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Editorial Introduction



Adam Harwood, PhD

Adam Harwood is associate professor of theology, occupying the McFarland Chair of Theology; director of the Baptist Center for Theology and Ministry; and editor, Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

This issue offers a variety of articles in biblical and theological studies. Joe Early Jr., associate professor of theology at Campbellsville University in Campbellsville, Kentucky, culls Martin Luther's writings to identify and critique the Reformer's view of women. Benjamin B. Phillips, associate dean at Harvard School for Theological Studies and associate professor of Systematic Theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, contrasts the Holy Spirit's works of prophecy and preaching. Joshua M. Greever, assistant professor of New Testament at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona, inquires into the background and meaning of Paul's warning in Eph 4:30 against grieving the Holy Spirit. Mark A. Snoberger, associate professor of Systematic Theology at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary in Allen Park, Michigan, considers how and in what way one should speak of the death of God when referring to the death of Christ. These stimulating articles are followed by a selection of book reviews in the fields of theology, biblical studies, and Christian ministry. May these articles and book reviews equip readers to be faithful followers and witnesses of the triune God.

The Role, Purpose, and Nature of Women According to Martin Luther



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Martin Luther (1483–1546) is known for key reformation concepts such as the priesthood of all believers and justification by faith. He is not widely known for his beliefs concerning the nature, role, and purpose of women. Other than marrying Katie Von Bora (1499–1552) and promoting clerical marriage, most Luther scholars mention little if anything of his views on women. Luther, however, did write about the fairer sex, especially Eve. Luther’s writings show his evolution from celibate friar¹ to happily-married husband. During these years, Luther developed a theology of women that was crucial in countering the negative connotations attached to medieval Catholic women while slowly elevating the status of women in the Protestant tradition. This paper examines Luther’s theology concerning the nature, role, and purpose, of women, how it changed throughout his life, and how it impacted the future of Protestant women.

Martin Luther may have been the man whose ideas changed Christianity forever, but before that, he was an Augustinian friar with a doctor’s degree in theology. As evidenced throughout his voluminous writings, Luther was well-schooled in canon law, teachings of the church fathers, scholastic principles, and a myriad of systems and traditions relating to women. To better understand Luther’s beliefs concerning women and how they changed throughout his life, a very brief overview of Catholic teachings about women in the patristic and medieval eras is necessary.

In the patristic era, the church fathers had little good to say about women. For instance, Tertullian (160–220) can be described as nothing less than a misogynist who when discussing Eve, proclaimed, “You are the devil’s gateway. . . . You are the first deserter of the divine law; you are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God’s image, man. On account of your desert—that is, death—even the Son of God had to die.”² For Tertullian, all women inherit Eve’s guilt and

¹Luther often called himself a monk for dramatic effect in his writings against monasticism, but as a member of the Augustinian Order he was a friar.

²Tertullian, *On the Apparel of Women*, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, eds. Alexander James and James Donaldson (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1885), 4:14. Hereafter cited as ANF.

are dangerous temptresses that could easily lead men astray. Most church fathers believed that since Eve tempted Adam, women could be temptresses who, if not controlled by men, could lead men astray.

For this reason, church fathers such as Tertullian, Augustine (354–430), Jerome (335–420), and myriad others encouraged virginity, modest clothing, and cloistering. Origen (184–253) and Augustine’s Neoplatonism led them to believe that men had a higher, more reasonable soul while women had a lower, weaker, and more sensual soul that was related to the physical body. Moreover, Augustine maintained that only the male is the full image of God. By herself, a woman is not the image of God. She can only attain the full image when she takes a male as her head.³ Another common belief permeating the patristic era was that a menstruating woman could not partake in the Lord’s Supper. This superstition (vaguely based on Lev 15:19–30) was so widespread that it reached England, and Augustine of Canterbury (d. 604) was forced to ask Pope Gregory I (590–604) to clarify the matter. Gregory told him that women could participate, but other regions of Christendom were not so accommodating.⁴ Ambrose (339–397) and Jerome’s writings assert that a woman’s best chance to reach heaven required that she embrace virginity and symbolically become male to overcome the sins of being a female.⁵

Medieval theologians held to and taught many of the same concepts as those in the patristic era but added concepts of their own. In addition, canon law was being codified, and women were not ignored. Gratian’s (fl. ca. 1150) *Decretum* (ca. 1150) of canon law quoted canon after canon that described what women could not do because of their gender. By 1050, many women’s monasteries were closed, and in 1059 a council determined that monastic women were to be considered among the laity. In *Summa Theologica* (book I, question, 92 answer 1), Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) promoted the idea that women are nothing more than “misbegotten males.” The infamous *Malleus Maleficarum*⁶ (“The Hammer of Witches”) argued that women are more prone to be witches because of their many physical and spiritual weaknesses. Moreover, all orthodox gender teachings stressed that men are superior to women, and women must submit to men in all situations.⁷

³Augustine, *On the Trinity*, in *Select Library of the Nicene Fathers*, trans. A. W. Haddan and W. G. T. Shedd (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1887), 3:159. Hereafter cited as NF.

⁴Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, trans. Leo Sherley-Price (London: Penguin, 1990), 82, 84–85.

⁵For an excellent overview of how the church fathers viewed women in the patristic era, see Mary T. Malone, *Women and Christianity, Vol 1: The First Thousand Years* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001).

⁶First published in 1487.

⁷For a helpful survey of how the church fathers viewed women in the medieval era, see Joseph Martos and Pierre Hegy, eds., *Equal at the Creation: Sexism, Society, and Christian Thought*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

Luther, however, would come to differ with many of these beliefs. He came to hold a higher view of women than his predecessors. In areas where he broke from the Catholic Church concerning women, Luther's teachings have their foundation in two of his most influential Reformation doctrines, justification by faith and the priesthood of all believers.

How did Luther apply justification by faith and priesthood of all believers in a way that challenged the Catholic Church's long-established views of women? Moreover, were his beliefs about women as revolutionary as his other beliefs or were they only Catholic teaching repackaged in Reformation verbiage? To answer these questions and discern Luther's positions one must investigate his teachings about the order of creation, the image of God, Eve's role in the fall as well as her corresponding punishment, and the purpose of the hierarchal order as it relates to roles in the home, society, and church. In turn, these teachings provide valuable insights into his novel beliefs concerning virginity, clerical celibacy, and marriage.

Based on doctrine, tradition, and superstition, the Catholic Church held that because of Eve's role in the fall, women should disavow their gender and all sexuality. If not for the fall, human sexuality would have been much different because lust would not exist. Church fathers such as Augustine believed that virginity was the state of humanity before the fall and thus should be the goal for all Christians. Marriage, therefore, was a second-class position for those who could not control their lust. Luther did not believe that virginity was superior to marriage. He taught that celibacy could be a charisma for those with no sexual desire but not a mandated law for the clergy. Sex was no longer evil, and he did not see women as temptresses looking to lead men physically and spiritually astray.⁸ Luther held that man's natural state is to have a companion and that those who chose virginity ignored God's mandate in Gen 1:28. Luther stated, "After God had made man and woman he blessed them, 'Be fruitful and multiply.' From this passage we may be assured that man and woman should and must come together in order to multiply."⁹ When contrasting himself with the Catholic clergy who saw marriage as a necessary evil, Luther stated: "I shall die as one who loves and lauds marriage."¹⁰ In doing so, he was also among the first theologians to set marriage above virginity.¹¹ Luther also pointed out the Catholic Church's hypocrisy for making marriage a sacrament in 1184 and then berating it in favor of virginity.

⁸Barbara J. MacHaffie, *Her Story: Women in the Christian Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2006), 91.

⁹*Luther's Works*, 55 vols, J. Pelican and H.T. Lehmann, eds. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1958ff.), 45:18. Hereafter cited as LW.

¹⁰*Luthers Werkes, Tischreden*, 6 vols. (Weimar: Verlag Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1912–21), 1:474. Hereafter cited as WA TR. Quotation from Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation, 1521–1532*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1994), 200.

¹¹Steven Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 7.

Many people took vows and became priests, monks, and nuns in the medieval era to avoid time in Purgatory and to gain a spiritual advantage by working for God. Prominent among these vows was that of clerical celibacy. Being a member of the clergy also elevated one's status well over that of the laity who had not dedicated their lives in service to God. As the laity were not as close to God, only a priest could approach God for the penitent and seek forgiveness. Luther responded to these beliefs by employing justification by faith and the priesthood of all believers. These Reformation doctrines leveled the playing field between the clergy and laity. Justification by faith said that faith in Christ alone saves; works are of no aid. The clergy, therefore, cannot earn their salvation through a lifetime of works epitomized by celibacy. This saving faith comes equally to the clergy, the laity, and women just as men.¹² The priesthood of all believers ended the need for a priest to mediate forgiveness of sin from God. As believers justified by faith, Luther taught that all Christians could serve as their own priest. Clerical celibacy was nothing but a works-based faith and did nothing to further one's salvation. Those who took these unhelpful vows, especially those who wanted to follow God's mandate to be "fruitful and multiply" should renounce them.

Therefore, priests, monks, and nuns are duty-bound to forsake their vows whenever they find that God's ordinance to produce seed and to multiply is powerful and strong within them. They have no power by any authority, law, command, or vow to hinder this which God has created within them. If they do hinder it, however, you may be sure that they will not remain pure but inevitably besmirch themselves with secret sins or fornication. For they are simply incapable of resisting the word and ordinance of God within them. Matters will take their course as God has ordained.¹³

For Luther, the husband and housewife had far surpassed the monk and nun as models for the ideal Christian life. He believed that "[monks and nuns] cannot boast that what they do is pleasing in God's sight, as can the woman in childbirth, even if her child is born out of wedlock."¹⁴ He also knew that many of the clergy were sexually involved with women and had illegitimate children. In *Table Talk*, he provided vivid examples of not only clerical hypocrisy but also murder.

There was in Austria, at Nieuburg, a convent of nuns, who, by reason of their licentious doings, were removed from it, and placed elsewhere, and their convent filled with Franciscans. These monks, wishing to enlarge the building foundations were dug, and in excavating there found twelve great pots, in each of which was the carcass of an infant. How much better to let these people marry, than, by prohibition thereof, to cause the murder of so many innocent creatures.¹⁵

¹²LW 11:10.

¹³LW 45:19.

¹⁴LW 45:41.

¹⁵Martin Luther, *Table Talk*, trans. William Hazlitt (London: HarperCollins, 1995), 354. Hereafter cited as TT.

As noted by Luther scholar Mickey L. Mattox, Luther understood the creation account differently before and after 1525.¹⁶ When he penned and preached his *Declamationes in Genesin* (*Lectures on Genesis*) 1523 and 1524,¹⁷ Luther painted the picture of women in a very traditional Catholic manner. His ideas differed only slightly from other later medieval theologians. From day one, he insisted that women were in submission to men.¹⁸ Luther said the first creation account detailed humanity's spiritual bodies and the second account the physical creation. He said that just as Adam, Eve was created with great care and attention and was made fully in the image of God. Luther wrote, "Just as Adam was created in accordance with a well-considered counsel, so . . . Eve (was) created according to a definite plan."¹⁹ The second creation account states that God created Eve after Adam. Luther took this to mean that the order of creation signified rank and that wives must submit to their husbands. He believed that since Eve came from his side, she was to be his helpmeet or assistant. Since Eve took her substance from Adam, women took the names of their husbands at marriage.

Luther also employed Neoplatonism when depicting differences in the first couple. Adam, the male, was wiser, stronger, and had a more rational soul. Eve was a female with less reason, weaker physical strength, and was given to bodily pleasures. For guidance, she was to look to Adam.²⁰ Before the fall, Adam and Eve were in tune with God and knew how he wanted them to relate to each other.

The male and female had different assigned roles. Adam was to tend the garden and Eve was to be a mother, homemaker, and helpmeet to Adam.²¹ They were also to be "fruitful and multiply." Sex, however, would be much different than in its current state. In Eden, sex would have been without shame or lust, both would be very fertile, and birth would have been simple and painless.²² In his *Lectures on Genesis*, Luther said, "How blessed was the state of man in which the begetting of offspring was linked the highest respect and wisdom, indeed with the knowledge of God! Now the flesh is so overwhelmed by the leprosy of lust that in the act of procreation the body becomes downright brutish and cannot beget in the knowledge of God."²³

After 1525, Luther began to view the creation account differently. In his *Enarrationes* on Genesis, classroom lectures delivered between 1535 and 1545, he now believed that prior

¹⁶Mickey L. Mattox, "Luther on Eve, Women and the Church," *Lutheran Quarterly Review* 17.4 (Winter 2003): 456–74.

¹⁷*Declamationes in Genesin* was published in 1527.

¹⁸*D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 73 vols. (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1883ff), 24:80; 9:322. Hereafter cited as WA.

¹⁹LW 1:115.

²⁰LW 1:66–69.

²¹LW 1:217.

²²LW 44:8

²³LW 1:71.

to the fall, Eve “was in no respect inferior to Adam, whether you count the qualities of the body or those of the mind.”²⁴ They shared in the rule over God’s creation. The only area in which Eve was subordinate to Adam was in the office of preacher. God gave and entrusted Adam alone with the mandate concerning the tree. Luther saw the tree as “Adam’s church, altar, and pulpit.”²⁵

Luther believed Eve was made in the image of God. Yet, her image was different in quality from that of Adam. She was equal in image but lesser than Adam in “glory and prestige.” Even though he believed they were equal in body and soul, Luther believed she had a weaker constitution than Adam. He explained these differences by comparing the sun and the moon,

For the woman appears to be a somewhat different being from the man, having different members and a much weaker nature. Although Eve was a most extraordinary creature—similar to Adam so far as the image of God is concerned, that is, in justice, wisdom, and happiness—she was nevertheless a woman. For as the sun is more excellent than the moon (although the moon, too, is a very excellent body), so the woman, although she was a most beautiful work of God, nevertheless was not the equal of the male in glory and prestige.²⁶

In the beginning, all was well in the garden. Adam and Eve were perfect physically, morally, and spiritually. Then the serpent appeared. Holding with medieval Catholic tradition, the younger Luther believed the serpent was a product of the fall of angels that preceded the creation of humanity. The serpent was either the devil or his tool whose goal was to gain revenge on humanity. As Adam was in the perfect image of God, the serpent chose to approach Eve with his offer of godlike knowledge if she ate the forbidden fruit. She was the weaker vessel, more gullible, prone to flattery, and thus more likely to believe the serpent.²⁷ Eve was talkative and superstitious and readily engaged the serpent. The younger Luther believed Eve passed down these characteristics to future female generations. The serpent approached her when Adam was not around. She believed the serpent, ate the fruit, and then gave some to Adam, who also ate. Because she offered the fruit to Adam, Luther holds her more responsible for the fall and her punishment of subordination to Adam as just.²⁸ Adam, however, knew better. “He makes the sin all the heavier and more gruesome. She was a fool, easy to lead astray, did not know any better. But he had God’s word before him. He knew it well and should have punished her.”²⁹

²⁴LW 1:115.

