first poetic verse presents the time in which the impudent king would stand up (Dan 8:23ab); the second poetic verse indicates his power, his destructive actions and his success during the first part of his reign (Dan 8:24ab); the third poetic verse presents his destructive actions against the mighty and holy people in the second stage of his reign (Dan 8:24c-25a); and the fourth poetic verse refers to his destructive actions against many people and his arrogance against the Price of princes in the third period of his reign or the time of the end (Dan 8:25bc).
the two thousand three hundred evening-morning(s) symbolically as day-year and the happening of the cleansing of the sanctuary at the time of the end. However, this explanation has left a gap between the event of 70 AD and the cleansing of the sanctuary at the time of the end. Therefore, we must investigate Gabriel’s third explanation in Daniel 11:21-45 to see if the problem of the gap is solved.

It is observed that Daniel 11:21-45 introduces a despicable man in verses 21-24. He is described as a destructive, deceptive, crafty and corruptive king. During the first stage of his reign he fights against the king of the south (Dan 11:25-28), engages against the people of the covenant, desecrates the temple, takes away the *tamid* (טָמִיר) and sets up the abomination of desolation (Dan 11:30-31). Then, during the second stage of his reign, he persecutes “the people who know his God” or “the wise people” until the time of the end (Dan 11:32-35). Then the character of the king of the north is revealed in verses 36-39. It is said that he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and speak horrendous things against the God of gods (Dan 11:36). He will have preference for the god of fortress instead of the God of his fathers and the fathers of his fathers (Dan 11:37, 38). He will devise plans against fortified cities and will give benefits to those who recognize him (Dan 11:39). Finally, in the time of the end or his third stage, the king will come to the beautiful land (Dan 11:41), will

48 The linguistic links that exist between Daniel 8:9-14 and Gabriel’s second explanation in Daniel 9:23-27 are the following: **First stage:** (1) the host of heaven/the people of Daniel (Dan 8:10a; 9:24a); (2) the rebellion/the rebellion (Dan 8:12a; Dan 9:24b); (3) prince of the host/Messiah the prince (Dan 8:11a; 9:25b); (4) the sanctuary shall be cast down/a people shall destroy the sanctuary (Dan 8:11c, 13:c; 26b); (5) desolation/desolation (Dan 8:13b; 9:26c, 27d). **First stage and third stage:** (6) the sanctuary/the most holy place (Dan 8:14c; 9:24c); (7) time period of 2300 evening-morning(s)/time period of 70 weeks (Dan 8:14c; 9:24a); (8) be brought to its rightful state/righteousness (Dan 8:14c; 9:24c); (9) the vision/the vision (Dan 8:13a; 9:24c). The lexical terms host, rebellion, prince of the host, desolation and the destruction of the sanctuary belong to the first stage. However, the lexical terms or phases bring to its rightful state, 2300 evening-morning(s) and the sanctuary belong to the third stage. The majority of the actions of the poetic discourse of Daniel 9:24-26 refer basically to the events of the first stage of 70 AD and some to both the first stage of 70 AD and the third stage of the time of the end. This situation indicates that Daniel 8:9-14 and Daniel 9:24-27 focus mainly on the events of the first stage of 70 A.D (Dan 8:10-12), but the ultimate goal of the sanctuary function and the Messiah ministry is the time of the end (Dan 8:14).
control the treasures of gold and silver (Dan 11:43), will go with great fury to kill and annihilate many (Dan 11:44), and will plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the beautiful-holy-mountain. However, he will come to his end there (Dan 11:45).49

Based on Gabriel’s explanations above, we can assert that the comments of Daniel 8:11-12 refer to the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem, the elimination of its rituals, the destruction of the people of Judah and the casting of truth to the ground in the year 70 AD, during the first stage of the little horn.

This view raises two questions: if the vision account of Daniel 8:9-14 predicted events that would occur in 70 AD, why did Gabriel declare that the vision should finish at the time of the end or be fulfilled at the time of the end? Why did Gabriel in his first and last explanation of the vision of Daniel 8 speak of the king’s actions being fulfilled during three stages of his reign until the end of earth’s history?

These questions deserve an honest and appropriate answer. My response to them presupposes that Daniel reported his vision faithfully, accurately and according to the grammatical conventions of the Hebrew language of his time. It presupposes the text of Daniel has come to us in its original form. It also presupposes some of the Biblical Hebrew grammatical conventions were lost in the past. However, much of the lost knowledge has

49 The linguistic connections that exist between Daniel 8:9-14 and the third explanation of Gabriel in Daniel 11:11-12:4 are as follow: (1) First stage: “a little horn went”/“a despicable man shall stand up” (Dan 8:9a; 11:21a); (2) “prince of the host”/“prince of the covenant” (Dan 8:11; 11:22); (3) “sanctuary”/“holy covenant” (Dan 8:11c; 8:13d, 14e; 11:28b, 30bc); (4) “sanctuary”/“sanctuary” (Dan 8:11c; 11:31b); (5) “regular cultic worship”/“regular cultic worship” (Dan 8:11b; 11:31c); (6) “desolation”/“desolation” (Dan 8:13c; 11:31d). (7) Second stage: “host”/“people that know their God” and “wise people” (Dan 8:12a; 11:32c; 33a); (8) “some of the host shall fall”/“they shall fall” and some shall fall (Dan 8:10b; 11:33c, 35a); (9) “time of the end”/“until the time of the end” (Dan 8:17f; 11:35d). (11) Third stage: “it shall do”/“he shall do his will” (Dan 8:12c; 11:36a); (12) “he shall magnify up to the prince of the host”/“he shall magnify above every god” (Dan 8:11a; 11:36b, 37d); (13) “beautiful land”/“beautiful land” (Dan 8:9c; 11:41a, 45b); (14) “the host was given”/“he shall kill and annihilate many” (Dan 8:12a; 11:44c); (15) “it went out”/“he shall come to his end” (Dan 8:9b; 11:45c). The majority of these connections relate to Dan 8:10-12, two of them to Dan 8:9 and three to Dan 8:13, 14. In addition, the connections of this prophetic discourse relate to three periods or stages of the despicable man or king of the north.
been recovered throughout several centuries of investigation regarding the Biblical Hebrew verbal system, among them the suffix verbal form (QATAL) and the prefix verbal form (YIQTOL). According to some Hebraists the QATAL verbal form expresses a situation as a whole or in its totality (with beginning, middle and end as one event) and serves to make comments in narratives. According to them, the YIQTOL verb form views a situation in its internal temporal constituency (either the beginning, middle or end of the event) or denotes iterative or repetitive actions in the past. In 2004 Roy Heller proposed, on the basis of his analysis of several Biblical narratives, the YIQTOL verb form has a repetitive function within extra-paragraph comments. If this proposal is correct, as he has proven, it is probable that Daniel used this linguistic convention in his extra-paragraph comment of Daniel 8:12a to indicate: “In rebellion a host was given [repetitively unto trampling] in addition to the regular [cultic worship].” It is possible that Daniel did not understand at first all the dimensions of the actions he saw in his vision, as we are informed in Daniel 8:15, 27. However, Gabriel was sent to explain to him, among other things, the repetitive actions inflicted against “the host” that would be fulfilled during the three stages of the king’s reign. Thus, Daniel perceived the

52 See Heller, Narrative Structure, 403, 405, 453-454.
53 The repetitive function of the YIQTOL verbal form in Daniel 8:12a, which is attested in other extra-paragraph comments of the Hebrew Bible narratives (cf. 2 Sam 12:31; 17:17; 1Ki 1:1), fits very well with Gabriel’s explanation of Daniel 8:9-14 in Dan 8:17, 19, 23-26; 9:24-27; 11:21-12:4.
prophecy would reach until the time of the end, when God would judge the little horn for its actions and it would be broken without human hand (cf. Dan 8:25c; 11:45). If this interpretation is correct, then Antiochus Epiphanes cannot be the referent of the little horn, but rather it should be a greater kingdom than Greece and Medo-Persia. That is, the Roman Empire.

4. The Epilogue

The epilogue of Daniel 8:27 is marked by an initial X-QATAL clause (Dan 8:27). Then a QATAL clause indicates Daniel was sick. Finally, three WAYYIQTOL clauses indicate he arose, did the king’s work and was shocked or dismayed on account of the vision (חָמַר). 56

5. Conclusion

The narrative structure of Daniel 8 starts with a prologue and finishes with an epilogue. Between them are two sections: (1) Daniel’s vision account (Dan 8:3-14) and (2) Gabriel’s explanation of the vision account (Dan 8:15-26). The first section is divided into five paragraphs and the second section, in two. The center of these seven paragraphs is the third scene of the little horn that covers the third, the fourth, and the fifth paragraphs. It depicts a conflict between the little horn and the Prince of the host. The former trampled the host of the latter (Dan 8:9-10). It took away his regular [cultic worship] and cast down his sanctuary (Dan 8:11; cf. Dan 9:24-27). A comment adds that a host was given repetitively [unto trampling] in addition to the regular [cultic worship] in rebellion (Dan 8:12a). These repetitive actions against the host do not represent a one-time event, but they would actually occur in three different stages of the little horn’s reign (cf. Dan 8:23-26 and 11:21-45). Since some of the actions in Daniel 8:9-14 involve the destruction of the Jewish temple, the taking away of

56 The epilogue of verse 27 has a chain of three WAYYIQTOL clauses that moves the story of Daniel forward. At the end of the epilogue, Daniel indicates that he was appalled or shocked on account of the vision (חָמַר). This information serves to motivate the reader for continuing reading on the time prophecy of Daniel 8 in the prophecy of the 70 weeks in Daniel 9.

57 For a comparative study of works on the literary structure of Daniel 8, see Pröbstle, Truth and Terror, 526-562.
of the temple’s rituals, the destruction of Jerusalem and the trampling of God’s people during three stages of the little horn’s reign, the referent of the latter symbol cannot be Antiochus Epiphanes, but a greater kingdom than the two kingdoms symbolized by the male goat and the ram. Should someone argue that Gabriel presented the little horn as a king and not as a kingdom, there is no inconsistency because Gabriel used the term king as a figure of synecdoche. That is, he made a part to represent the whole as in Dan 7:17, 23. The climax of the vision account appears in the fifth paragraph. The explicit resolution is: “The sanctuary shall be cleansed” (Dan 8:14; cf. 12:1). Daniel did not understand the cryptic answer at once (Dan 8:15, 27). Three more explanations were necessary so that he could understand it (Dan 9:24-27, 11:2-12:4 and 12:5-13). This is a pragmatic reminder of the need to take into account the whole picture of the vision and its explanation in order to grasp the structure and meaning of the vision of Daniel 8.

Heller’s proposal regarding the usage and function of clause types according to three discourse categories of Biblical Hebrew and his proposal regarding the repetitive function of the QIYTOL verb form within extra-paragraph comments are verifiable in the vision report of Daniel 8. Text Linguistics, the study of the function of clause types according to three categories of discourse, is an asset to the historical-grammatical method of interpretation for it offers objective criteria for analyzing narratives and vision reports that comprise over forty percent of the Hebrew Bible.

An Outline of the Narrative Structure of Daniel 8

1. Prologue
   It presents the setting of the vision on the banks of the River Ulai, in the citadel of Susa, in the province of Elam and in the third year of Belshazzar.

2. First section
   2.1. Extra-paragraph comments
       It describes a ram standing on the banks of the river Ulai, its identity, its supremacy, and its arrogance.
   2.2. Inner-paragraph comments
It depicts a male goat coming from the west to fight against the ram, its victory, its supremacy, its arrogance, and the fracturing of its power.

2.3 Inner-paragraph comments
It portrays a little horn extending its power to the beautiful land, to the host of heaven, casting down part of the host, and trampling upon them.

2.4 Extra-paragraph comments
It depicts the little horn’s arrogance, its damages to the properties of the Prince of the host, and its success.

2.5 Inner-paragraph comments
It presents a dialogue between two holy beings regarding the damages caused to the properties of the Prince of the host and the resolution to the problem.

3. Second section
3.1 Inner-paragraph comments
It shows the coming of an interpreter to help Daniel understand his vision and Daniel’s experience with him.

3.2 Explanation paragraph
It presents Gabriel’s explanation of the vision account.

4. Epilogue
It indicates Daniel was exhausted, sick, and astonished on account of the vision, without being able to understand it.

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The Meaning and Message of the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount

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The Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew 5-7 is probably one of the best known of Jesus’ teachings recorded in the Gospels. This is the first of the five discourses in Matthew that Jesus delivered on an unnamed mount that has traditionally been located on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee near Capernaum, which is today marked by the Church of the Beatitudes.

New Testament scholarship has treated the Sermon on the Mount as a collection of short sayings spoken by the historical Jesus on different occasions, which Matthew, in this view, redactionally put into one sermon.¹ A similar version of the Sermon is found in Luke 6:20-49, known as the Sermon on the Plain, which has been commonly regarded as a Lucan variant of the same discourse. While the two discourses show some striking resemblances, they, however, also show some obvious differences. Common to them is that they each begins with a list of statements known as the Beatitudes and concludes with a short metaphoric parable of the two builders. The main difference between the two versions lies in what is found in between the Beatitudes and the parable of the two builders.

The position taken in this paper is, first of all, that the Matthean and Lucan versions are two different sermons with similar content delivered by

Jesus on two different occasions. Secondly, it seems almost certain that the two discourses are summaries of much longer ones, each with a different emphasis, spiritual and physical respectively.

Whatever position one takes, it appears that the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew is not just a collection of randomly selected pieces; the discourse displays one coherent literary theme. The Sermon is introduced with the Beatitudes, which are concluded with a couplet of short metaphorical parables on salt and light. This is further followed by a collection of practical messages in which Jesus contrasts true disciples with the Scribes and the Pharisees (5:20-7:23). The Sermon concludes with a couplet parable of the two builders. Accordingly, this paper suggests the following structure of Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount:

A. Beatitudes (5:3-12)
B. Couplet Parables of Salt and Light (5:13-16)
   1. Righteousness that Exceeds (5:17-6:18)
      a. Antitheses (5:21-48)
      b. Fasting (6:1-4)
      c. Praying (6:5-15)
      d. Charity (6:16-18)
   2. Worrying about Tomorrow (6:19-34)
   3. Judging Others (7:1-6)
   4. Praying (7:7-11)
   5. The Narrow and Wide Gates (7:12-14)
   6. Known by their Fruits (7:15-23)
C. Couplet Parable of the Two Builders (7:24-27)

In this structure, the Beatitudes (5:3-12) function as the springboard passage upon which the couplet of metaphorical parables on salt and light are built. The verb μωραίνω, “to be foolish” (in 5:13) and its cognate adjective μωρός, “foolish” (in 7:26) link the couplet of parables on salt and light with the couplet parable of the two builders. This suggests that the parables on

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2 See Leon Morris, The Gospel According to Matthew, PNTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 93; Michael J. Wilkins, Matthew, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 193-194. While the discourse in Matthew was spoken on a mount (5:1), in Luke it was spoken on an unidentified plain (Luke 6:17). In Matthew, the Beatitudes are in the third person plural, in Luke, they are in the second person plural. The emphasis of the Beatitudes in Matthew is on spiritual qualities, while in Luke it is on physical and material things with the addition of the “woes” (Luke 6:24:26).
the salt and light and the two builders function as an *inclusio* defining the theological meaning of the rest of the Sermon.