²⁵LW 1:95.

²⁶LW 1:68–69.

²⁷WA 9:334.

²⁸LW 8:115–18.

²⁹WA 24:82; quoted in *Luther on Women: A Sourcebook*, eds. Susan Karant-Nunn and Merry Wiesner-Hanks (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 21.

Young Luther believed Eve sinned for many reasons. She was insubordinate and did not refer the matter to her husband whom God spoke to directly about the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Moreover, as Adam was more rational and less given to emotions, he would not have believed the serpent.³⁰ Other scholars posit that Eve may have been jealous of her husband's greater authority and sought to even their standing.³¹ The fall and the corresponding curse signaled a change in the primordial couple's relationship from that of a benevolent subjugation (early Luther) or loss of equality to a stringent submission (later Luther). As both Adam and Eve recognized they were naked, their innocence was gone. From this point forward, the more physical and lower appetites would dominate the act of procreation. Lust now trumps reason.³²

For the older Luther, however, subordination and gender inequality did not occur until Eve sinned and then received God's corresponding punishment.³³ She was in no part inferior to Adam. Luther portrayed Eve as wise, and she engaged the serpent because she recognized it was one of the animals which she and Adam held in dominion.³⁴ At its most basic level, the fall, however, occurred for the same reason. It was the first couple's shift from belief to unbelief. They no longer believed God's mandate about the tree. Perhaps Luther's gentler reevaluation of Eve was because he had been happily married to Katie Von Bora since 1525, and she bore him six children.³⁵

According to Luther, God ordained that there be a proper order to his world. At creation, there were only two orders, or estates; the ecclesiastical, of which Adam served as a priest, and the domestic, or *oeconomia*. After the fall, a third estate became necessary. The civil, or *politia*, rule of one human being ruling over another was now essential.³⁶ Eve must now answer to Adam and thus women to men in all three estates—in the home, church, and society. Luther did not believe that becoming a Christian freed a woman from subordination to her father or husband. He taught that Gal 3:28 concerned only the heavenly life to come. A woman's status in the temporal world had not changed.

The norm in the late-medieval era was that women were either under the authority of their father or husband. Mature women who were not married aroused suspicion. It was as if they were fighting against their sex drive, disobeying God by not procreating, and ignoring a proper order by not having a husband.³⁷ Luther insisted that the married life was what God intended. Sex was now good. A husband and wife could now enjoy each other in

³⁰Mattox, "Luther on Eve, Women and the Church," 460.

³¹John A. Phillips, *Eve: The History of an Idea* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), 105.

³²WA 24:81–85.

³³MacHaffie, *Her Story*, 93.

³⁴WA 42:138; LW 1:185.

³⁵Mattox, "Luther on Eve, Women and the Church," 462.

³⁶WA 24:102.

³⁷Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, "Women," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*.

a way that Catholic tradition perceived as sinful. Procreation and satisfying one's sexual desires were important but not the only reasons for marriage. He believed that genuine love and companionship should play a role. Luther believed a man who loves and supports his family is much more a saint than a priest or monk. "The legends or stories of the saints which we have in the papacy are not written according to the norm of Holy Scripture. For it is nothing to wear a hood, fast, or undertake other hard works of that sort in comparison with those troubles which family life brings, and the saints [i.e., the patriarchs] bore them and lived in patience."³⁸

Luther loved Katie, but that did not mean that marriage made them equal in the estates. In the *oeconomia* estate, he believed in strict patriarchy. Because of original sin, the wife's domain was in the home. Wives were to obey their husband and accept the fate of their position due to God's sense of order and their rightful punishment. Men were to handle all matters outside the home. In *Lectures on Genesis*, the younger Luther stated,

This punishment, too, springs from original sin; and the woman bears it just as unwillingly as she bears those pains and inconveniences that have been placed upon her flesh. The rule remains with the husband, and the wife is compelled to obey him by God's command. He rules the home and the state, wages wars, defends his possessions, tills the soil, builds, plants, etc. The woman, on the other hand, is like a nail driven into the wall. . . . The wife should stay at home and look after the affairs of the household, as one who has been deprived of the ability of administering those affairs that are outside and that concern the state.³⁹

Luther practiced this belief in his own home. He once told Katie, "You make me do what you will; you have full sovereignty here [i.e., the home] and I award you, with all my heart, the command in all household matters, reserving my rights in other points."⁴⁰

The primary women's vocation was to bear and raise children. Luther believed motherhood was a divine vocation. He advised mothers,

If a mother of a family wishes to please and serve God, let her not do what the papists are accustomed to doing: running to churches, fasting, counting prayers, etc. But let her care for the family, let her educate and teach her children, let her do her task in the kitchen . . . if she does these things in faith in the Son of God, and hopes that she pleases God on account of Christ, she is holy and blessed.⁴¹

Luther's statements concerning the mother's role in the family were not always so

³⁸WA 42:55.11-14; quoted in Jane Dempsey Douglass, "Women and the Continental Reformation," in *Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974), 294.

³⁹LW 1:202-3.

⁴⁰TT 335.

⁴¹WA 43:20.31-36; quoted in Douglass, "Women and the Continental Reformation," 295.

kind. In an extraordinarily harsh statement, Luther proclaimed, “Women are created for no other purpose than to serve men and be their helpers. If women grow weary or even die while bearing children, that doesn’t harm anything. Let them bear children to death; they are created for that.”⁴²

In matters of the *ecclesia* estate, Luther insisted that women be silent in church. From the creation when Adam delivered God’s message concerning the tree to Eve, men held all ecclesiastical responsibilities. Referencing 1 Cor 14, Luther insisted that a woman could not preach, receive ordination, or hold a church office. He did believe that if no male was available, a woman could preach or baptize.⁴³ Women could also prophesy in the church as this was an occasional outpouring of the Spirit, not a permanent act of preaching.⁴⁴ Otherwise, women were to be silent in church. The priesthood of all believers did stress that all believers, including women, have some manner of priestly duties. Women, therefore, were to speak about Christ, but it should be at home.

A new office specifically for women did appear in the Reformation. As ministers could now marry, the office of pastor’s wife became a much sought-after position. Wives, such as Katie, could now serve as role models for other Protestant wives. She was known for providing food and lodging for Martin’s frequent guests and occasionally discussing theology with them. However, she never pressed her husband or argued for the equality of women.⁴⁵

Luther also believed that women should not participate in the *politia* estate. Society and politics were spheres for the learned and Luther could never see women as being able to add anything productive to society. Though not as misogynistic as his predecessors, he believed women were naive like children and thus should remain at home their husbands better control their rash and impulsive behavior.⁴⁶ Women were competent in the home, but men were to lead outside it. Luther said,

But when they talk about matters other than those pertaining to the household, they are not competent. Although they have words enough, they are lacking in substance, which they do not understand. For that reason, they speak foolishly, without order, and wildly, mixing things together without moderation. It appears from this that woman was created for housekeeping but man for keeping order, governing worldly affairs, fighting, and dealing with justice—[things that pertain to] administering and leading.⁴⁷

⁴²Martin Luther, *Sämtliche Werke* (Heyder, 1826–1857), 20:84; quoted in Merry E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 13.

⁴³LW 30:135; 39:234.

⁴⁴WA 13:111.

⁴⁵Martos and Hegy, *Equal at the Creation*, 134.

⁴⁶WA 1:17; 1:26

⁴⁷WA TR 1:1054.531–32; quoted in *Luther on Women*, 28–29.

Moreover, if they tried to involve themselves outside the home, it would take away from their God-ordained domestic duties.⁴⁸ This was Luther's main point.

In conclusion, Luther had a profound effect on women and the family. Some of the results, however, were negative. Because the cloister was no longer a choice, many former nuns lost their homes, wandered the countryside, and lost one of their few opportunities where they could exert female leadership. When coupled with the fact that women were not to preach, teach, or lead in Luther's church, no avenues of leadership or autonomy existed where women could lead in the *ecclesia* estate. The only practical choice was to be a helpmeet in marriage.

Luther's doctrines of the priesthood of all believers and justification by faith were often applied in gender-specific ways. While the doctrines gave freedom from the restraints of the Catholic Church, this often did not mean the same for women as it did for men. Women may be ontologically the same as men and have equal access to God, but it did not remove them from the patriarchal control of their fathers or husbands and opened few avenues outside the home.

Other aspects were positive. Luther's teachings on the superiority of marriage to celibacy lifted not only marriage but also women. Within marriage, women were not a necessary evil, and their uncontrolled sexuality was no longer believed responsible for the sins of the world. The Lutheran idea of the family helped liberate husbands, wives, and children from stifling "religious, sexual, and vocational bondage."⁴⁹ Though Luther saw and used justification by faith and the priesthood of all believers as a way to raise the laity and eliminate the Catholic clergy's stranglehold on access to God, in later years these doctrines provided a foundation that would help restrain gender-based discrimination in theology and social practice.⁵⁰ Martin Luther, therefore, played a seminal role in removing Eve's stigma from women and began their slow elevation towards equality in many aspects of Protestant traditions.

⁴⁸Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled*, 68.

⁴⁹Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled*, 7.

⁵⁰Martos and Hegy, *Equal at the Creation*, 129.

The Spirit of Prophecy in the Pulpit: Reconsidering Preaching as a Form of Prophecy.



Benjamin B. Phillips, PhD

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Note: A version of this paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Denver, Colorado, on November 13, 2018.

In 1606, William Perkins published the first book in the English language on the subject of preaching, *The Art of Prophesying*.¹ The title of this small volume continues to strike a tender spot among students of preaching, who are all too ready to acknowledge their need of the Spirit's help as they embark on their preaching career but are understandably reluctant to take up the mantle of "prophet" in the pulpit. Yet what may be too-easily dismissed as a needless conflation of two "obviously" distinct things obscures the close connection between prophecy and preaching that Christian preachers and theologians have articulated and the arguments that support those claims.

This paper will sketch a brief history of the "preaching as prophecy" view through representative patristic, medieval, reformation, and modern writers to show the prevalence of this view in the Christian tradition and will analyze some of the key arguments made therein. This, in turn, will lead to a consideration of the best arguments articulated by contemporary theologians in favor of distinguishing prophecy and preaching. Finally, the paper will turn to a brief, systematic comparison of the work the Spirit in prophecy and preaching in order to articulate more clearly the similarities and differences between the two.

While we must agree with contemporary scholarship in its conclusion that preaching and prophecy are not precisely the same thing, both current biblical-theological scholarship and historical perspectives require us to affirm significant continuity between them. Prophecy and preaching bear a relationship that is best described as analogous. In short, we may conclude that the Spirit of prophecy still speaks through the preaching of the word of God.

¹Originally published in Latin, 1592.

Preaching as Prophecy: Brief Sketch of a Christian Tradition

The view that preaching is, or at least is the post-apostolic version of, the New Testament gift of prophecy has been widely held among Christian theologians and preachers down through history, claiming among its adherents Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Matthew Henry, and John Wesley.² Gregory the Great, in his comments concerning the prophets who met the young Saul asked,

Who are these prophets except the great preachers of the Holy Church? The ministry of a prophet is to reveal things hidden and to predict things to come. The doctors of Holy Church, when they draw the hidden meanings of the scriptures to common knowledge, open up unknown secrets, and when they preach eternal joys, they reveal the future. Therefore, prophets come to meet us, because the doctors of Holy Church show us the truth of Holy Scripture.³

This ancient perspective found traction in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as the revival of preaching in the universities and through the Dominicans and Franciscans once again raised the question of the nature of prophecy and its relationship to preaching.⁴ Thomas of Chobham, an English Dominican, author of *Summa de arte preadiciandi* (c.1229), wrote that “to prophesy is to preach” (*prophetare est predicare*).⁵ Thomas Aquinas also affirmed that preaching is prophecy, noting that

someone who has not received a divine revelation, [but has the ability to understand it] is called a prophet, hence we read in I Corinthians: Let the prophets speak; two or three, and let the rest judge. So he calls teachers and preachers prophets according to that [phrase] of Ecclesiasticus: All teachers will still pour out doctrine as prophecy. Sometimes those who repeat revelations are called prophets, hence in Chronicles: The sons of Asaph [and] of Jeduthun were prophesying.⁶

Erasmus affirmed this view of preaching with his reading of 1 Corinthians 14:1, where “Paul calls prophecy not the prediction of future things, but the interpretation of the divine scriptures.”⁷ Elsewhere, he defined prophecy as “the exposition of the mysteries of Scripture.”⁸

²Anthony Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit: In Biblical Teaching, through the Centuries, and Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013), 113.

³Gregory the Great, *Expositiones in librum Primum Regum*. Edited by P. Verbraken, in *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 144 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1963), 4.173, quoted in G. Sujin Pak, *The Reformation of Prophecy: Early Modern Interpretations of the Prophet and Old Testament Prophecy* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018), 7–8.

⁴Brian Fitzgerald, *Inspiration and Authority in the Middle Ages: Prophets and their Critics from Scholasticism to Humanism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017), 88.

⁵Ibid., 95.

⁶Thomas Aquinas, *Sermon Attendite: On the Third Sunday After the Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul*, Preached July 26, 1271 at Paris, translated by Athanasius Sulavik, available at <http://jonhaines.com/thomas/english/SermAttendite.htm>.

⁷Erasmus, *Annotations on 1 Cor 14:1 in Opera Omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami*, edited by J. H. Waszink et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1969–), 6.8, 266. Quoted in Pak, 15.