Matthew 5:1-2 shows that Jesus spoke the Sermon on the Mount primarily with his disciples in mind as they were about to be sent to proclaim the message of the kingdom (Matt 10). The purpose of this paper is to explore the meaning of the Beatitudes in connection with the couplet of metaphorical parables of salt and light in Matthew 5:13-16 in light of the structure of the Sermon on the Mount and the message they originally communicated to the disciples.

**The Beatitudes (5:3-12)**

The Sermon on the Mount begins with an introductory section consisting of eight (or nine) pronouncements that are commonly known as the Beatitudes, each beginning with the Greek adjectival plural μακάριοι. The word “beatitude” comes from the Latin *beatitudo* which corresponds to the Greek μακαρισμός from which the Anglicized word *macarism* (“happiness”) comes. The term denotes a literary form that was commonly used in the ancient world commending or praising a person for favor received in life.³

In the classical Greek, the adjective μακάριος is a longer form of the older word μάκαρ (“blessed, happy”).⁴ The word μάκαρ was first used by poets to describe the transcendent happiness enjoyed by gods who were referred to as “the blessed ones” (οἱ μακάρες).⁵ The word was also used for deceased persons who shared in the supra-earthly existence of gods in the isle of the blessed.⁶

The meaning of the word μακάριος and its cognate verb μακαρίζω originally corresponded to the older form μακάρ. However, the word gradually came to be applied to living persons; at first, it was used for the freedom of the wealthy from the worries and cares of life because of their wealth. From Aristotle on, it was a common word used to describe persons

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⁶ Ibid., (see also Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, 95-100).
who were secure from the hardships of life. It usually appeared in a formal construction: μακάριος ὁ . . . (“happy is he who . . .”) or μακάριοι οἱ . . . (“happy are those who . . .”) omitting the copula. People were regarded fortunate and happy because they possessed things that were supposed to produce happiness including wealth, fame, power, a life of pleasure, freedom from suffering, family, wisdom and knowledge, etc. The word could also have a religious meaning of being “blessed.”

In the LXX, μακάριος generally translates the Hebrew word אוֹש, which

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7 A classical example of the meaning of the word in the Greco-Roman world is a Greek ode to the cicada ascribed to Anacreon of Teos (6th century BC):

We call you happy (μακάριος), cicada,
when up on the treetops,
after you have drunk a little dew you sing like a king.
Yours are all the things you can see in the fields,
all that the woods produce.
You are honored by all people,
sweet prophet of summer.
The Muses love you,
and so does Apollo himself who gave you your shrill song.
Age cannot wear you down,
you earthborn sage and musician.
Free from the suffering of flesh and blood,
you are almost like the gods


9 See Plutarch (Artaxerxes 12.4); τοὺς θεοὺς εὔχομαι ποιήσαι μακάριον καὶ πλοῦσιον (“I pray the gods to make him rich and happy” [tr. LCL, 11:154-155]); Libanius (Autobiography 1.154): γὰν δὲ τεσσαράκοτα μὲν οἵς μακάριζε, πάρ’ ὧν οῖς οἶος πλούσιον (“those whom you count the lucky ones—men with the money” [tr. LCL, 478:220-221]); cf. also Homer, Iliad 16.596; 24.536; Odyssey 14.206; 17.420; 19.76.

10 E.g., Stobaeus, Eclips 3.1.106.

11 Cf., Euripides, Iphigenia in Tauris 543; Bacchae 904.

12 E.g., Euripides, Alcestis 169.

13 Plato, Republic, 5.465d; Euripides, Electra 1357-1359.

14 Homer, Odyssey 4.208; Euripides, Medea 1025; Iphigenia in Tauris 915; Aristophanes, Wasps, 1512.

15 E.g., Plato, Laws 2, 660e.

STEFANOVIĆ: MEANING AND MESSAGE OF THE BEATITUDES

is used 45 times in the Hebrew Scriptures. The word occurs mainly in Psalms and the Wisdom Literature acclaiming persons for their piety and faithfulness to God. It is significant that Yahweh is never called μακάριος in the fashion of the Greek gods, only humans.

Since the translation of the word μακάριος as “blessed” is derived mainly from the Latin beatus, and the word “blessed [by God]” in Hebrew is בָּשָׂלָה, and in Greek εὐλογητός, modern translators favor the word “happy.” However, the two words—“blessed” and “happy”—seem to express two facets of meaning found in the Hebrew Scriptures and the LXX. It is Yahweh who bestows earthly blessings upon persons. The recipients of those divine blessings are characterized as “blessed/happy.”

According to W. F. Albright, the meaning of μακάριος corresponded to the meaning μακάριος conveyed in the Hellenistic world: “happy is the person who . . . .” However, in the Bible, the word obviously pointed to more than mundane happiness; it denoted an inner state of being, which resulted from a divine act. Such happiness was an inner feeling for God’s blessings bestowed upon a person. Thus, the traditional translation of the word as “blessed” should not be easily discarded, due to the fact that the happiness that the word μακάριος renders in the Bible is a response to a divine act, a state of well being as a divine reward for faithfulness to God. Boring thus rightly concludes that the opposite of μακάριος in the Bible is not
unhappiness but being cursed.  

During the Second Temple period, pronouncements of blessedness among the Jews generally replicated the conventional concept. A classical example of a *macarism* is Sirach 25:7-11, in which the author lists nine or ten kinds of people that are described as happy:

There be nine things which I have judged in mine heart to be happy (ευαγαρίον
to), and the tenth I will utter with my tongue: A man that hath joy of his children; and he that liveth to see the fall of his enemy. Well (μακάριον) is he that dwelleth with a wife of understanding, and that hath not slipped with his tongue, and that hath not served a man more unworthy than himself. Well (μακάριον) is he that hath found prudence, and he that speaketh in the ears of them that will hear: O how great is he that findeth wisdom! Yet there is none above him that feareth the Lord. But the love of the Lord passeth all things for illumination: he that holdeth it, whereto shall he be likened?  

It can be easily seen how, among the Jews in the first century, the word μακάριος denoted the well being of a person experiencing earthly happiness in life.

In the New Testament, μακάριος occurs 50 times, of which 28 can be found in Matthew and Luke (the word does not occur in Mark). The meaning of the word in the New Testament has been extensively treated by modern scholarship and is beyond the scope of this study. Our focus is on the way the word is used in the Sermon on the Mount.

The Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-12 consist of two clauses each. The first

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23 Boring, “Matthew,” 8:177.
25 Translated by Lancelot C. L. Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1986). The conventional Greek use of the word is also found in 2 Enoch 42:6-14, which is very much in line with Psalms and the Wisdom literature.
STEFCANOVIĆ: MEANING AND MESSAGE OF THE BEATITUDES

The clause gives a pronouncement consisting of the predicative μακάριος followed by the identity of the persons who are blessed (“happy are those . . .”). The second clause states the reason for the blessedness consisting of a ὅτι clause (“for,” or “because”) stated in the future tense.28 In the macarisms of the time, the ὅτι clause was not common outside the New Testament; as such, it is particularly significant in the Matthean discourse.29 Two things may be observed in the Beatitudes. First, Jesus radically changes the conventional concept of happiness. Those who are μακάριοι are not “blessed” according to the conventional meaning of the conferral of blessings experienced in life in terms of good fortune and a life free of hardships, which is ephemeral and fickle. They are μακάριοι not because of [hardships in life], but rather in spite of [hardships in life]. True happiness is “not attached to wealth, to having enough, to a good reputation, power, possession of the goods of this world.”30 The μακάριοι might possess nothing, be hungry, humble, afflicted, humiliated, endure hardships, and be persecuted; the circumstances of life may turn against them; yet life cannot take that happiness from them because life has not given it to them. In such a way, the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount depict a “reversal of all human values.”31

This true happiness is not to be understood as a mental or emotional state32 or in relation to one’s feelings, but rather as the result of a divine act in human lives. God is the true source of happiness. The disciple is in a state of happiness when he/she is aware of God’s special blessings regardless of whether he/she is experiencing good fortune or hardships in life. In such a way, “what constitutes life as it was intended to be lived stands in stark contrast to conventional wisdom”33 in which “happiness is something which is dependent on the chances and the changes of life, something which life may give and which life may also destroy.”34 In Jesus’ teaching, μακάριος “describes that joy which has its secret within itself, that joy which is serene

28 The obvious exemption are the first and last Beatitudes in which the ὅτι clauses use the present tense pointing to the experience in the kingdom of heaven here and now.
29 Hagner, Matthew 1-13, 89.
30 Spicq, Theological Lexicon, 2:438.
32 France, Matthew, NICNT, 108.
and untouchable, and self-contained, that joy which is completely independent of all the chances and the changes of life.”

The second thing that may be observed is that, in contrast to the Old Testament and the conventional concept where πάντα or μακάριος respectively refers to one’s present well being, the Beatitudes go beyond the present situation to the future, in the fashion of Jewish apocalyptic literature.⁶⁵ While μακάριοι are blessed and, as a result, happy now, the visible conferral of such blessings will not be experienced ultimately until the future realization of God’s kingdom on the earth. Thus, in the Beatitudes, the present and the future are related.

This futuristic character of the Beatitudes, however, is not to be understood, as U. Becker rightly observes, “in the sense of consolation and subsequent recompense. The promised future always involves a radical alteration of the present.”⁶⁸ The disciples are not happy because they are free of hardship in life, but rather because they are citizens of the Kingdom by following Jesus as they go through hardship in life. Their lives have meaning in light of the future realization of the kingdom. It is the future that provides strength for the disciples in the present.

In summary, the inner happiness spoken of in the Beatitudes is God’s gift of blessing granted to those who choose to be disciples. This blessing is a result of the realization of a person’s spiritual poverty (5:3) and an acknowledgment of one’s total dependence on God (5:5). The disciple is μακάριος because of the special relationship with God now and today as well as in the light of the future reward. Such blessedness and happiness cannot be taken away by adverse circumstances in life.

The Couplet Parables of Salt and Light

The Beatitudes are followed by a couplet of short metaphoric parables of salt and light that Jesus used to expand upon the role of the μακάριοι in the world (5:13-16).⁶⁹ As in the case of other parables, Jesus used here an

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⁵⁵ Ibid., 1:89; so also Mounce, Matthew, 38.
⁶⁶ E.g., 1 Enoch 58:2 (“Blessed are ye, ye righteous and elect, for glorious shall be your lot”); also Pss. Sol. 17:50; 18:7. Also Rev 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14.
⁶⁷ This concept is emphasized two times in Luke 6:21.
⁶⁹ W. D. Davies (The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount [reprint; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989], 250-251) sees the two metaphoric parables on salt and light as a polemic against the Judaism of the time. While, on one hand, Jesus chose these two metaphoric parables in order to contrast the disciples with the Scribes and Pharisees, on the other, these
illustration understandable to the first-century audience. Salt and light were common elements in antiquity. Pliny the Elder (AD 23-79), a contemporary of Jesus, stated: “For the whole body nothing is more beneficial than salt and sun.”

It appears that these couplet parables of salt and light in the Sermon on the Mount function as a dual-directional passage concluding the Beatitudes and, at the same time, introducing the rest of the Discourse.

“You are the Salt of the Earth” (5:13)

In the first metaphoric parable, Jesus likens the disciples to salt; “you are the salt of the earth” (𝑢`μει/𝑗 evste τo ἀλας τῆ γῆς.) The emphatic pronoun 𝑢`μει/𝑗 meaning literally “you yourselves [are salt]” refers to “you [are blessed/happy]” in verse 11. This suggests that those who are the salt of the earth as well as the light of the world are the μακάριοι of the Beatitudes.

In comparing his disciples to salt, Jesus referred to the mineral known today as sodium chloride. Salt was a necessity of life in Palestine, as in the rest of the ancient world. The book of Sirach lists it as one of the basic necessities of life (39:26). The Dead Sea was a major source of salt in Palestine. However, Dead Sea salt was impure, mixed with gypsum and other minerals producing an alkaline or bitter taste, for which reason the people of Palestine often purchased salt of a superior quality from the traders in the North.

The word salt (ἀλας) occurs in six passages of the New Testament of which five times in the Synoptics in the sayings of Jesus (Matt. 5:13; Mark 9:50; Luke 14:34). The verb ἀλίζω simply means “to salt” or “to season with salt.” Salt is used exclusively in a figurative sense, taken, however two parables were aimed to particularly be a critique of the Dead Sea sect, who withdrew from the world. While not excluding the possibility that the two parables addressed significantly the situation of the Qumran community, the context shows that Jesus chose them primarily to describe the salt and light of the disciples in contrast with that of the Scribes and the Pharisees (cf. Matt 5:20; also 5:21-6:18).

40 Quae totis corporibus nihil esse utilius sale at sole dixit (Natural History 31.102), tr. W. H. S. Jones (Loeb Classical Library, 8:440-441).
41 Ibid., 250.
42 The regular Greek word for salt is ἀλς; however, in the New Testament, the word ἀλας is used.
Because of the wide use of salt in the ancient world, commentators have made many suggestions of its metaphoric meaning in Matthew 5:13. Most of them interpret it as a preservative; but the context suggests that Jesus used the metaphor of salt exclusively in the meaning of flavoring: “If salt has become tasteless [μωραζθεί] . . .” (Matt. 5:13; Luke 14:34) or, “If the salt has become unsalty [ἀλαζόν] . . .” (Mark 9:50). An interpretation of the salt metaphor in Matthew 5:13 that suggests a sense of preservation does not do justice to the text.