⁸Erasmus, *Paraphrases on the Epistles to the Corinthians: The Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians,*

Though the Reformation ushered in a view of preaching that was higher in many ways than that of the middle ages, the connection between prophecy and preaching continued to be affirmed by both Luther and Calvin. Luther read Paul's admonition in 1 Thess 5:19–20, "do not despise prophetic utterances," to be speaking of respect for preaching. He admonished his readers, "not to despise those who can expound Scriptures and ably interpret and teach the difficult books. For St. Paul tells us not to despise prophesying or quench the Spirit."⁹ Luther's view is also evident in his comments on 1 Pet 4:11, which Luther took to mean that "if someone has the grace to be able to preach and teach, let him teach and preach. . . . Now St. Peter says here: 'Whoever speaks, as one who utters the oracles of God.' One should note very well that no one should preach anything unless he is sure that it is God's Word."¹⁰

Though Luther's view of preaching as prophecy was entirely in line with the church fathers and medieval theologians represented here, his was not merely the passive acceptance of a received tradition about preaching. It found strong support in Luther's view of the Holy Spirit's work in preaching. For Luther, Christ rules through "the external Word alone, which the Holy Spirit will preach" (cf. John 16:8).¹¹ The Spirit brings about conviction through "an oral Word or an office of preaching, called the Word of God."¹² This high view of the Spirit speaking through preaching naturally led Luther to the classic expression of Spirit-empowered speech—prophecy.

Like Luther, John Calvin viewed preaching as at least one form of the New Testament gift of prophecy. For Calvin, Paul's warning not to despise prophetic speech in 1 Thess 5:20 called for a more careful definition of the kind of speech to be respected.

By the term *prophecy*, however, I do not understand the gift of foretelling the future, but as in 1 Cor. 14:3, the science of interpreting Scripture, so that a *prophet* is an interpreter of the will of God. For Paul, in the passage which I have quoted, assigns to *prophets teaching for edification, exhortation, and consolation*, and enumerates, as it were, these departments. Let, therefore, prophecy in this passage be understood as meaning—interpretation made suitable to present use. Paul prohibits us from *despising* it, if we would not choose of our own accord to wander in darkness.¹³

Colossians and Thessalonians, Collected Works of Erasmus 43, edited by Robert Sider, translated by Mechtild O'Mara and Edward Phillips (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 25. Quoted in Pak, 15.

⁹Martin Luther, *Luther's Works, Vol. 20: Minor Prophets III: Zechariah*, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 20 (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1999), 156.

¹⁰Martin Luther, *Luther's Works, Vol. 30: The Catholic Epistles*, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 30 (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1999), 124–25.

¹¹Luther, "Fourth Sunday after Easter: Third Sermon: John 16:5–15; 1523," in *The Sermons of Martin Luther: The Church Postils*, 8 vols., ed. John Lenker, trans. John Lenker et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1995), 3.134–35. (Hereafter cited as SML, vol.page); *D. Martin Luthers Werke: kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 121 vols. (Weimar: Hermann Bohlaus Nachfolger, 1883–2009). (Hereafter cited as WA, vol.page.) WA, 21.354.

¹²Ibid.

¹³John Calvin and John Pringle, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians*,

Reflecting on 1 Cor 12:28, Calvin saw support for his view that prophecy goes beyond “mere” foretelling to the “science of interpreting” and applying Scripture.

My reason for thinking so is this, that he [Paul] prefers prophecy to all other gifts, on the ground of its yielding more edification—a commendation that would not be applicable to the predicting of future events. Farther, when he describes the office of *Prophet*, or at least treats of what he ought principally to do, he says that he must devote himself to consolation, exhortation, and doctrine. Now these are things that are distinct from prophesying. Let us, then, by *Prophets* in this passage understand, *first* of all, eminent interpreters of Scripture, and farther, persons who are endowed with no common wisdom and dexterity in taking a right view of the present necessity of the Church, that they may speak suitably to it, and in this way be, in a manner, ambassadors to communicate the divine will.¹⁴

As with Luther, Calvin’s willingness to interpret Paul’s teachings about prophecy as statements about preaching was grounded in a high view of the Spirit’s work in preaching. Calvin emphasized the idea that the Holy Spirit empowers the preacher.¹⁵ Indeed, preaching must be Spirit-empowered, since no human is naturally qualified to speak for God. In preaching, as in prophecy, God “clothes him with his Spirit, to supply his nakedness and poverty.”¹⁶

In the generation following Calvin, the English Puritan William Perkins penned his treatise on preaching, *The Art of Prophesying*. Perkins asserted that there are “two parts to prophesy: preaching the Word and public prayer.”¹⁷ With respect to preaching, he wrote, “Preaching the Word is prophesying in the name and on behalf of Christ.”¹⁸ Though Perkins does not offer arguments for his interpretation, he implies them in his choice of Scripture citations. Most notably, he sees the role of “ambassadors for Christ” (2 Cor 5:18–20) as indistinguishable from being a prophet, God’s spokesman. The Puritan commitment to preaching as prophecy was reflected in their preaching conferences known as prophesyings. At these gatherings, three to six preachers would preach on the same text. A final speaker would summarize the application, and the sermons were then critiqued (cf. 1 Cor 14:29–31).¹⁹

Colossians, and Thessalonians (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 299–300.

¹⁴John Calvin and John Pringle, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 415.

¹⁵Calvin, *CNTC: Acts* 10:44, 317–8; *CO* 48/*CR* 26.250–51.

¹⁶Calvin, *Harmony of the Gospels, Luke* 24:49, 243; *CO* 45/*CR* 73.818–89.

¹⁷William Perkins, *The Art of Prophesying and the Calling of the Ministry* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2016), 7.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹Joel R. Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage, 2012), 703.

In the late twentieth century, the belief that preaching is prophecy has been upheld up by both Reformed and Charismatic writers. Charismatics such as Paul Barnett and Peter Jensen insist that “it is an inadequate reading of the Old Testament which separates prophecy from preaching or the exposition of Scripture.”²⁰ Likewise, Gregory Kane’s definition of prophecy states that it is “spontaneous, inspired speech; directed application of a Biblical text; and public pronouncement of a moral or ethical nature that confronts the socio-political.”²¹ Scholarly works on the nature of New Testament prophecy by Hill and Gillespie have supported the view that prophecy is, or at least includes, “applied pastoral preaching.”²² Anthony Thiselton builds on their work by taking prophecy to “denote a broader and more solemn, gospel-centered discourse or utterance.”²³ Thus, Thiselton defines prophecy as “healthy preaching, proclamation, or teaching which is pastorally applied for the appropriation of gospel truth and gospel promise, in their own context of situation, to help others.”²⁴

Finally, contemporary Reformed theologians such as J. I. Packer and Michael Horton have affirmed that preaching is prophecy. Michael Horton notes that the office of prophet can be understood in either a narrow or a broad sense. In the narrow sense, the term refers to the biblical prophets. In a broad sense, it encompasses the Spirit-empowered speech of all believers.²⁵ He affirms that “Paul treats prophecy as preaching,” given for the purposes of evangelism and sanctification. Also, Horton notes that such prophecy is not inspired in the way the biblical authors were, and so must be tested.²⁶

Packer, on the other hand, is particularly emphatic, writing that

we should realize that it [prophecy] has actually been exhibited in every sermon or informal “message” that has had a heart-searching, “home-coming” application to its hearers. Prophecy has been and remains a reality whenever and wherever Bible truth

²⁰Paul Barnett & Peter Jensen, *The Quest for Power* (Sydney: Anzea, 1973), 101. Quoted in Graham Cole, *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology, ed. John Feinberg (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 251.

²¹Gregory Kane, “The Exercise of Prophecy in the Early Reformation,” *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 1 (2013): 28–41. Kane notes that he adapts his definition of prophecy from C. M. Robeck, “Prophecy, Gift of,” in *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*.

²²David Hill, *New Testament Prophecy* (London: Marshall, 1979), 110–40 and 193–213; see also Thomas Gillespie, *The First Theologians: A Study in Early Christian Prophecy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994).

²³Thiselton, *Holy Spirit*, 113.

²⁴Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 1084.

²⁵Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims On the Way* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 405.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 884.

is genuinely *preached*—that is, spelled out and applied, whether from a pulpit or more informally. Preaching is teaching God’s revealed truth with application; such teaching with application is prophecy, always was, and always will be and is no more so among charismatics today than at any other time in any other Christian company, past, present, or future.²⁷

Packer offers as a partial definition of prophecy by the claim that it is “a God-prompted application of truth that in general terms has been revealed already, rather than a disclosure of divine thoughts and intentions not previously known and not otherwise knowable.”²⁸ In support of this aspect of the definition of prophecy, Packer interprets Joel’s prophecy that the outpouring of the Spirit would be on “all mankind” (Joel 2:28–29) in light of Moses’ cry, “Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!” (Num 11:29). Packer thus concludes that Joel intended to say that prophecy was something that all believers would do.²⁹ Since not all believers foretell future events, Packer concludes that prophecy today is best understood as formal (sermonic) or informal Bible-based teaching, encouragement, and exhortation.

Analysis of Arguments for Preaching as Prophecy in Christian Tradition

Far from being a casual conflation of two obviously different forms of Spirit-empowered speech, the Christian tradition as sketched above provides interesting, non-trivial arguments in support of the idea that preaching is, or is at least a form of, prophecy. These arguments seem mainly to be of two types, functional equivalence arguments and exegetical-theological arguments.

Gregory offered a functional equivalence argument based on the assertion that “[t]he ministry of a prophet is to reveal things hidden and to predict things to come.”³⁰ This straightforward definition of prophecy allowed Gregory to assert that preaching does just the same thing. He noted that those who teach and preach the Scriptures “reveal hidden things” when they help their hearers to understand the Scriptures that were previously opaque to them (exposition). He also pointed out that one who proclaims a previously-given prophecy of future events nevertheless is “predict[ing] things to come.” The fact that the biblical prophets received their information by the unmediated inspiration of the Spirit, while preachers receive theirs by the medium of Scripture is of no significance to Gregory. This difference marks the boundary between inspiration and illumination, a critical distinction here. Inspiration guarantees the inerrancy of each statement, and so the unconditional truthfulness of the prophet’s whole message. Illumination may be taken to apply only to specific insights and so only conditionally to the whole message of the preacher.³¹

²⁷J. I. Packer, *Keep In Step With The Spirit* (Terrytown, NY: Revell, 1984), 217.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 215.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 214–15.

³⁰Gregory the Great, *Expositiones in librum Primum Regum*, 4.173.

³¹Though one may speak of the mind of the preacher (or any reader) being illumined in studying

Perkins implied both a functional equivalence argument and an exegetical argument when he cited 2 Cor 5:18–20 (esp. 20) “we are ambassadors for Christ” in support of his equation of preaching and prophecy. The functional equivalence argument would be grounded in the role of an ambassador as the authorized spokesman for his king. Just as an ambassador speaks on behalf of the king, conveying his message to a foreign people, so also the prophet is God’s authorized spokesman to his estranged world. If preachers are ambassadors, then they fulfill a role that is equivalent to that of the prophets. As with Gregory’s argument, this version of Perkins implied argument ignores the significant distinction between inspiration and illumination.

As an implied exegetical-theological argument, however, Perkins’ view is much stronger. Paul explains that to be an ambassador for Christ is “as though God were making an appeal through us” (2 Cor 5:20). This leads preachers to speak on behalf of Christ, almost as if Christ were the one speaking, saying “be reconciled to God.” The phrase “as though God were making an appeal through us” might be taken to indicate that Paul is offering up a metaphor rather than an assertion to be taken literally.

Luther, however, would insist that the Spirit of Christ does, in fact, speak through preachers. Luther adduced this principle from Matt 10:20, “It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you.”³² Because God works in this way, Luther could say that “Christ speaks” to those who hear his word proclaimed.³³ One of the features of Old Testament prophecy was the idea that in prophecy God/God’s Spirit was speaking through the prophet (e.g., 2 Sam 23:2; see also Acts 1:16; 28:25). So if Christ speaks through preachers, then this indicates a strong bond of continuity between preaching and prophecy.

Aquinas offered three distinct exegetical arguments for equating preaching and prophecy. First, he claimed that a connection between prophecy and teaching based on Sir 24:33, which he glossed as saying, “[All teachers] will still pour out doctrine as prophecy.” Aquinas takes this to mean that Sirach sees teachers teaching by means of prophesying. Using this as his interpretive lens for reading 1 Cor 14:29, Aquinas reads Paul’s prophets as

or hearing the word of God, I think it best to see illumination as yielding specific insights rather than whole messages. If the Spirit of Truth will not permit error when he grants revelation, then he will not permit error when he grants understanding. An errant statement cannot be the result of either inspiration or illumination. In either case, neither the message nor the “insight” can have originated with the Spirit of Truth. Limiting the result of illumination to specific insights allows us to affirm that a person can receive illumination, while not placing us in the untenable position of either affirming illumined preachers to be inerrant in the sermon as a whole or denying illumination in any sermon containing an error of any sort.

³²Luther, “Second Sunday after Easter: Third Sermon: John 10:11–16; 15:23,” *SML*, 3.60–61; *WA* 21.330.

³³Luther, “Day of Christ’s Ascent into Heaven: Third Sermon: Mark 16:14–20,” *SML* 3.238–39; *WA* 21.407.

teachers. This argument is problematic from a Protestant perspective since it appeals to an apocryphal text as providing an authoritative hermeneutical point of view for interpreting a canonical text. This is not “Scripture interpreting Scripture.”

As a second argument, based on his reading of 1 Cor 14:29 in light of Sir 24:33, Aquinas takes those who judge prophecies to be prophesying through their judgment/interpretation of the original message. It seems more likely, however, that Paul’s point was that those judging would distinguish between genuine prophetic messages and false prophecies.³⁴ The underlying implication in Aquinas’s argument is that the reception of the revelation and the understanding of the revelation can come from different individuals, both of whom are rightly called prophets on the basis of their respective functions. Such a point might be supported by an appeal to the interpretation of dreams by Joseph and Daniel. In these cases, the revelation (dream) was given to Pharaoh (Gen 41:1–7) and King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2:1–18) respectively. Neither could understand the dream, so Joseph (Gen 41:25–32) and Daniel (Dan 2:36–45) interpreted them. In both cases, Joseph (Gen 41:16) and Daniel (Dan 2:28–30) affirm that God was the one who answered through them. Both Joseph and Daniel here were surely acting as prophets, men through whom God was speaking; but both were also interpreting previously-given revelations. The fact that these two cases involved prophecy as the interpretation of previously-given prophecies (dreams) does not yet mean that every instance of interpreting previously-given revelation is prophecy in the sense of being inspired speech distinct from illumined insight.