A debatable issue among commentators is regarding the rhetorical question made by Jesus: “If the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty?” Did Jesus mean that salt could lose its tasty effect? Some commentators believe that this loss of saltiness refers most likely to the aforementioned poor quality of the Dead Sea salt. Because of its impurity, it has been argued that the salt in Palestine could lose its distinctive flavor. In actuality, however, salt is a stable compound and, as such, it does not

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43 In Matthew 5:13, salt represents the disciples, while in Mark 9:50 Jesus tells the disciples to have salt in themselves. If salt loses its distinctiveness it has no value (Matt 5:13; Mark 9:50; Luke 14:34). In Colossians 4:6, Paul applies the salt’s seasoning function metaphorically to human speech.

44 In antiquity, salt was an important ingredient to give taste to food. Adding salt in the preparation of food was common in antiquity. Job asked: “Can something tasteless be eaten without salt?” (6:6). Even animal food was flavored with salt (cf. Isa 30:24). In addition to culinary use, as with all cultures before the technology of refrigeration, salt was also used as a preservative. It functioned also as a fertilizer and a catalyst or purifier. Salt was also valued medicinally (see Pliny the Elder’s description of the medical effectiveness of salt in antiquity [Natural History 31.73-92]) and was rubbed on newborn babies (Ezek. 16:4). Besides its common uses, salt was also used in Israelite temple rituals; it had to be added to offerings and sacrifices offered upon the altar (Lev 2:13; Ezek 43:24; Ezra 6:9-10; cf. also Josephus Antiquities 3.9.1), wherefrom the expression “the salt of the covenant” denoting the permanent nature of the covenant relationship between God and his people. A covenant sealed by salt was believed to be everlasting; thus, the expression “a covenant of salt” (Num 18:19; 2 Chr 13:5) refers to the ancient Middle Eastern custom of ratifying covenant relationships where salt functioned as a symbol of loyalty. See also W. D. Davis and Dale C. Allison, The Gospel According to Saint Matthew, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 472-473.


46 W. D. Davies argues that the usual use and meaning of salt does not apply when interpreting what Jesus tried to communicate with the metaphor of salt in Matthew 5:13. In his view, Jesus chose the metaphor of salt of the Dead Sea to deliberately express a critique of the Qumran sect who withdrew from the world. In such a way, Jesus set the salt of the disciples against the salt of the Qumranians (Davies, Setting, 250).
lose its saltiness. That such was the understanding among first-century Jews may be seen from a story attributed to Rabbi Joshua ben Haninia (A.D. 1st cent.). When asked if salt loses its flavor, the rabbi responded: “Does the mule bear young?” The point the rabbi tried to make was that salt could not lose its flavor as much as a sterile mule could not produce an offspring.

It seems that the question of whether salt can lose its saltiness is beside the point Jesus tried to make to the disciples. As R. T. France observes, Jesus was not teaching his disciples about chemistry or chemical processes; instead, he coined a proverbial illustration to make a theological point. Real salt does not lose its saltiness. Salt without saltiness is not salt, and as such, it has no value and use; “so does a professed disciple who lacks genuine commitment.” The verb for “tasteless” used in Matthew 5:13 means literally “become foolish” (so also in Luke 14:34). Thus, a point Jesus makes is that, as it is impossible for salt to lose its saltiness, so the makários referred to in the Beatitudes cannot lose their spiritual flavor as long as they are the followers of Christ. However, salt that (hypothetically) loses its saltiness would be good for nothing. This notion sets the disciples in contrast to the popular religious culture and practice of the time (e.g., of the Scribes and the Pharisees; 5:20).

Craig S. Keener thus rightly observes that the first century listeners would have quickly grasped the point Jesus tried to make to the disciples. As salt gives flavor to food, so the disciples are to give flavor to the earth. Salt is supposed to flavor the earth, not earth the salt. Earth is here a synonym for the world (cf. 5:14). The salt mixed in food cannot be seen, only tasted. The most obvious characteristic of salt is that it is different from its locality. The disciples who lose saltiness are of no value any longer.

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48 France, Matthew, NICNT 112.
49 Keener, Matthew, 173.
50 France, Matthew, NICNT, 112, shows that the Aramaic verb ṭaḵ which was originally used by Jesus, means both “to become foolish” and “to lose its saltiness.”
51 Keener, Matthew, 173.
52 Contrary to Hillyer “אַלָּאָגוּ,” 3:445, who argues that Matt 5:13 should be best translated as: “You are salt for the soil” and balanced in parallelism with 5:14, “You are light for the world.” However, the context does not support such a translation.
“You are the Light of the World” (5:14-16)

Those who are μακάριοι are further likened to light: “You are the light to the world (ὑμεῖς ἐστε τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου)” (5:14). Light is a well-known metaphor both in the Bible and Judaism. In the Old Testament, Israel is spoken in terms of a light to the nations (cf. Isa 60:1-3). The mission of the Servant in Isaiah is portrayed in terms of light (Isa 42:6; 49:6), which was in the New Testament fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus (Matt 4:16; Luke 2:32; John 8:12; 12:35-36). Paul also often uses the light metaphor for the gospel (2 Cor 4:6; Eph 5:8; Phil 2:15). Here, in Matthew 5:14-16, Jesus exhorts the disciples to be a shining light to the world, just as he Himself is the light to the world.

It appears that the structure of the light metaphor (5:14-16) is comparably similar to the salt metaphor (5:13):

You are the salt of the earth         You are the light of the world
The salt must not lose its flavor        The light cannot be hidden

This comparison shows that the two metaphors are complementary to each other. In Matthew 5:14-16, Jesus reiterates the point made in the metaphor of “the salt of the earth” (v. 13). Just as salt provides taste and transforms food, so the lamp provides “light to all who are in the house.” Also, as it is impossible for salt to lose its saltiness, so it is impossible to hide or conceal the light— like a city on a hill: “The city on the hill cannot be hidden” (v. 14). In using this proverbial saying, Jesus could have in mind a number of cities in Galilee such as Nazareth and Gamala. However, as some commentators observe, Jesus most likely referred to the New Jerusalem of the messianic kingdom, radiating the light of divine glory throughout the world (Isa 2:2-4; 4:5-6; 60:1-22).

53 See Keener, Matthew, 174-175; Davies and Allison, Matthew, 475.
54 W.D. Davies suggests that Jesus used the light metaphor to express another critique of the Qumran sectarians who called themselves “the sons of light” but hid their light under a bushel. Light is for the world, but the Sectarians “forsook the darkness of the world” and confined their light to themselves. They isolated themselves from the rest of the world “and hid their light under a bushel at Qumran and in enclosed communities” (Setting, 250).
55 See Robert H. Gundry, Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 77; also Davies and Allison, Matthew, 475. It is also interesting that the Roman philosopher and politician Cicero (106-43 BC) described the city of Rome as a “light to the whole world” (In Catalinam 4.6).
Jesus further enhances the metaphor of light with another proverbial saying: “Nobody lights a lamp and puts it under a basket but on a lampstand” (5:15). Here, Jesus referred to a typical one-room Palestinian house. A lamp (λυχνος) was a small clay vessel with a spout on one end in which a wick was set. It was filled with oil and placed on a lampstand or a special hole in the room-wall to provide illumination in the house. In order to illuminate the house, the light is never covered with a basket. The point Jesus made was that when a person lights a lamp, it is placed on a lampstand where it produces the most effective light for every person in the house. As such light cannot be concealed, as also should the light of the disciples. Their lives and deeds are visible to the world. “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (5:16). Yet, the disciples do not generate light; their light is a reflection of their Father who is heaven.