Third, Aquinas takes 1 Chr 25:1–3 to be an example of the proclamation of previously-given prophecy being described as prophesying. In verses 2–3, the sons of Asaph and Jeduthun sang “under the direction of” their fathers who prophesied, presumably singing the prophecies that their fathers had delivered. The first verse reads “the sons of Asaph . . . and of Jeduthun, who were to prophesy with lyres, harps, and cymbals.” Grammatically, Aquinas takes this to indicate that Asaph and Jeduthan were the sources of the prophecies which their sons then “prophesied” with the musical instruments. If Aquinas is correct, then proclaiming previously given revelation (preaching) is prophesying. Yet Aquinas’s way of reading the passage is not the only option available. One alternative would be to see these younger men as prophets themselves (receiving new, direct revelation) operating under the direction of their fathers as Asaph operated under the direction of King David. In that case, the mere recitation of a prophetic message no more makes one a prophet than the copying of Scripture makes one a biblical author.

Calvin makes an exegetical-theological argument about the superiority of the forth-telling aspect of prophecy to a fore-telling aspect of prophecy. Calvin’s thesis is that that fore-telling doesn’t edify, exhort, or console. The point must be construed narrowly; fore-telling as Calvin presents it here refers to the bare prediction itself. Any accompanying

³⁴Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1140.

statements of edification, exhortation, or consolation would be forth-telling. The question is whether or not Paul intended to make this distinction. Even if we grant the distinction between fore- and forth-telling utterances, Paul does not seem to be categorizing types of statements so much as categorizing the effects of prophecy. If this is the case, then we can clearly see how predictive prophecy could have the effect of edifying, exhorting, or consoling (e.g., Paul urges Christians to use the prophecies of Christ's return to comfort one another (1 Thess 4:18).

Packer's exegetical-theological argument takes Moses's cry, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" (Num 11:29) as itself an instance of prophecy. Joel's prophecy that the outpouring of the Spirit would come on "all mankind," with the result that "your sons and daughters will prophesy" (Joel 2:28–29), then becomes the divine affirmation that Moses's desire would eventually be fulfilled. Yet this argument seems to run counter to the experience of the Corinthians that Paul addresses in 1 Cor 14:5. That Paul wishes all could prophesy seems to be a counterfactual desire ("if only . . . but alas") to contrast superiority of prophecy to tongues, which Corinthians thought everyone should have. Thus, "if everyone could have any one gift it should be prophecy, not tongues!" does not imply that everyone does or can have that one or any one gift. Indeed, the fact that the Spirit does not give any individual gift to all Christians (1 Cor 12:17–19, 29–30) decisively undercuts Packer's argument.

The scholarship of Hill, Gillespie, Thiselton, and others represents a rich and deep probing of the Old Testament, inter-testamental, and New Testament thought about prophecy. Hill, in particular, argues that 1 Cor 14:3 identifies features that constitute the very nature of prophecy: edification, exhortation, and consolation.³⁵ On the basis of 1 Cor 14:29–31, which posits a succession of prophets speaking so that others can learn and be exhorted, Hill concludes that "prophetic utterances" were often "sustained utterances"³⁶ of a length and paraenetic or evangelistic purpose corresponding to sermons. While assessing the full scope of their arguments escapes the space available in this essay, there seems to be a flaw in taking 1 Cor 14:3 as a sufficient condition to constitute speech as prophecy. Other forms of Spirit-empowered speech can serve the same purposes including teaching, words of wisdom, etc. That does not make them prophecy.³⁷ Furthermore, edification, exhortation, and consolation are not even necessary conditions for prophecy, at least in its initial utterance. While these purposes would probably characterize the gift of prophecy within the church, that does not exclude the possibility of prophecy for other purposes towards non-believers, such as evangelism (1 Cor 14:24–25).³⁸ Nevertheless, the work of Hill, Gillespie, and Thiselton underscore significant similarities between preaching and prophecy.

³⁵Hill, 112.

³⁶Hill, 123.

³⁷Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts: Then and Now*. Rev. ed. (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1999), 201.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 202. See also Turner's point-by-point critique of Gillespie, pp. 204–7.

Preaching is Not Prophecy

Though there is a notable line of thought in Christian tradition which equates prophecy and preaching, contemporary theology boasts a significant cadre of charismatic and non-charismatic scholars who reject the prophecy as preaching thesis. Non-charismatics such as the Reformed scholar Anthony Hoekema identify the New Testament gift of prophecy as a “special charismatic gift of the Spirit. In other words, we may not identify this gift with what we might today call a gift for preaching or Bible teaching.”³⁹ Dispensationalist David Farnell flatly asserts that “the preacher is not a prophet.”⁴⁰ John Walvoord adds that while Christians today may possess gifts of teaching, exhortation, and evangelism, “prophecy has ceased.”⁴¹

Such denials may be expected from scholars committed to the cessationist thesis, but they are also echoed by others who are Charismatic or open to the continuationist/restorationist perspective. Michael Green insists that prophecy is not the same thing as preaching and that the prophecy as preaching thesis “could only be maintained in defiance of the whole weight of New Testament evidence.”⁴² Wayne Grudem, in *The Gift of Prophecy*, distinguishes prophecy from teaching, equating preaching with teaching.⁴³ Michael Harper distinguished preaching from prophecy on the basis of preparation through the study of Scripture (preaching) and direct revelation from the Spirit (prophecy). He concluded that “both have a part to play in the edification of the church—but they should not be confused.”⁴⁴ A different distinction is affirmed by Denis and Rita Bennett, who write that “prophecy is not ‘inspired preaching.’” For them, preaching arises from an “inspired intellect,” while prophecy brings “the words the Lord gives directly; it is from the Spirit, not the intellect.”⁴⁵

Analysis of Arguments Distinguishing Prophecy and Preaching

Four arguments distinguishing prophecy and preaching warrant analysis here. The first three do not presume the cessationist thesis but are available to continuationists and cessationists alike. These arguments distinguish immediate and mediated revelation, inspiration and illumination, and the spiritual gifts of teaching and prophecy. The fourth argument is simply the cessationist thesis, the significance of which will be noted for the purposes of this essay, while analysis of its warrant will be deferred.

³⁹Anthony Hoekema, *What About Tongue-Speaking?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1966), 89n.3.

⁴⁰F. David Farnell, “The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament,” *Masters Journal of Theology* 25.2 (Fall 2014): 45–62.

⁴¹John Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit: A Comprehensive Study of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*, 3rd ed. (Findlay, OH: Dunham), 1958.

⁴²Michael Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 211.

⁴³Wayne Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, rev. ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000), 117–20.

⁴⁴Michael Harper, *Prophecy: A Gift for the Body of Christ* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos, 1964), 8.

⁴⁵Dennis and Rita Bennett, *The Holy Spirit and You* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos, 1971), 108–9.

One of the strongest arguments for distinguishing prophecy and preaching is grounded in the difference between immediate and mediated revelation. Prophets and teachers were the major agents who proclaimed the word of God to early Christian churches, outside of the apostles. Both mediated knowledge to those who heard them speak.⁴⁶ While teachers within the church and outside of it (i.e., scribes/rabbis) proclaimed the word of God mediated in the form of Scripture, prophets were “immediately-inspired spokesmen” for God.⁴⁷ For Aune, direct revelation was the *sine qua non* of Christian prophecy, “the distinctive feature of prophetic speech was not so much its content or form, but its (direct) supernatural origin.”⁴⁸ This distinction is significant, for it implies that even the New Testament prophet was subject to the standards for judging prophecy given in Deut 13:1–2 and 18:20–21 (infallibility and faithfulness). Teaching was subject to the test of faithfulness (Jas 3:1; cf. 1 Tim 1:7).

A second distinction which supports the differentiation of preaching and prophecy is that made between the work of the Spirit in inspiration and illumination. Second Peter 1:21 explains that “no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” Here, Peter affirms that the Old Testament prophecies were produced by the agency of the Holy Spirit “moving” the prophets who spoke and wrote. Their message was, as a result, directly or immediately “from God.” This corresponds to the Scripture’s claim that the Holy Spirit spoke through the prophets (2 Sam 23:2; Luke 1:70; Acts 1:16; 3:18; 1 Pet 1:11).⁴⁹ By contrast, illumination refers to the work of the Spirit overcoming the noetic effects of sin so that sinful people can understand and accept God’s word (1 Cor 2:12). Though this applies to the reading of Scripture, the context here is Paul’s discussion of preaching. Yet illumination is needed, not only for those who hear preaching but those who preach. The Spirit helps the preacher “to know the things freely given to us by God” (1 Cor 2:12) and to speak rightly “not in words taught by human reason, but in those taught by the Spirit” (1 Cor 2:13). Moreover, these assertions are tied to neither Paul’s apostolic office nor to the gift of prophecy. Instead, Paul speaks of the Spirit’s work in preaching. While he makes assertions about his own personal ministry (1 Cor 2:1–5), he goes on to write about the message that “we speak” (1 Cor 2:6–13).⁵⁰ Prophecy comes by inspiration but preaching through illumination.

The third argument for a distinction between preaching and prophecy to be treated here is that teaching and prophecy are listed as distinct gifts in Paul’s letters (Rom 12:6–8; 1 Cor

⁴⁶Farnell, 59.

⁴⁷Ibid., 50.

⁴⁸David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 338.

⁴⁹Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, unabridged, one-volume ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1983–85), 201.

⁵⁰Duane Litfin, *Paul’s Theology of Preaching: The Apostle’s Challenge to the Art of Persuasion in Ancient Corinth* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), 236–43.

12:28–30; cf. Eph 4:11). This presumptively entails some significant difference that would warrant their distinct presence on the same brief lists of spiritual gifts. Grudem argues that the essential feature of prophecy is that it entails a revelation from the Holy Spirit that is then publicly reported.⁵¹ Teaching, however, is grounded in previous revelation (Scripture) rather than direct revelation (see immediate vs. mediated revelation distinction above). For this, Grudem cites the teaching and preaching of Paul and Barnabas, along with many others (Acts 15:35), Paul’s ministry at Corinth (Act 18:11), and his statements on the value of Scripture for teaching (Rom 15:4; 2 Tim 3:16).⁵² Grudem then notes that the English words “preaching” and “teaching” are used interchangeably.⁵³ This allows the conclusion that “prophecy and teaching are not the same things” is equivalent to “prophecy and preaching are not the same thing.”

Finally, we note the relevance of the cessationist thesis to the question of whether or not prophecy and preaching are distinct. Cessationism holds that certain gifts of the Spirit are no longer present in the life of the church. As Walvoord put it, “prophecy has ceased.”⁵⁴ Clearly, the view that prophecy has ceased entails a firm distinction between prophecy and preaching. Unless, of course, one might wish to deny the existence of post-apostolic preaching!

The Spirit Speaks: A Systematic Comparison of Prophecy and Preaching

In the end, despite the interesting and occasionally quite strong arguments for the preaching as prophecy thesis, the theological distinctions between immediate and mediated revelation, inspiration and illumination, and the gifts of prophecy and teaching require the conclusion that preaching and prophecy are distinct phenomena. Yet this cut-and-dry statement can obscure the deep bonds of continuity between prophecy and preaching glimpsed in the preceding study.

The common ground for prophecy and preaching is the work of the Holy Spirit. In both, the Spirit accomplishes God’s purposes in Christ by communicating the word of God to humanity.

⁵¹Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 113–17.

⁵²Ibid., 118–19.

⁵³Ibid., 120–21.

⁵⁴Walvoord, 178–79.

Work of the Holy Spirit In Prophecy	Systematic Category	Work of the Holy Spirit In Preaching
Immediate/direct speech to the human agent	Mode of Revelation	Mediated speech through Scripture
Inspiration	Supernatural Agency	Illumination
Man of God (Prophet) divinely commissioned to proclaim the word of God (e.g., Isa 6)	Human Instrumentality	Man of God (Preacher/ Ambassador) divinely commissioned to proclaim the word of God (e.g., 2 Tim 4:1-2)
The prophet's whole message	Scope of Truth Conveyed	Specific insights into meaning/application of Scripture
Magisterial (authority to command belief and obedience in virtue of its own authority as divine revelation)	Authority	Ministerial (authority to convey the message of an external, superior authority, i.e., Scripture)
Infallibility (Deut 18:20-22; predictions must be fulfilled) AND faithfulness (Deut 13:1-2; does not draw people away from God)	Standard of Accountability	Faithfulness (2 Tim 2:2; see also Jas 3:1; cf. 1 Tim 1:7; 2 Tim 3:16; word of God must be "rightly divided" and directed to God's purposes)
The word of God (Written; see 2 Sam 23:2; Luke 1:70; Acts 1:16; 3:18; 1 Pet 1:11; 2 Pet 1:21)	Product	The word of God (Spoken; see Matt 10:20; John 16:8; 1 Cor 2:12-13)

As the chart above suggests, prophecy and preaching share certain defining categories. Both are grounded in divine revelation, both result from supernatural agency empowering a man of God, both convey truth, and both bear divine authority. Both prophecy and preaching are held to a standard of accountability that is humanly impossible to meet, and so can only be met with the Spirit's help. The Spirit speaks the word of God through both. In short, both prophecy and preaching are Spirit-empowered speech. These common bonds are, in part, what constitutes the wisdom of the Christian tradition that equates prophecy and preaching.

This chart also highlights the discontinuities between prophecy and preaching indicated by the work of recent scholars. Prophecy has its source in immediate divine revelation, while the mediated speech of the Spirit through Scripture is the foundation for preaching. The Spirit brings about prophecy through inspiration, a phenomenon unique to the prophets (both writing and non-writing). The Spirit brings about preaching through illumination, a phenomenon common to true preachers and faithful hearers. Genuine prophecy carries the assurance that the whole message is true. True preaching carries the assurance that specific insights into the meaning and/or application of the Scripture will be true. Prophecy is authoritative in itself, while preaching can claim authority only by faithfully adhering to a standard external and superior to it—Scripture. The standard of accountability for prophecy is infallibility in prediction and faithfulness in allegiance to God, while the standard for preaching is faithfulness to the Scriptures. The product of prophecy, when inscripturated, is the written word of God for all subsequent times and places. The product of preaching is the spoken word of God to those who hear the message.

Conclusion: The Spirit of Prophecy in the Pulpit

The danger of equating prophecy and preaching is that preachers, and perhaps some hearers, can come to believe that the unique features of prophecy characterize their preaching. When this happens, preachers abandon the exposition of the Scriptures and claim direct revelation from God. They claim authority equal to, and inevitably greater than the written word of God. Together, this leads swiftly to preaching that cannot be held accountable to the Scripture and so runs the risk of Scripture's condemnation of false prophets and false preachers.