The Metaphoric Parable of the Two Builders (5:20-7:27)

The rest of the Sermon on the Mount provides a practical application of what was stated in the Beatitudes and illustrated with the couplet parables of salt and light. The salt and light of the disciples stand in contrast to the popular religious culture and practice of the time: “For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 5:20). In the rest of the Sermon, Jesus contrasts the righteousness of the true disciples with that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

What follows is the section known as the antitheses: “You have heard that . . . but I tell you . . . .” (Matt 5:21-48). Here, the lives of the disciples are best portrayed, to put it in John Stott’s words, as “Christian Counter-culture,” which is “the life of the kingdom of God, a fully human life indeed but lived out under the divine rule.” The disciples are the followers of Christ, and as such are called to follow in the footsteps of the master “who perfectly exemplified the character traits of the Beatitudes.” Their righteousness is characterized not by external display of piety but by the

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56 The symbol of the lampstand occurs also in Mark 4:21 and Luke 8:16; 11:33.
57 The Greek word μοσχός refers to a basket container with a capacity of about two gallons. In Mark 4:21 and Luke 8:16, the light is not put under the bed.
intrinsic attitude of the heart. It is visible in the way they give to the poor (6:1-4), pray (6:5-15), and fast (6:16-18). It affects and impacts every aspect of the disciples’ life, both present and future (Matt 6:19-7:23).

The Sermon concludes with another couplet parable of the two builders (Matt 7:24-27) in which Jesus again reiterates what was stated in the Beatitudes and the couplet parables of salt and light. In the parable of the two builders, Jesus delineates the test of righteousness for true disciples, those who are μακάριοι (7:24-25), in contrast to those who do not obey His words (7:26-27). Just as the salt that has (hypothetically) lost its saltiness becomes foolish (μωραλθης), so is the foolish (μωρος) person who builds his/her house on the sand. Just as in the Beatitudes, where the ultimate result of the choice made is shown in the future, so in the case of the two builders. Only the blessings and happiness that are built on the rock, a symbol for God in the Bible, are permanent and stable. The future test will affirm the present spiritual stability of the true disciple.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Sermon on the Mount was originally addressed to the disciples (cf. Matt 5:1-2) as they joined Jesus and were about to be sent out to their task of preaching the good news of the Kingdom (chap. 10). The description of the Twelve in the Synoptics is given in terms of a group of Galileans whose association with Jesus was much motivated by popular political motives and an aspiration for “greatness” in the Kingdom (cf. Matthew 18:1-3; 21:20-28; Mark 10:35-45; Luke 9:46-48; 22:24-30).

However, as Jesus pointed out, true disciples are the ones who have accepted the conditions of the Kingdom. As such, they must be different from the world. “They were not to take their cue from the people around them, but from him, and so prove to be genuine children of their heavenly Father.” 60 The secret of discipleship is not found in the empty ambition and greatness of the conventional culture of the here and now, but in the future reward. True disciples experience the fullness of blessedness and true happiness because they are the followers of Jesus, and, thus, are citizens of the Kingdom. Not that the disciples are only called to be different from the world, but they are also to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Salt must be mixed with food. And the light must be set on a lampstand. Light normally penetrates and removes darkness. But it does much more; the denser the darkness, the more visible the light. So are supposed to be the

60 Stott, 18.
lives of the μακάριοι in a sin-darkened world as they follow in the footsteps of the Master.

While writing this paper, I could not but ask myself a question: What is the relevance of the Sermon on the Mount and how does it apply to the practice and life of the Church, which has been entrusted with the great commission (Matt. 28:20)—the church that we are all a part of? Are we truly what Jesus appointed us to be: the salt and light to the world?

As some of you know, I came from a country that used to be called Yugoslavia. When the country was politically united in one federation, the Church was also structured as one body into one Union Conference. Then, in the 1990s, a civil war broke out resulting in the subdivision of Yugoslavia into seven smaller countries. The issues that led to this disintegration were political, nationalistic, and religious. Concurrently, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in this region also split. What used to be one Union Conference, was eventually split into two: one with about 4,000 church members, and another with about 8,000 members. In contrast, other protestant denominations and the Jehovah’s Witnesses did not have any problems continuing to live and work together as one body. The Seventh-day Adventist Church missed an opportunity to respond to Jesus’ call to be the salt and the light to the region and to show to the world how the gospel removes ethnic, tribal, and nationalistic barriers and separation. Contrary, the Church lost its saltiness and was overcome by political and nationalistic darkness.

One may also reflect on how the political situation and/or nationalistic, racial, tribal, cultural, and ideological matters impact the relationships between the church members in some parts of the world, including this country. The followers of Christ referred to in the Sermon on the Mount are not to fall into the pitfalls of racial or nationalistic prejudices or theological and ideological clans, cliques, and clubs. One might also wonder what impact the Church can have on the world when devoted leaders and scholars are fervently attacked on the Internet and charged with spurious and unsubstantiated claims.

As Jesus stated in the aforementioned Discourse, if the church loses its saltiness and its light, it loses the reason for its existence. Jesus calls us to a higher standard than the people around us, to a “Christian counterculture.” I believe that the effort of the two societies, Adventist Society for Religious Studies and Adventist Theological Society, to interact and respectfully dialogue as colleagues and members of the same family of
Christ will be a great testimony to others and will fulfill Jesus’ prayer in John 17. Yet, Adventist scholars, as colleagues and friends, can disagree. While disagreement simply for the purpose of disagreeing is divisive, disagreeing for the purpose of searching and sharpening our understanding on biblical teachings is healthy disagreement. Unity does not mean uniformity and unanimity. We can be the great testimony to the gospel that unites rather than divides the followers of Christ. It is in such a way that we as leaders and scholars may be perceived as “the sons of our Father in Heaven” (Matt. 5:45) and, as such, be the true salt and the light to those around us.

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An Unconventional Look at the Challenge of Theodicy

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The foundational contention of this paper is that those Christian theologians and philosophers who write about theodicy and the issues that swirl in and around it, tend to follow a common and well-known process and trajectory that is here designated as the conventional look at theodicy. It is a further contention of this paper that, within a community where belief in God is solidly intact, and where the Bible is already perceived to be reliable and trustworthy as revelation from God, this conventional approach may not be the best one to use when dealing with issues of suffering. Lastly, this paper will suggest a different way of looking at the issues of theodicy that will be designated as an unconventional look at the subject.

The conventional approach to the issues of theodicy tends to unfold along the following lines. It begins with a theologian or philosopher making some statement about the difficult nature of the subject, then to be followed by an assembly of finely tuned theological and philosophical arguments designed to resolve the knotty issues. The intention is to somehow find a way to resolve the well-known tensions associated with theodicy by trying to reconcile God’s traditional characteristics of omnibenevolence, omnipotence, and omniscience with the continuing occurrence of evil in the world.

A perusal of some current contributors to the theodicy discussion will help make this point. Consider Millard Erickson, an evangelical theologian whose work is often used and cited. He begins discussion of this subject by saying “probably the most difficult intellectual challenge to the
Christian faith is the problem of how there can be evil in the world. If God is all-powerful and all-loving, how can evil be present in the world?" Erickson goes on to expand on the problem by quoting the words of David Hume who, speaking of God, said: “Is he willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing: whence then is evil?”

John G. Stackhouse, Jr., begins with the same point, though he makes it more expansive. In an article in Christianity Today, he says that the problem of evil is “arguably the most important philosophical question of any era.” And Ravi Zacharias, perhaps the most notable Christian apologist of our time who has a very good conventional-style chapter on theodicy in his wonderful book Jesus Among Other Gods, begins his comments on suffering and God by saying that “behind this question lies possibly one of the greatest barriers to belief in God.” Any number of other authors and theologians could be cited who begin the conventional way, noting theodicy as the thorniest of issues for Christian thinkers.

Having stated their initial premise, those who follow what I am calling the conventional approach then proceed to engage in sometimes long and involved theological and philosophical discussions in an attempt to find some way (hopefully an unassailable one) by which they can either defuse or redirect the tensions between God’s power, and God’s knowledge, and the matter of evil so that the conflict either becomes apparent or else moot. And the usual way of doing this is to either defuse or diminish one or another of the variables in such a way as to allow an escape from the problem. For example, though the proponents of the so-called “Openness of God” theory would probably not like my characterization of their position, I think theirs is an attempt to defuse the problems of theodicy by reducing either God’s omnipotence or His omniscience, depending how you read them. The result is that expectations of God become only marginally better than those we have of humans so God gets off the hook.

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2 David Hume, *Dialogs Concerning Natural Religion*, part 10.
because it becomes unreasonable to expect so much of His superior, but still modest capacities.

Perusal of some other prominent authors reveals this same strategy. The already mentioned Ravi Zacharias proceeds by laying out some very fine philosophical arguments that undermine, even destroy, the critic’s allegations. One of his most powerful arguments is that one cannot at the same time argue that the existence of evil is grounds for denying the existence of God and then, at the same time argue that there is no “objective moral basis for (measuring) good and evil,” something those who use the issues of theodicy against God do quite frequently. You can’t say there is evil but then say there is no standard by which to measure it!

Zacharias follows another interesting line of thought too, that evil may not be totally bad in its function and consequence, a line of thought that would also serve to reduce somewhat the power of the issues of theodicy. If evil is not really so bad, if it serves some purpose, then the tensions in theodicy are somewhat diminished. This line of argument relies on the fact that sometimes evil has an uncanny ability to open a window on goodness as when, in the midst of evil, someone does something transparently good. The stark contrast between the two can be very enlightening. Alternatively, sometimes tragedy has the effect of sharpening the focus of life as witnessed to recently by Ben Witherington and his wife upon the unexpected and untimely loss of an adult daughter. Witherington put it this way: “Death has a way of convincing us of what matters in life. It shuts up our squabbles and complaints.” The effect of this tragic death on him and his wife was to sharpen their focus on the things that really matter in life.

So it is that in the midst of evil, someone might actually find the idea of a Savior quite attractive as was the recent case of an alcoholic friend of mine who returned to faith upon the untimely death of his eldest son the effect of which he described by saying, “When my son died, my own

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5 Ibid., 113.
6 Interesting as this line of thought may be, it certainly raises a host of other questions not the least of which would be the question of the value or outcome of suffering. Because of the degree and intensity of some suffering, the learning or benefit would have to be very good indeed!
mortality came up and stared me in the face. I had not drawn a sober breath in 32 years, and I realized that I was not ready to face eternity!” The jolt was enough to return him to the community of believers. From things like this, some conclude evil has utilitarian value so is not as bad as some would think, thereby diminishing theodicy’s tensions.

Timothy Keller, the now-famous pastor of the Redeemer Presbyterian Church in downtown Manhattan, is another who has spoken to issues of theodicy with good effect. His line of thought follows the conventional trajectory. He argues that you cannot, as a non-theist or atheist, take a feature of life such as one would see in the functioning of the evolutionary process where one organism or animal preys on another and so survives, and argue that this is normal and amoral and then turn around and argue that the very idea of God must be discounted because of the existence of such carnage in the world. We cannot deny the existence of God because of the presence of death and destruction and then turn around and say that in the natural world, such things are normal and ordinary bearing no moral implications.8

One more person who should be mentioned is Alvin Plantinga, now widely regarded as the best Protestant philosopher on the planet. He has weighed in on matters of theodicy with a rather prodigious mind mounting a considerable defense of theism by way of what is now being called the “Free Will Defense.” This argument is quite long and complicated, but it has proven to be strong as evidenced by the absence of any serious refutations even with the passage of thirty or so years. A summary of this argument taken from an article by John G. Stackhouse is helpful. He distills the argument like this:

God desired to love and be loved by other beings. God created human beings with this end in view. To make us capable of such fellowship, God had to give us the freedom to choose, since love cannot be either automatic or coerced. This sort of free will, however, entailed the danger that we would use it to go our own way in defiance of both God and our own best interests.

For God to grant human beings free will was to grant us the awful dignity of making real choices with real consequences. If God prevents us from sinning, he is preventing us from truly free action. And if God

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constantly and instantly repairs our mischief, then it is likely that we would never face our sin and the need for redemption. . . . If God, for some reason (perhaps known only to God), wants to enjoy the fellowship of these particular beings (each with particular flaws), then God must let us be who we are, sin and all.\(^9\)

Plantinga’s Free Will Defense\(^10\) rests on the understanding that love is the cardinal ethic of reality, and if love is indeed the cardinal ethic, then freedom to choose must be built into reality as well, for a love that is programmed or required is not love. Certainly, if one were to tell a lover that his beloved was merely programmed to respond, then not only would the ethos of love be destroyed, but also the possibility of it. And both the lover and the beloved would discover their love seriously cheapened, descending into some kind of self-serving or Pavlovic response. Love simply cannot grow or flourish in the face of conscription or requirement. Plantinga has also pointed out that a lot of the claims levied against God arise from a misunderstanding of God’s omnipotence. People commonly argue that God’s omnipotence enables him to do “anything.” But, Plantinga argues, that is not true, for some things God cannot do, like contradict his own character. We simply cannot envision God as a being incongruent with his own inherent characteristics. At the core of the issue of theodicy is the expectation of some coherence within the nature of God, so God’s omnipotence cannot be conceived to allow such a contradiction. It is precisely because we expect coherence within the nature of God that we are troubled by the continued presence of evil in the face of an almighty and loving God. After all, if God were able to contravene His own character, it would render the whole question of the problem of evil moot for God would no longer need any defense. We could just say that God is capricious, so face the fact that life is tough and get a helmet!

The arguments of Zacharias and Plantinga and others are useful and helpful. They are engaging and effective. They illustrate the existence of some healthy links between theology and philosophy and life. But, as pointed out at the beginning, their lines of thought follow what in this paper


\(^10\) The shortest version of this argument can be found in Plantinga’s essay God, Freedom, and Evil, Eerdmans, 1974.
is called the conventional discussion of theodicy—describe the issues, then argue a way into and through the issues hoping to resolve the tensions.

It is right at this point that I make the observation that, for those for whom issues of God and faith are already quite settled, the conventional approach to theodicy might not be the best. One reason is that, if you look at it closely, it is only scantily biblical. Noble and enlivening and useful as the arguments and processes may be, they are primarily philosophical, logical, or theological in nature, drawing little directly from the narratives of Scripture. At the very least, they do not draw their major substance from any biblical account as much as from the various forms of argumentation. This point is not likely to be missed within a community that believes the Bible to be credible and God to be loving and reliable.