The danger of seeing only the discontinuities between prophecy and preaching is that preaching loses its unique place in the economy of the Holy Spirit. Preachers can come to think that their study, their intellect, their rhetorical skill is what will make preaching faithful and effective. Missing the high and dangerous calling of preaching invariably means missing the joy of dependence on the Spirit, and the recognition that true preaching is in all cases a miracle.

One recent proposal which is sensitive to both the continuities and discontinuities of prophecy and preaching has been made by Jonathan Griffiths in *Preaching in the New Testament: An exegetical and biblical-theological study*. Griffiths begins by observing that Paul commissioned Timothy “to proclaim the word as *God’s authoritative representative*” (italics in the original; 1 Timothy 4:2).⁵⁵ Paul had already designated Timothy as a “man of God” (2 Tim 3:17), an Old Testament title designating divinely-authorized and authoritative speakers of God’s word (Moses, Deut 33:1; David, 2 Chr 8:14; Samuel, 1 Sam 9:6, 10; Elijah,

⁵⁵Jonathan Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament: An exegetical and biblical-theological study*, in *New Studies in Biblical Theology*, ed. D. A. Carson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017), 58.

1 Kgs 17:18, 24; Elisha, 2 Kgs 4:7, 9; and even an angel, Judg 13:6–8). This places Timothy’s ministry as a preacher “in a line of continuity with commissioned ‘prophetic’ word ministry throughout Scripture.”⁵⁶

Ultimately, Griffiths weaves together a rich network of “intertextual quotations, allusions and resonances” that connect New Testament preachers such as Jesus, John the Baptist, Peter, and Paul with the Old Testament prophets, noting that their work is described as “preaching” rather than prophesying. His work demonstrates that this continuity is important for understanding what preaching is and understanding preachers themselves. Nevertheless, “New Testament preachers are not exact equivalents to Old Testament prophets.”⁵⁷

For Griffiths, the idea of prophecy does not completely explain preaching, but it is necessary to understand preaching. With sensitivity to both the scholarly and apologetic contexts of his work, Griffiths clarifies that his thesis of the continuity of preaching with prophecy

- 1) “does not imply that preaching relies upon receiving new revelation.”
and
- 2) “does not mean that all the statements in the NT about new-covenant prophets or the gift of prophecy are really all about preaching.”⁵⁸

The best way forward then, is to see preaching as an analogue to prophecy, characterized by deep commonalities, but also by genuine differences—by both continuity and discontinuity. John Owen suggested as much when he wrote of the “sign gifts” that

although all these gifts and operations *ceased* in some respect, some of them absolutely, and some of them as to the immediate manner of communication and degree of excellency; yet so far as the edification of the church was concerned in them, something that is *analogous* unto them was and is continued.⁵⁹

We must not conflate prophecy and preaching, yet we should also affirm that when the word of God is preached faithfully, then the Spirit of prophecy is present in the pulpit.

⁵⁶Ibid., 58, 60. Griffiths also cites Mounce’s comments on 1 Tim 6:11 in support. William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 2000), 353.

⁵⁷Ibid., 66.

⁵⁸Ibid., 127.

⁵⁹John Owen, *A Discourse of Spiritual Gifts*, in *The Works of John Owen*, ed. W. H. Goold (Edinburgh: Johnstone & Hunter, 1850–53), vol. 4, p. 475, cf. p.454. Quoted in Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, *Contours of Christian Theology*, ed. Gerald Bray (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 233.

What Does It Mean to Grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30)?



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In Eph 4:30 Paul commands Christians, “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” What does Paul mean when he commands us not to grieve the Spirit? By this I do not mean what effect the sin of grieving has upon the Holy Spirit in his person. This is a good question and is the type of question we need to ask as we construct our doctrine of God, for it affects our understanding of things like impassibility, how the Spirit relates to us, and so on. But I want to focus on the question, What is the sin that grieves the Holy Spirit? What is it that Christians should refrain from so as not to grieve the Spirit?

Some commentators link grieving the Spirit with the sins of speech in the immediate paraenesis of Eph 4:25–32 (e.g., Hoehner), while others argue that it refers more holistically to living contrary to the will of God (e.g., Muddiman). In seeking to discern the meaning of the phrase, commentators often recognize that Paul’s language closely resembles Isa 63:10, a text that describes Israel’s grieving of God’s Spirit in the wilderness. While this is a salient insight, it is rare to see any detailed analysis of what it meant for Israel to grieve the Spirit in the wilderness (Snodgrass’s commentary is a good exception here). Similarly, the commentaries rarely mention the background of grieving a deity in the Greco-Roman world or how Eph 4:30 was received in early Christianity. Hence, there is a scholarly lacuna on the topic of what it means to grieve the Spirit.

With this in mind, I hope to demonstrate this thesis: Paul is commanding Christians to do what is pleasing and not grieving to the Lord by speaking words that build one another up, by refraining from unrighteous anger towards one another, and by putting away falsehood and acting with truth towards one another. In order to demonstrate this thesis, I will first analyze various backgrounds to the text: (1) the Greco-Roman background, (2) the reception history of Eph 4:30 in *The Shepherd of Hermas*, and (3) the OT evidence for Israel grieving God’s Spirit. Second, I will analyze Eph 4:30 in its immediate literary context. The basis for my conclusions will derive from the immediate context of Eph 4, while the backgrounds analysis will corroborate these conclusions.

Grieving a Deity in the Greco-Roman World

There are two instances from Greco-Roman literature that mention sins that grieve deities and the punishment that follows. From this literature we can see that to grieve a deity is a serious offence against the deity and therefore is followed by strict judgment.

The first example comes from Diodorus Siculus, a Greek historian from the first century BC. In his *Bibliotheca Historica* (1.65.5–8) he tells of an earlier king of the Egyptians named Sabaco, who reigned over Egypt in the latter half of the eighth century BC.¹ According to Diodorus, Sabaco was a very pious king, and to illustrate his piety Diodorus tells us how Sabaco one time had a recurring dream in which he was told by the god of Thebes to slaughter all the priests in Egypt if he wanted to remain king for long. Sabaco's interpretation of the dream was that he must have in some way "grieved the god" (*lypein ton theon*, 1.65.7; my translation) by his very presence as king, and the slaughter of the priests was to be a propitiatory sacrifice to avert the deity's anger. But because Sabaco was pious and did not like the taking of life, he chose to abdicate the throne rather than slaughter the priests so as to remain king. He would rather remain innocent of blood than to "grieve the lord and defile his own life with impious murder in order to rule over Egypt" (*ē lypōn ton kyrion kai mianas asebei phonō ton idion bion archein tēs Aigyptou*, 1.65.8; my translation). In this case, we do not know precisely the reason for the god's grief, but we may infer that the god deemed it to be significant enough such that there needed to be a wholesale slaughter of the priests in order to appease the god.²

Another example of grieving a deity comes from a scholion on *The Argonautica* by Apollonius of Rhodes, a Greek author from the third century BC. *The Argonautica* is an epic poem that tells the story of the quest of Jason and the Argonauts for the Golden Fleece. In 2.311–15, on their quest we hear how the Argonauts meet an old prophet named Phineas. Phineas explains how he had "grieved Zeus" (*elypēse ton Dia*, line 313) because he had from his prophetic gift divulged too many secrets of the will of Zeus. Zeus was grieved because "he himself wishes to deliver to men the utterances of the prophetic art incomplete, in order that they may still have some need to know the will of heaven." As a result of Phineas's folly, Zeus cursed him with old age and blindness. From this story, we see both that which grieved Zeus—foolishly divulging too many divine secrets—as well as the judgment that followed.³

¹Perhaps this is the Pharaoh "So" of 2 Kgs 17:4.

²For the English translation of 1.65.5–8, see C. H. Oldfather's LCL translation, vol. 1 of which is under public domain and can be found at http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Diodorus_Siculus/1C*.html; accessed Nov. 3, 2018). For the Greek text, see Diodore de Sicile, *Bibliothèque Historique*, vol. 1, book 1, part 2, trans. Ferd. Hoefler, 2nd ed. (Paris: L. Hachette, 1865; Reprinted/digitized) at <http://remacle.org/bloodwolf/historiens/diodore/livre1c.htm>, accessed Nov. 3, 2018.

³For the Greek text, see Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica Scholia vetera in Apollonium Rhodium* (1813;

These two examples from Greco-Roman literature demonstrate that to grieve a deity was a serious offence that would bring significant punishment. While Ephesians is a far cry from the pagan piety of Sabaco or the foolish offence of Phineas, these examples show that the language of grieving a deity would have been known and understood at least in some parts of the Greco-Roman world. Therefore, the initial conclusion from the Greco-Roman background is that it is hardly surprising that Paul would urge the Ephesians to live toward God in such a way as to not grieve God's Spirit.

Grieving the Spirit in *The Shepherd of Hermas*

Grieving the Spirit is a major theme of *The Shepherd of Hermas*, especially in the *Commandments*.⁴ *The Shepherd of Hermas* post-dates Ephesians as a second-century Christian document and therefore cannot serve as the basis for Paul's thought. But it can be a window in the milieu of early Christian thought on sins that grieve the Spirit.

As a caveat, there is much debate regarding the pneumatology of *The Shepherd*, whose use of the term *pneuma* is ambiguous: is it best explained by anthropology, angelology, or theology, or even some mixture of all three? Still, for our purposes, we need not render a verdict in this case, for all we need to show is that the language of grieving a spirit (or "the Spirit") was picked up and utilized in early Christianity. Whether or not the language of *The Shepherd* accurately reflects Paul's language, we can still see in it an early Christian reflection on what it meant to grieve the s/Spirit.⁵

public domain; published by Fleischer in the European Libraries collection, Bavarian State Library; digitizing sponsor Google, sourced at <https://books.google.com/books?id=oBI-AAAAcAAJ&hl=en>), 148. For the digitized page, see https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_oBI-AAAAcAAJ/page/n167, accessed Nov. 3, 2018. For the full English translation of lines 311–15, see R. C. Seaton, as quoted by https://www.gutenberg.org/files/830/830-h/830-h.htm#link2H_4_0002, accessed Nov. 3, 2018.

⁴For another grieving text from early Christianity, see *Diogn.* 11:7, where Christians are enjoined not to "grieve grace" (*charin mē lypōn*). It is possible that "grace" is a substitute for "Spirit," for "grace" "gives understanding, reveals mysteries, announces seasons, rejoices over the faithful, is given to those who seek" (11:5). The sin that likely grieves is faithlessness to God (11:5). Instead, Christians should hold fast to the entirety of God's word (11:6). For a grieving text that may derive in part from Judaism, see the Apocalypse of Sedrach 14:10 (2nd–5th cent AD), which states it is possible to "cause sorrow to my angels" (see S. Agourides, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James S. Charlesworth [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1983], 1:613). Those who cause sorrow are those who do not pay attention to the gospel and do not show reverence to God even in church (14:10). They live in sin and despair (14:7–9), and "they do that which my divinity hates" (14:9). See also *T. Isaac* 4:40, "But you shall take care and be alert that you do not grieve the spirit of the Lord" (OTP 1:908), which seems to refer to a variety of sins or uncleanness.

⁵For the Spirit in *Hermas*, see Bogdan Gabriel Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology: Clement of Alexandria and Other Early Christian Witnesses* (Boston: Brill, 2009), 113–38; Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations* (3rd ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 444; Carolyn Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1999), 31–34; C. Haas,

According to *The Shepherd*, that which grieves the Spirit is sin, sadness, pollution, defilement, and the devil's presence.⁶ In *Commandment 10*, the sins that grieve the Spirit are double-mindedness (*dipsychia*) and an angry temper (*oxycholia*). When a person is double-minded, "grief (*hē lypē*) enters them and grieves the Holy Spirit (*lypei to pneuma to hagion*) and crushes him" (10.2.2). Similarly, when a person has an angry temper, they are "grieved (*lypeitai*) by what they have done" (10.2.3). Both double-mindedness and an angry temper, then, "grieve the spirit" (*lypei to pneuma*, 10.2.4), both the human spirit and the divine Spirit. They grieve the Spirit for different reasons—one for reasons of mere failure at a task, and another for reasons of sin from which there needs to be repentance (10.2.1–4). If a person persists in that which grieves the Spirit, the Spirit will intercede against the person and "leave" him (*aphistēmi*, 10.2.5), because the Spirit does not tolerate "grief or distress" (10.2.6).

Even though the *lypeō* word group does not occur in *Commandment 5*, there is a conceptual similarity, for once again an angry temper (*oxycholia*) is a sin to put away, in contrast with patience. Additionally, there is a contrast between the Spirit of God and the devil. The Holy Spirit is said to dwell within a person, but if an evil temper or an evil spirit is present, the place is polluted or defiled, and the Spirit is "distressed" (*stenochōeitai*) and seeks to leave (5.1.2–3). "For the Lord lives in patience, but the devil lives in an angry temper" (5.1.3).

Similarly, in *Commandment 3*, Hermas is commanded not to allow an evil conscience to coexist with the Spirit of truth, nor bring grief (*lypēn*) to the godly and true Spirit (3.4). The emphasis of *Commandment 3* is the necessity of putting away all that is false and living instead in truthful ways, including ways that speak the truth to one another.⁷

As a summary, the sins listed in *The Shepherd of Hermas* that are said to grieve the Spirit are double-mindedness, an angry temper, and an evil conscience that issues in false speech. The result of grieving the Spirit is loss of the Spirit's intercession and presence.

One more point regarding *The Shepherd of Hermas* needs to be noted. There are a number of points of overlap between Eph 4 and *The Shepherd of Hermas*, suggesting the possibility that *The Shepherd* reappropriated Paul's language (whether faithfully or not). Notice the similarity in words and phrases:

- "Grieve the Holy Spirit" (Eph 4:30 = *Mand.* 10.1–3)

"Die Pneumatologie des 'Hirten des Hermas,'" ANRW 2.27.1 (1993): 552–86.

⁶Note the *gar* clauses in Herm. *Mand.* 5.1.3; 10.2.6, which show the divine Spirit is in view, in concert with the human spirit.

⁷See also Herm. *Vis.* 4.3.4, where grief and distress (*lypē/stenochōria*) are the "dross" that is burned away by the purifying fire.

- The virtue of “patience” (*makrothymia*; Eph 4:2 = *Mand.* 5.1–3)
- A “place” (*topos*) for the devil (*diabolos*; Eph 4:27 = *Mand.* 5.1.2–4)
- The need to “put away” (*airō*) all kinds of anger (*pikria*, *thymos*, *orgē*; Eph 4:31 = *Mand.* 10.2.5; see also 5.2.4)
- The significance of “truth” (*alētheia*) versus “falsehood” (*pseudos*, *pseudomai*, *pseusma*; Eph 4:15, 25 = *Mand.* 3.1–6)
- The need to watch one’s words (*pas logos sapos ek tou stomatos hymōn mē ekporeuesthō* in Eph 4:29 = *pasa alētheia ek tou stomatos sou ekporeuesthō* in *Mand.* 3.1)

These similarities suggest the possibility that *The Shepherd* alluded to Eph 4 and reworked its content in *Commandments* 3, 5, and 10. Even if an airtight case cannot be made for such, Paul and *The Shepherd* both mention grieving the Spirit in the context of sins of speech, anger, and falsehood. To be clear, Paul and *The Shepherd* are different in significant ways, for unlike *The Shepherd*, Paul never threatens Christians concerning the loss of the Spirit’s intercession and presence. Rather, the Spirit is the seal that protects, guards, and marks out Christians until and for the day of redemption. Still, it seems that Paul and *The Shepherd* agree that the sin that grieves the Spirit has something to do with sins of speech, anger, and falsehood.

To summarize thus far our study of the background of grieving the Spirit, to grieve a deity flows from a serious sin. The sin might include revealing too many divine secrets (Phineas) or various sins of speech, anger, double-mindedness or falsehood (*The Shepherd*). If we think of falsehood or duplicity as the fundamental sin that gives rise to the others, then the sin that fundamentally grieves a deity is faithlessness to that deity (see also *Apoc. Sedr.* 14:7–10; *Diogn.* 11:5–7), a faithlessness that can be manifested in various forms of mistreatment of others.

Hence, grieving a deity can bring various forms of divine judgment. Sabaco either had to slaughter all the priests or abdicate the throne; Phineas was afflicted with old age and blindness; and *The Shepherd* warns that the Holy Spirit will leave the person who persists in the sin that grieves the Spirit.

Given this background, it is hardly surprising that Paul would urge the Ephesians to not grieve the Spirit. Even before their conversion, it is conceivable that the Ephesians could have had a concept that a deity can be grieved or saddened or distressed. Additionally, the language of grieving a deity is descriptive of a serious offence against the deity. Hence, Paul’s choice of grieving language in his prohibition against sin is a choice that heightens the Ephesians’ awareness of the seriousness of the sin prohibited. Certainly, the seriousness of the sin is already connoted by both the title “the Holy Spirit of God” and the relative clause “by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” However, the addition of the verb

“grieve” even further adds to or heightens the seriousness of the prohibition. Finally, there are some significant differences between Paul and these other texts. Contra *The Shepherd*, Paul does not warn that the Spirit will leave a Christian if the Christian grieves the Spirit. Paul never states the Spirit will leave the Christian, not because Paul has a lower view of the severity of the sin, but rather because Paul has a higher view of the effectiveness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which redeems us from present sin (Eph 1:7) and seals for final redemption (Eph 1:13–14).

Grieving the Spirit in the Old Testament

In addition to the Greco-Roman background and evidence from *The Shepherd of Hermas*, a brief survey of Israel’s grieving of the Spirit in the Old Testament may help clarify what Paul means in Eph 4:30. Unlike *The Shepherd* and in distinction from the Greco-Roman literature, the Old Testament is potentially a fruitful corpus to discern influence on Paul’s thought.

I looked at every instance of the verb *lypeō* and the noun *lypē* in the LXX. The words are used almost exclusively with reference to human beings who are grieving or sorrowful. The only instance that refers to Israel grieving God—and even this is debated due to whether the LXX is a right translation of the MT—is Ezek 16:43, which states that Israel grieved God for reasons of faithlessness.⁸ Judah had “played the whore” (16:41) by worshiping other gods. That which grieved God—note the holistic “all these things” (*en pasi toutois*)—is idolatry.

If we expanded our study to include terminology from outside the *lypeō* word group, we would find there are other terms that can describe God’s sorrow or anger for sin. In Hebrew, the key term is the verb *nhm*, which appears in those famous “divine grieving” texts of the Old Testament, namely, Gen 6 and 1 Sam 15. In Gen 6:6–7, the verb is used twice to refer to the sorrow God is said to have for creating humanity. Similarly, in 1 Sam 15:11, 35 the verb is used to refer to God’s sorrow for making Saul king. Of course, very famously in 1 Sam 15:29 God is said not to have sorrow inasmuch as he is not human (cf. Ps 110:4). Now, these are fascinating texts as we construct our doctrine of God, but whether they are in Paul’s mind in Eph 4:30 is doubtful inasmuch as the LXX and the Jewish revisors (Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion) never translate *nhm* with the *lypeō* word group in these texts but rather use other terms to express the idea, such as *enthymeomai*, *thymoō*, *parakaleō*, *metameleomai*, or *metanoēō*. In other words, God “considers” or “thinks over” (*enthymeomai*) the matter

⁸Ezekiel 16:43, *anth hōn ouk emnēsthēs tēn hēmeran tēs nēpiotētos sou kai elypeis me en pasi toutois, kai egō idou tas hodous sou eis kephalēn sou dedōka, legei kyrios; kai houtōs epoiēsas tēn asebeian epi pasais tais anomiais sou.*

-MT: *wtrgzy ly* – vocalized as a Qal = “you were agitated with/at me”; vocalized as a Hiphil = “you agitated me” (so LXX)

-LXX: *elypeis me*

in Gen 6:6, and he is “angry” (*thymoō*) with humanity in Gen 6:7, but he is not “grieved” in the sense of *lypeō*. Similarly, in 1 Sam 15:11, 35, God is “incited” (*parakaleō*) against Saul and expresses his “sorrow” or “regret” (*metameleomai*) for making Saul king, but he is not “grieved” in the sense of *lypeō*. Hence, it is difficult to see an allusion to these “divine grieving” texts for lack of verbal links. One might argue, of course, for a conceptual link, but we can say no more than this.

Perhaps a more fruitful search for the OT background is the story of Israel’s wilderness generation wherein the Holy Spirit is said to have been grieved in Ps 78:40 and Isa 63:10. Neither text uses the *lypeō* word group, but especially Isa 63:10 is closer to Eph 4:30 because it is the Holy Spirit who is said to be grieved.⁹

Psalm 78, which is written for “the coming generation” (78:4), recounts both “the glorious deeds of the Lord” (78:4) and Israel’s faithlessness in response to those glorious deeds. Specifically, God’s glorious deeds are his redemptive works at the exodus, and Israel’s faithlessness is specifically that of the wilderness generation subsequent to the exodus (cf. 78:9–16, 17–31, 32–55, 56–72). In Ps 78:40, Asaph laments, “How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness and grieved him (*yaatsivuhu, parōrgisan auton*) in the desert!” Verse 40a describes the sin against God (rebellion), verse 40b the effect the sin had against God (grieved him). The nature of the rebellion is clear from the context: lack of faith (78:32), false and lying speech (*epseusanto*, 78:36), and covenant infidelity (78:37). The seriousness and nature of their rebellion is clarified by 78:41, which names God as “the Holy One of Israel” (*ton hagion tou Israēl*).

Similarly, in Isa 63:10 Israel “grieved his Holy Spirit” (*weitsevu eth-ruah qodsho, parōxyman to pneuma to hagion autou*). Like Ps 78, Isa 63:7–14 recounts “the steadfast love of the LORD” (63:7), manifestly at the exodus (63:8–9). The presence of God’s Spirit among his people is highlighted in this testimony, for God “put in the midst of them his Holy Spirit” (63:11), and “the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest” (63:14)—a reference to the tabernacle and the entrance into the promised land, respectively.¹⁰ At the same time, God’s presence in, among, and at the head of his people provided them an opportunity to grieve him (63:10). In the context, the sin that grieved God was Israel’s covenant infidelity, in contrast to his expectation that they would not be false toward him (63:8).¹¹ Hence, the presence of the Spirit among Israel was a sign of Israel’s redemption from Egypt and Israel’s covenant relationship with God. The Spirit’s presence was a function of God’s steadfast love for his people. This covenant relationship made their grieving of him all the more tragic and heinous, for they were grieving the one who loved and had redeemed them.

⁹For another less similar text, see Deut 32:16. For the stories of Israel’s rebellion in the wilderness, see especially Exod 17:1–7; Num 11:1–15; 14:1–12; 16:30; 20:1–13; and 21:4–9.

¹⁰So J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1993), 515.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 513–14.

This brief survey of how Israel grieved God's Spirit in the Old Testament may help clarify what Paul means in Eph 4:30. As aforementioned, Eph 4:30 does not seem to be a quote of any Septuagintal text, not only because no scriptural citation formula appears (e.g., *gegraptai*), but also because the verb *lypeō* doesn't occur in these contexts (even in the versions of the OG). Rather other verbs appear, such as *parorgizō* in Ps 78:40 and *paroxynō* in Isa 63:10.

However, even though the verb is different, Eph 4:30 may echo Isa 63:10 inasmuch as both Eph 4:30 and Isa 63:10 describe the effect of a particular sin on the Holy Spirit. And even with the verb differences, it is not as though *lypeō* is much semantically different from *parorgizō* or *paroxynō*. Perhaps Paul's choice of *lypeō* is a way to distance the church's relationship toward God from that of Israel in the Old Testament—in the new covenant one cannot "irritate" or "anger" God like was possible in the old covenant, but one can only "grieve" God now.¹² But even still, the verbs are not much semantically different.

Besides these verbal similarities, there are also conceptual similarities. Like Israel, the church is in a (new) covenant relationship with God. They have experienced a new exodus or redemption, not only in the present (Eph 1:7) but also in the future (Eph 1:13–14; 4:30). Also, they have the Spirit dwelling in their midst, as was the case with Israel (Isa 63:11–14), which serves both as a privilege and as a motivator for holiness. Hence, on the basis of conceptual similarities and perhaps verbal echoes of Israel's wilderness story, we can say that Paul thinks the situation of the Ephesians is at least analogous to Israel's.¹³ Paul is concerned that the Ephesians not treat God in the same way that Israel's wilderness generation treated him, so as to grieve God or cause him sorrow.

If this analogy is granted—which I think is tentatively legitimate—then it is likely that Israel's sin that grieved God is the same sin that Paul is concerned about, which would likewise grieve God's Spirit. Israel's sin fundamentally was idolatry and covenant infidelity (esp. cf. Ps 78:36; Isa 63:8; Ezek 16:43). Israel was false and duplicitous toward God, which can be called testing God, rebelling against God, failing to believe God, or failing to treat God as holy. And this fundamental sin of idolatry and infidelity manifested itself in all kinds of sins of speech, especially quarreling and grumbling. If this analysis is correct, then this fits quite well with Paul's concern in Eph 4, which also is concerned with sinful speech that originates from duplicity toward God and one another. This leads us to the final section, an analysis of Eph 4:30 in its context.

¹²Perhaps this is a way where an already/not yet eschatological framework can help us balance, on the one hand, God's present saving work in Christ (see Eph 2:5–6), and on the other hand, our continued struggle against sin as Christians in this world.

¹³One could say "typological" as well as "analogous," but establishing a typological relationship between Israel and the church is beyond the scope of this paper.

Analyzing Ephesians 4:30

The structure of Ephesians is widely recognized as having two sections: 1:1–3:21 and 4:1–6:24. The structure of 4:1–6:24 is determined in large part by the programmatic term *peripateō*, which occurs six times in the section (4:1, 17 [twice]; 5:2, 8, 15).¹⁴ Its programmatic character is evident from its appearance in 4:1, which is the heading for 4:1–16 as well as the entire ethical section.

In 4:17 Paul begins a new section by highlighting the need to walk in a way different from unbelieving Gentiles. Further, 5:1–2 transitions from one set of specific commands and prohibitions (4:25–32) to another (5:3–14).¹⁵ Verses 17–32 are divided into two subsections: (1) verses 17–24 provide general instructions on how to avoid living like unbelieving Gentiles (vv. 17–19) and how to live instead as members of the new humanity (vv. 20–24);¹⁶ and (2) verses 25–32 provide specific instructions on how to live on the basis of their new life in Christ. Finally, in 5:1–2 Paul summarizes the general and specific instructions of 4:17–32 by calling the Ephesians to imitate God and walk in love. Thus, the structure of 4:17–5:2 is as follows:

¹⁴Rightly Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 581; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC, vol. 42 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 274–75; Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 194. The term also occurs twice in 1:1–3:21, both in 2:1–10 (vv. 2, 10), where it also appears to have a structuring function, for it forms an inclusio around 2:1–10. In 2:10 God prepares in advance that believers will walk (*peripateō*) in good works, which anticipates the second half of the letter.

¹⁵Commentators are divided over where to place 5:1–2 in the outline of Ephesians. Some view it as the conclusion to 4:17–32 or 4:25–32 (T. K. Abbott, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*, ICC [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1897], 146; Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, ZECNT [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010], 298; Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, ICC [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998], 443; Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* [New York: R. Carter and Brothers, 1856; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1954], 247; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 294; Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999], 335n262; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary*, trans. H. Heron [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991], 192–93, 204; Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 248; Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, BECNT [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010], 292–93), whereas others view it as the introduction to the next section (Markus Barth, *Ephesians*, AB, vol. 34 [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974], 555; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 643; Brooke Foss Westcott, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: The Greek Text with Notes and Addenda* [London: Macmillan, 1906], 75). In a sense both views are true, for 5:1–2 is a transition from 4:17–32 to 5:3–14. Retrospectively, it summarizes 4:17–32, and prospectively, it summarizes 5:3–14. John Muddiman (*A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, BNTC [London: Continuum, 2001], 223–24) thinks 4:25–5:5 is a unit because 5:6 is asyndetic, but asyndeton does not necessarily have a macrosyntactical function in Pauline paraenesis (cf. 4:28–29, 31; Rom 12:14–21).

¹⁶Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 275) thinks vv. 17–24 are, along with 4:1–16, the basis for the rest of the ethical section of the letter.