It is in light of this eventuality that the title of this paper emerged, “An Unconventional Look at Challenges of Theodicy.” Is there a way to look at theodicy that draws its thought and conclusion more directly from some passage (or passages) of Scripture than is seen in the conventional manner? Is there an unconventional way to look at theodicy?

In this paper I propose there is another way, one that draws directly on at least two of the narratives of the Bible, the first the story of Job, long associated with theodicy, the second the experience of Habakkuk. We turn first to Job.

The story of Job is well-known and has long been used as evidence and a point of discussion by those interested in theodicy so there is no reason to relate it here in any detail. The gist of the story is that a righteous man got caught up in the timeless saga of suffering because of things he could not see, things going on behind the scenes. For at least part of his suffering time, Job was an unwitting (and, therefore, grumbling) participant in the drama. Particularly poignant in his story is the interchange between himself and his wife! When told in traditional context, that interchange is said to depict the final and dramatic cost of Job’s faithfulness. It is viewed as testament to a fierce devotion to God that the man would not surrender even if his life’s companion scorned him. There were also his friends (we do well to use the word “friends” advisedly here), who, to borrow words from Gardner C. Taylor, came and “stared into his grief for seven days, and
THOMAS: CHALLENGE OF THEODICY

then spoke too quickly.” 11 These words encapsulate a certain wisdom that, when dealing with suffering, particularly that of others, we ought to be not so quick to offer explanations lest we say more than we know. But, rather than looking at the dimensions of the problem, let us focus on the resolution to the sufferings of Job as it appears in the story. How were the issues troubling Job settled in the narrative?

If the progression of the story may be condensed and paraphrased, as the discussion (if we can call it that) between the Almighty and Job progresses, God finally says to Job, “Job, you are such a big and wise man, why don’t you come out here and face me? Come and let me ask you some questions.” And so Job presents himself before the Almighty and God begins to ask him a whole array of questions, questions that Job found himself unable to answer. In this showdown, according to the words of one of my predecessors, the score ended up being God 82, Job 0!

Fascinating is the fact that this interchange resulted in the collapse or evaporation of Job’s wranglings. In the face of the grandeur and love and majesty of God, Job’s troubles and questionings simply vanished. Who can forget his words, found in Job 42:1-6:

Then Job replied to the LORD: “I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. You asked, ‘Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?’ Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. You said, ‘Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.’ My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.” 12

Before drawing any conclusions from this, let us turn to the experience of the Prophet Habakkuk for it has some interesting parallels. The little book by his name in the Old Testament is remarkable in many ways, but nothing is more remarkable than the directness with which the human prophet confronts God! Even a cursory and initial reading of his writings

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11 Transcribed from Gardner C. Taylor’s sermon titled, “Seeing Our Hurts through God’s Eyes.”
will show that he was not reticent to turn his face heavenward and blurt out accusations:

How long, LORD, must I call for help,  
but you do not listen?  
Or cry out to you, “Violence!”  
but you do not save?  
Why do you make me look at injustice?  
Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?  
Destruction and violence are before me;  
there is strife, and conflict abounds.  
Therefore the law is paralyzed,  
and justice never prevails.  
The wicked hem in the righteous,  
so that justice is perverted.  

Clearly, the prophet is angry here. And he lashes out. And God responds giving an answer that could be summarized thus: “Habakkuk, I am going to do something. I am going to send the Babylonians in to over-run the land and they will put an end to all the injustice!” Of course, this was not the answer the prophet was looking for. It is the equivalent of God saying to us, “I am going to send in the Communist Chinese to over-run your land and they will put an end to the injustice!” So, in consternation, Habakkuk cries out again to God, perhaps using even stronger language. And again, there comes a reply from God at the end of which the prophet’s troubles were all resolved. And how did resolution come?  

The answer begins with a hint found in Chapter 2:20, where, juxtaposed over against the lampooned capacities of the pagan gods, it is recorded that, “The LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.” There follows chapter 3 which is, arguably, one of the most magnificent chapters in all the Bible, a chapter where God comes out as a Warrior, capable of distressing even nature itself. The language is magnificent and should probably be read here to make the point, but let it suffice that the magnificence of God is again revealed in a powerful way. The effect on the prophet is remarkable. Habakkuk says:

13 Quoted from the New International Version.
THOMAS: CHALLENGE OF THEODICY

16 I heard and my heart pounded,
my lips quivered at the sound;
decay crept into my bones,
and my legs trembled.
Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity
to come on the nation invading us.
Then comes a most beautiful confession:

17 Though the fig tree does not bud
and there are no grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,
18 yet I will rejoice in the LORD,
I will be joyful in God my Savior.

In an agrarian society, this describes disaster! Yet the prophet confesses both trust and joy even in the face of that.

Let it not escape us that in the cases of both Job and Habakkuk, the questions that were so very urgent in their minds, got lost in a moment of worship! When Job and Habakkuk were able to catch a vision of God in all his glory and majesty, the questions of theodicy dissolved into ephemera. They lost their urgency and simply vanished away.

Some reflection on the experiences of Job and Habakkuk bring some interesting thoughts to mind. The first is that the worship of God is a balm for the human soul, even in times of great trouble. Perhaps we should say it is a balm especially in times of great trouble. It seems that for those who already trust in God, resolution to the troubles of suffering could be found by creating or seeking out times of worship. It may be that believers who are suffering need not so much careful argumentation as occasions of worship. A vision of the majesty and glory and power of God is refreshing for it corrects for the parallax of circumstance and we realize our troubles are not the most magnificent things in life.

Secondly, it seems the grandeur and glory of God and their contemplation, remind us of mystery and the power it has. I do not use mystery here as an attempt to evade the problem of theodicy, nor do I use it in some mystical sense, but rather, I use it in hopes of humbling humans in their trumped-up capacity for knowing. So often we think that we can,
by careful thought and reason, find the answer to all problems. In truth, human knowledge is very limited and the process of knowing is very frail. We, more often than we think, run into mystery, mystery understood as “a problem that encroaches upon its own data.”\textsuperscript{14} It is not hard to run out of capacity to know. In our experience, the solutions quickly get beyond our capacity to know and we ought to recognize that. We are simply too over-confident about what we think we can actually know. The problem known as theodicy certainly participates in this dynamic.

Lastly, the narratives of Job and Habakkuk reveal that our frustration with circumstance is no reason to doubt either the power or goodness of God. In both cases, God was proven both good and kind, able to act in behalf of those who trust Him. These narratives leave no room for the diminution of God’s glory and power. We may conclude that reducing the power and majesty of God, or diminishing His love, are not solutions to the problems that surround theodicy. They are fallacies of human invention for in both these narratives, God clearly acts in the defense of His people. The path to action may be surprising or it may be circuitous, but there is no reason to doubt that God is active and active for the best interests of those who trust in Him. In this, the goodness and faithfulness of God is seen. The conclusion is that calling the goodness of God into question is not a solution to the struggles of theodicy.

An unconventional way of looking at theodicy, then, is to conclude that God is great, and God is good, and our sufferings are part of a bigger picture that we cannot fully analyze or understand. Our best strategy, then, is to worship God and trust Him in spite of the things that trouble us.

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\textsuperscript{14} Zacharias, 109.