General instructions (4:17–24)

Do not live like the Gentiles (vv. 17–19)

Live as the image of God (vv. 20–24)

Specific instructions (4:25–32)

Summary: imitate God and walk in love (5:1–2)

Paul’s general instructions in 4:17–24 are applied in specific ways to the Ephesians in 4:25–32. Because they are members of the new covenant community and the new creation order established by Christ (4:20–24), “therefore” (*dio*, 4:25) they should live in ways commensurate with their new status in Christ.¹⁷

The structure of 4:25–32 consists of five sections featuring positive and negative commands. This structure is portrayed in the following table.¹⁸

Verse	- / +		Stipulations	Reason/ Purpose
25	- +		Putting off what is false Speak truth to your neighbor	Because (<i>hoti</i>) members of one another
26–27	+ -	<i>kai</i>	Be angry And do not sin	
	- -	<i>de</i>	Do not be angry long And don’t give the devil a place	
28	- +	<i>de</i>	Do not steal But labor, working with your hands	To (<i>hina</i>) share with those in need

¹⁷The omission of *dio* (Ⲣ⁴⁶) is not supported by the external evidence. That *dio* looks back to vv. 20–24 is the majority view of commentators (e.g., Barth, *Ephesians*, 511).

¹⁸Perhaps of note is that the imperatives throughout the passage and the participial impv (4:25a) are almost exclusively present imperatives. Only the participial impv in 4:25a (*apothemenoī*) and the impv in 4:31 (*arthētō*) are aorists. One could argue that the aorists bracket the text, or that the aorists speak to that which has already happened at conversion. More helpful, though, is the traditional explanation that aorist imperatives reflect specific commands and present imperatives reflect general principles. See also the work of Benjamin L. Merkle, whose paper at the 2016 ETS annual conference in San Antonio argued that “a verb’s semantic meaning often has a significant influence upon the tense-form that is selected by the author” (“Verbal Aspect and Imperatives: Ephesians as a Test Case,” handout, 1).

29–30	– +	<i>alla</i> <i>kai</i>	Do not speak rotten words But speak words that edify And do not grieve the Spirit	To (<i>hina</i>) give grace to those who hear By whom you were sealed for future redemption
31–32	– +	<i>de</i>	Put away various kinds of anger But be kind, compassionate, forgiving one another	Just as also (<i>kathōs kai</i>) God has forgiven you

Each section has a negative and a positive command, and, with the exception of Eph 4:26–27, there is a causal or purpose clause that provides motivation for the command. Each new section is marked by asyndeton, although in my estimation 4:27 is closely linked with 4:26 because both deal with anger. Ephesians 4:26 is also a quote from Ps 4:4, and Eph 4:27 seems to comment on the meaning of that verse.

Several observations should be noted from the structure with regard to the meaning of Eph 4:30. First, the initial command in 4:25 enjoins Christians to speak truth to one another. Since this command to put away falsehood and speak what is true heads the list, it sets the tone for the remaining commands.¹⁹ Hence, not grieving the Spirit must be understood within the framework of acting truthfully towards one another.

Second, the content of the commands pertains to life in the community.²⁰ Each command and prohibition cannot be kept by oneself. Ephesians 4:25 mentions “the neighbor” and the fact that we are “members of one another (*allēlōn*).” Probably the anger of 4:26–27 is directed toward people. Likewise, the command to refrain from stealing in 4:28 is a command to respect and protect the property of one another. In 4:29, the reason to refrain from speaking rotten words is because people have ears to hear! In 4:31–32, we are called to put away various kinds of anger, and instead be kind, compassionate, and forgiving to one another (*heautois*). Hence, that which grieves the Spirit is likely a communal sin, a sin against one another.

¹⁹This is also evident from the term *to pseudos*, which is in stark contrast to the emphasis on truth in vv. 20–24 (Barth, *Ephesians*, 511).

²⁰Barth (*Ephesians*, 525) says it well: “Ecclesiology is ethics, and ethics is ecclesiology.”

Third, with this said, Eph 4:30 stands out inasmuch as it is the only sin in the section that explicitly is against God. Even though the accent of the passage is on communal sins, sin isn't merely horizontal but vertical as well. Perhaps there is a contrast here with 4:27, which says not to give a place or an opportunity for the devil. In 4:30 it is stated that Christians have been sealed with the Spirit, which likely attests to the Spirit's indwelling presence within believers. Hence, one reason not to give the devil a place in us, so to speak, is because the Holy Spirit already dwells in believers. If the Spirit's presence in 4:30 is to be contrasted with the possibility of allowing the devil to influence us in 4:27, then perhaps the sin that would grieve the Spirit has to do with anger, which would be the means by which the devil gains a foothold. Anger plays a major role in this list, appearing in 4:26–27, 31, so it is possible that that which grieves the Spirit is unrighteous anger.

Fourth, even though anger plays a key role in the list, the sin that grieves the Spirit is likely closely related to the sin of speaking rotten words of Eph 4:29.²¹ Notice that 4:30 is not asyndetic but is correlated with 4:29 by means of the conjunction *kai*. Hence, 4:30 is not its own section but is an additional negative command that clarifies 4:29.²² According to 4:29, when we speak, we speak in the presence of “those who hear” (*tois akouousin*), such that we have opportunity to bestow grace to one another. But 4:30 adds that we speak also in the presence of the Spirit himself. The upshot of seeing 4:29 linked with 4:30 then, is that we have two audiences when we speak; our words affect both audiences. We can tear others down and so grieve the Spirit, or we can build others up and so delight or please the Spirit.²³

To summarize, the sin that grieves the Spirit is our rotten words that tear down other Christians (Eph 4:29). More broadly, grieving the Spirit occurs when we feel and express unrighteous anger towards one another (4:26–27, 31). Within the passage as a whole, we grieve the Spirit when we fail to act truthfully towards one another (4:25).

²¹For a close link between sins of speech and the Spirit, see 5:18–19; 1 Thess 5:18–19; CD 5.11–12.

²²Rightly Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 631; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 307–08; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 204–05; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 317; Witherington, *Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 300. Arnold (*Ephesians*, 305–06) sees v. 30 as linked syntactically with v. 29 but then suggests a broader application of v. 30 to the other commands. Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 308) and O'Brien (*Ephesians*, 345) note the parallel between the additional motivations not to give an opportunity to the devil (v. 27) and not to grieve the Spirit (v. 30), which supports viewing v. 30 as an additional motivation to v. 29. Best (*Ephesians*, 460) thinks v. 30 is rather general and serves as a “bridge” from vv. 25–29 to vv. 31–32 (similarly Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 229), while Mitton (*Ephesians*, 172) argues v. 30 should be linked with v. 31. Snodgrass (*Ephesians*, 249) argues v. 30 is the most important motivation in 4:25–5:2. Heil's attempt (*Ephesians*, 199–201) to make vv. 30–32 serve as the chiasmic mirror of vv. 17–19 is forced, with only a repetition of the terms *theos* and *pas*.

²³Likely “grieving” the Spirit is the binary opposite of “pleasing” or “delighting” the Spirit. See the *osmēn euōdias* of 5:2 and the *euaireston* of Eph 5:9–10. Note also the contrast between “grieving” and “pleasing” in Tob 4:3, *poiei to areston autē kai mē lypēsēs autēn*.

Within Eph 4:30 itself, the reason we should not grieve the Spirit is twofold: (1) he is the holy God (4:30a), and (2) he is our seal for the day of redemption (4:30b). As God, he is holy. Nowhere else in Paul's letters does he describe the Spirit with a full title given in 4:30a, "the Holy Spirit of God." The adjective "holy" here is not a meaningless word but functions to describe what God's Spirit is like. His holy character is the basis and the goal for our character—hence the call to imitate God in 4:32–5:2. In Ephesians, Christians are already holy (1:1, 15, 18; 2:19; 3:8, 18; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18). We are part of a holy temple (2:21) built on the foundation of holy apostles and prophets (3:5). However, it would be a misreading to think that Christians in this life can never act contrary to God's holiness. We are holy now positionally in Christ (1:3–14), and it is likely that the filling of the Spirit in 5:18 is transformative. But it is also true that we will one day be holy in an ethical sense (1:4; 5:27, "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing"). Even 4:30 reminds us that even though we have been redeemed (1:7), we still look forward to the day of redemption (4:30). It is possible for Christians to grieve the Spirit! Hence, Paul's reminder that we live in the presence of "the Holy Spirit of God" should motivate us to further holiness.²⁴

The second reason we should not grieve the Spirit in Eph 4:30 is because he is our seal for the day of redemption. As our seal, he is the mark of ownership that we belong to God. Hence, we should live as those who belong to him, not to "the prince of the power of the air," the (other) *pneuma* in Ephesians "who works now in the sons of disobedience" (2:2). Having been now freed from that power, how much more should we live in obedience to the one to whom we now belong? How unnatural would it be for us to let the sun go down now on our anger and thus give that old power, the devil, a place once more!²⁵ This is not to say that Christians can once again belong to the devil, for the Spirit as our seal also probably connotes his protection of us. Still, the point remains: because we belong to another, the Holy Spirit, Paul urges Christians not to grieve him.

Conclusion

In this paper we have analyzed the background of grieving a deity in the Greco-Roman world, *The Shepherd of Hermas*, and the OT. According to the Greco-Roman background, to grieve a deity is the product of a serious sin, and the result brings significant judgment. Paul would agree that grieving the Holy Spirit is a product of sin, and the weighty phrase "the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" attests to the seriousness of that sin. In distinction from the Greco-Roman background, though, Paul writes to those who have already been redeemed and have the Spirit as a seal and a

²⁴On Isa 63:10, C. Westermann (*Isaiah 40–66* [SCM: 1966], 388; quoted in Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 514) notes, "To grieve God's goodness is to assail his holiness . . . The nerve-center of all that happens in history consists in the fact that, when God's holiness has been wounded, things cannot go on as they are."

²⁵This is not to say that Christians can be demon-possessed or once again live in the 2:2 reality again. Rather, 4:27 speaks to the inordinate influence the devil can have even within Christians today.

guarantee for future redemption.

According to *The Shepherd of Hermas*, various sins can grieve the Spirit, such as speech, anger, double-mindedness, or falsehood. *The Shepherd* warns that the Holy Spirit will leave a person who persists in the sin that grieves the Spirit. We saw that there are a number of points of overlap between Eph 4 and *The Shepherd*, and we suggested the possibility that *The Shepherd* reappropriated or reworked Paul's language (whether faithfully or not). *The Shepherd's* emphases on speech, anger, and falsehood fits remarkably well Paul's emphases in Eph 4:25–32. This similarity corroborates our understanding of the sin in Eph 4 that grieves the Spirit. Paul differs from *The Shepherd* especially in that the Spirit is a seal and a guarantee for future redemption. Paul never threatens Christians of the loss of the Spirit's intercession and presence as is found in *The Shepherd*.

According to the Old Testament background, Israel's wilderness generation grieved the Spirit according to Ps 78:40; Isa 63:10; and Ezek 16:43. Although Eph 4:30 does not seem to quote any Septuagintal text, we saw enough verbal and conceptual similarities to think an echo of Israel's story is plausible. In these texts, the fundamental sin was Israel's idolatry and covenant infidelity. Their rebellion manifested itself in grumbling, quarreling, and false and lying speech (Ps 78:32, 36; Isa 63:8) against "the Holy One of Israel" (Ps 78:41). These sins are especially similar to Paul's emphasis on putting away falsehood and speaking only what is true with one's neighbor (Eph 4:25). Like Israel, and even to a greater degree than Israel due to the new covenant, the church has been redeemed and has the Spirit of God dwelling in their midst. His presence is both a privilege and a motivator for holiness. Hence, unlike Israel, Christians should do what is pleasing (and not grieving) to the Lord by speaking words that build one another up, by refraining from unrighteous anger towards one another, and by putting away falsehood and acting with truth towards one another.²⁶

²⁶The difference between Israel and the Ephesians, though, is stark: whereas—in the words of Stephen—Israel "resisted the Holy Spirit" because they were "stiff-necked and uncircumcised in their hearts and ears" (Acts 7:51), the Ephesians had received the life-giving Spirit at conversion and thus no longer had hard hearts (Eph 1:13; 4:19; Abbott [*Ephesians*, 144] rightly notes the Spirit's indwelling presence is implied in 4:30. Having been sealed with the Spirit, they were now freed from sin's power and freed for faithfulness. Remarkably, in the midst of Israel's grumbling in the wilderness (Num 11:1–30), Moses had wished for a day when all God's people might have the Spirit (Num 11:29). Perhaps he was merely expressing a desire for assistance in leading the people, but in the context of Numbers 11 the implication is that if all God's people had the Spirit, they would know the Lord intimately and not grumble anymore but remain faithful to him (Rightly R. Dennis Cole, *Numbers*, NAC, vol. 3b [Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000], 195–96). Moses's wish was granted at Pentecost when the Spirit was poured out on all God's people (Acts 2:16–21; cf. Isa 59:21; Joel 2:28–29), including the first Ephesian believers (Acts 19:1–7). Hence, in Eph 4:30 Paul combines the ethic of the old covenant—defined as faithfulness to the Lord—with the framework of the new.

Neither Forsaken nor Estranged from God: Clarifying What May Rightly be Said about the Death of God in the Death of Christ



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In his 1972 work *The Crucified God*, Jürgen Moltmann, arguing from the premise that since Jesus is God, everything predicated of Jesus may also be predicated of God, affirmed that when Jesus was crucified, God was crucified; a God who is classically defined as both impassible and immortal both suffered and died, thus placing those attributes in question.¹ Arguing further, Moltmann asserted that Christ not only died with respect to the humanity that had been prepared for him, but also, in some sense, with respect to his divinity as well. Death being by definition a separation, Christ *as God* suffered a death unique in kind when the Father “withdrew” from him, “abandoned” him, and “cursed him,” and “rejected him,” opening up a rift “between God and God” and prompting Christ’s so-called “cry of dereliction”: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt 27:46; Mark 15:34 cf. Ps 22:1).² Thus, death implicated properly not only the humanity of Jesus, but also his divinity; in fact, by mutual consent of God’s three persons, Christ’s death fundamentally “reconstructed” the Trinity into something other than what it previously had been.³ Such a death, Moltmann argued, was more horrific than any death that mere humans might experience.⁴

¹*Der gekreuzigte Gott* (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1972); trans. *The Crucified God* by R. A. Wilson and John Bowden (London: SCM, 1974), esp. 200–290. In his treatment Moltmann tempers the raw claims of God’s death found in Hegel and Nietzsche and massages the less organized claims in Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 4.1, trans. G. W. Bromiley, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. E. Torrance (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956), *passim*.

²Most strongly, perhaps, is his statement that “the cross of the Son separated God from God to the utmost degree of enmity and difference” (Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 252; but see his sixth chapter).

³In Moltmann’s words, the Father “suffers the death of his Fatherhood in the death of the Son” (*ibid.*, 243).

⁴I bring out this point and, earlier, the issue of divine impassibility, because together they offer the impetus for and crux of Moltmann’s understanding. An impassible God could not possibly relate with the horrors that man had perpetrated on himself in two World Wars and the Holocaust. Instead, God had to be passible in order to relate with mankind—to suffer as much as and even more than we.

Moltmann's thesis (or cluster of theses) was well received in its day, particularly on a war-ravaged continent appalled by the progress of twentieth-century human depravity.⁵ Particularly among those who saw Christ's atonement as his expression of radical solidarity with the socially marginalized and forsaken, relief was found in the fact that Christ's experience of injustice, suffering, and death was greater in degree than that of the most forsaken of Adam's other sons. Only by so dying could Christ truly relate with all of mankind. Among evangelicals and especially those who held to a substitutionary satisfaction view of atonement, Moltmann's theory was slower to catch on, but even here parts of Moltmann's theory made some sense, and certain features of his distinctive Christology, especially his use of Ps 22 as proof of Trinitarian abandonment, began to trickle into modern evangelical theology such that for many these ideas are practically assumed today. Evangelical hymnody has also begun to evolve to match the trend: no longer had we only Charles Wesley's confusing (but ultimately, I think, defensible) wonder at the "mystery all—th' Immortal dies" coupled with amazement "that thou my God should'st die for me";⁶ now we have songs suggesting the crucifixion saw "Jesus forsaken, God estranged from God," lines that reflects startling Moltmannian specificity.⁷ I find this a trend alarming both for its import for Christology and particularly the atonement, but also for its subtle impact on the trending shift of evangelical mission away from proclamational evangelism and toward social justice.

It is the purpose of this article to explore afresh the mystery of the death of Christ and to discover what may properly be stated concerning the fact and nature of the death of God in the death of Christ. Specifically, it will answer two questions: (1) When Christ died on the cross, was the Second Person of the Trinity abandoned by the First such that it may be truly said that God was estranged from God? and, having answered this first question in the negative, (2) in what sense (if any) may it properly be stated that God died?

Otherwise, Christ could not be truly described as having "taken up our pain and borne our suffering" (Isa 53:4). Moltmann should not be classed with the process theists; still it is not surprising that he appeals to Whitehead in his attempts to deconstruct western forms of Trinitarianism and especially the doctrine of impassibility (*Crucified God*, 250, 281, 286, 287).

⁵Eberhard Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, trans. Darrell Guder (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983); Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1996), 9; Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, *The Triune God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 49.

⁶Charles Wesley, "And Can It Be That I Should Gain," *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns*, ed. John Wesley (London: Woolmer, 1738).

⁷Chris Anderson, "His Robes for Mine" (Lilburn, GA: Church Works Media, 2008), available with doctrinal notes by the author at <https://www.churchworksmedia.com/product/his-ropes-for-mine/>. Other modern hymns that reflect the idea of divine death-as-abandonment include Stuart Townend, "How Deep the Father's Love for Us" (Brentwood, TN: Thankyou Music, 1995); Keith Getty, "Gethsemane Hymn" (Brentwood, TN: Thankyou Music, 2008); Dan Forrest, "Forsaken" (Columbus, OH: Breckenhorst, 2014); and others.

Psalm 22, Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34, and the “Forsaking” of Christ

For many, the understanding that Jesus Christ was abandoned by his Father on the cross is beyond dispute—Christ assumes this fact, it would seem, when he cries out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” What could be plainer?⁸ But as we begin to scrutinize this elusive bit of intertextuality a bit more closely, the conclusion that Christ was forsaken by God becomes less certain. Indeed, as the thesis for this section of my article, I assert that Christ, by employing Ps 22:1, actually affirmed that he was *not* forsaken by God.

The issue at stake here is not so much exegetical as it is hermeneutical, though I will make several exegetical observations to establish the hermeneutical approach I am defending. The question, simply, is how (and if) Jesus was using Ps 22 as a whole when he quoted its first verse on the cross. Many assume, due especially to John’s use of a fulfillment formula to describe the disposal of Christ’s garments (John 19:24; cf. Ps 22:18), that Ps 22 as a whole and verse 1 specifically must be prophetic. Added to this is “an astonishing number of close parallels to the events of Jesus’ crucifixion”:

- (1) besiegement with insults (vv. 6–7, 12, 16)
- (2) disjointment of the victim and description of his life as being poured out like water (John 19:34 [?]; cf. Ps 22:14)
- (3) extreme thirst (v. 15)
- (4) pierced hands and feet (v. 16)
- (5) exposure of the bones, whether by injury, want, or nakedness (v. 17)⁹

The number and specificity of these parallels, together with the apparent *unsuitability* of these details to any known suffering by the historical David, suggest that the whole psalm represents a forward-looking genre—either a direct prophecy or some sort of typological/Christotelic device.

The idea of strict prophecy, while historically storied,¹⁰ is unlikely. **First**, the psalm is very plainly a lament that concludes in confidence—there are no internal, rhetorical features that suggest that it is prophetic. **Second**, the psalm contains elements that decidedly do

⁸Gerardo A. Alfaro calls this the “face value’ thesis” of Christ’s words on the cross (“Did God Abandon Jesus at the Cross?” review essay of Holly Carey, *Jesus’ Cry from the Cross: Towards a First-Century Understanding of the Intertextual Relationship Between Psalm 22 and the Narrative of Mark’s Gospel* [London: T&T Clark, 2009], *SwBTJ* 53 [Spring 2011]: 205 n. 11).

⁹Craig L. Blomberg, “Matthew,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 99.

¹⁰James L. Mays notes that the nearly universal practice of the church was to “take the psalm as Jesus’ words and relocate it completely in a Christological context. This results in understanding the psalm in terms of Jesus” rather than in its own hermeneutical context (“Prayer and Christology: Psalm 22 as Perspective on the Passion,” *Theology Today* 42 [October 1985]: 323).

not apply to Jesus, including much hyperbole,¹¹ but more importantly, the implication that God preserved the referent from dying in answer to his prayer (vv. 20–21). **Third**, while several elements of Ps 22 may seem at first blush to be unique to the crucifixion, a closer examination shows otherwise. This last point must be developed more thoroughly:

- Of the five points raised above as “astonishingly” christological, at least three are plainly identifiable with David’s historical experience; David endured both thirst and the kinds of hunger/exposure necessary to disclosure of his bones (e.g., 2 Sam 17:19; Ps 63:1, 5) and was routinely the object of scorn and insult.
- The second parallel, disjointment (v. 14), offers no serious difficulty to viewing David as the historical referent. Of course, we know of no occasion in which all of David’s bones became disjointed, but neither have we any textual basis for predicating the disjointment of Jesus. Indeed, all impetus for assuming that Christ suffered disjointment on the cross derives from the assumption that Ps 22 predicts the crucifixion—an instance of circular reasoning.

Further, we should note that the figures of simile, metaphor, and hyperbole figure prominently in the clauses of verse 14: (a) the idea of having one’s life poured out “as water” is only dubiously connected with the water came out of Jesus’s side;¹² (b) the idea of the heart being turned to wax is surely not literal, but is rather metaphorical of the loss of inner strength and resolve—a condition that, if anything, is more easily predicated of David than of Jesus; and (c) the idea that *all* of the referent’s bones (whether David or Jesus) came out of joint is surely hyperbolic. What we have here is hyperbole paired with analogy—the referent was so close to the point of physical collapse that his whole being seemed gelatinous.¹³ In short, we see here described a physical and psychological exhaustion so intense that it *seemed* to the referent that his heart was wax, his bones disjointed, and his very being as unstable as water. Such analogies may easily be predicated not only of Jesus Christ, but also of David.

- The fourth parallel—the piercing of the hands and feet in v. 16—seems at first blush to be an incontrovertible reference to the crucifixion,¹⁴ but as every student of Ps 22 is

¹¹Nothing in Scripture, for instance, suggests that Jesus or David were ever surrounded by vicious bulls, lions, or dogs. This observation suggests that the psalmist engages in metaphor and hyperbole in order to broaden the scope of possible application, not to narrow it.

¹²In Peter Craigie’s words, the modern idiomatic equivalent of being “poured out as water” is being “completely washed out” (*Psalms 1–50*, WBC [Nashville, TN: Word, 1983], 200).

¹³Or, to cite Craigie again, like “a bag of useless bones” (*ibid.*).

¹⁴Allen Ross, for instance, argues that the silence of the NT crucifixion accounts about Ps 22:16 actually strengthens the case for a reference to “piercing” in that the reference to crucifixion was “so obvious” that it didn’t even need to be mentioned (*A Commentary on the Psalms*, 3 vols., Kregel Exegetical Library [Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2011], 1:540 n. 33). Much more likely is Mays’s proposal: “The fact that this reading is not reflected in the Gospel’s use of the psalm may mean that it was unknown to those who formed the tradition of the passion of Jesus” (“Prayer and Christology,” 327).

aware, the tensions associated with the translation of this phrase are legion. The verse reads, in the MT,

sevavuni kelavim adath mereim hiqqifuni kaari yaday weraglay,

Lit., “Dogs surround me, a band of evil men encircle me, as a lion my hands and feet.”

The text of the third clause in this pericope (the one under consideration) is mutilated and makes little sense as it stands. Solutions include (1) supplying a missing verb (e.g., “like a lion, they *pin* my hands and feet”¹⁵; “like lions [they maul] my hands and feet”¹⁶) or, more commonly, (2) emending the text so that *kaari* reads not as an analogy to a lion, but as a verb, often (but not always¹⁷) the verb *krh* (i.e., my hands and feet have “shriveled”¹⁸; they have “bound” my hands and feet¹⁹; or they “dig holes” [in] my hands and feet²⁰). The idea of “piercing” observed in a great many English translations²¹ reflects an optimistic but very unlikely wresting of this last option, which is normally featured in agricultural contexts. Sadly, despite the fact “there is no basis for stretching [the Hebrew verb] to mean ‘pierce,’” this reading has been staunchly retained by nearly all modern English translations, because, in Goldingay’s candid opinion (which I find difficult not to share), retaining the idea of being pierced “facilitates its being applied to Jesus.”²² In short, we have another example of circular reasoning in the service of biblical theological assumption.

I conclude that the “astonishing number of close parallels to the events of Jesus’ crucifixion,” while real, do not in any sense diminish their historicity as David’s experience as well.

¹⁵So the NET.

¹⁶So the NJPSV. See also several similar suggestions in Brent A. Strawn, Psalm 22:17b: More Guessing,” *JBL* 119 (2000): 446.

¹⁷Leslie Allen lists fully eight alternate verbs proposed variously in the literature (“Cuckoos in the Textual Nest,” *JTS* 22 [n.s.] [1971]: 149, n. 3).

¹⁸So the NRSV, also John Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3 vols., Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006): 1:321, n. i, following *DCH*, s.v. “הִרְכַּ,” gloss V, 4:459. For the research underlying the inclusion of this fifth gloss, see J. J. M. Roberts, “A New Root for an Old Crux,” *VT* (1973): 247–53.

¹⁹So the MSG; see also *HALOT*, “הִרְכַּ,” gloss IV, 1:197; cf. John Kaltner, “Psalm 22:17b: Second Guessing the ‘Old Guess,’” *JBL* 117 (1998): 503–6.

²⁰So LXX, *ōryxan cheiras mou kai podas*; *HALOT*, “הִרְכַּ,” gloss I, 1:197, cf. LSJ, 9th ed., s.v. “ὀρυξασαω,” 1257.

²¹So the ESV, NIV, NASB, CSV, KJV, NKJV, and many others.

²²Goldingay, *Psalms*, 1:321, n. i. See also Tremper Longman, *Psalms*, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 131.

A **fourth** reason for rejecting Ps 22 as pure prophecy lies unexpectedly in the fulfillment formula used in John 19:24 to describe the division of the referent's clothing by lot in Ps 22:18. This verse might seem at first blush to be incontrovertible proof that Ps 22 is to be taken as pure prophecy—not only because (1) the casting of lots for clothing has no historical parallel in the life of the psalmist, but because (2) John specifically claims that this Psalm 22 was *fulfilled* (*plēroō*) at Christ's crucifixion.

- The first observation, that there is no direct incidence of this event in David's recorded experience, I concede. Still, David's situation is not so very far from the experience of ultimate disgrace expressed in Ps 22. David's situation, we know from Scripture, more than once led him to death's door, and we know further that his prematurely acquisitive heirs were sometimes to blame. It is true, of course, that we have no record of David's heirs bickering over his clothing, but it would not be so very strange for him to frame his condition hyperbolically (as he has already done multiple times) by using a metaphor of ultimate ignominy commonly attested in the literature of the day.²³ In other words, this clause falls well within the scope of reasonable application to David.
- That John sees this statement as *fulfilled* (*plēroō*) at the cross (John 19:24), however, seems to suggest that Ps 22:18 has a function that exceeds the historical-narrative one. This suggestion derives from the nearly universal opinion that the formulaic use of *plēroō* by the NT authors reflects semantic range 4a in BDAG, viz., "the fulfillment of divine predictions or promises."²⁴ However, this definition has been observed to be quite unworkable, as many of the instances of *plēroō* that BDAG cites under this gloss are very obviously intended by their human authors neither as "promises" or "predictions" (e.g., Matt 2:15; 2:17; 13:35; 27:9). Seizing on this glaring problem, J. R. Daniel Kirk notes:

If we work with the notion of fulfillment put forward by BDAG, the problem with the formula quotations immediately becomes clear. The argument might go something like this: (1) fulfillment has to do with realisation of prophetic prediction or promise; (2) the OT references in the formula quotations do not by and large contain (messianic) prophetic predictions or promises; (3) therefore Matthew [or in our case, John] grossly mishandles scripture for his own ends. Q.E.D.²⁵

One answer to the problem (an approach with an impressive 2000-year provenance), which has become explosively popular in modern evangelical scholarship, is to identify in Ps 22 an "indirect" or semi-prophetic genre—a *type*. Typological

²³Hans-Joachim Kraus (*Psalms 1–59* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993], 298) identifies two examples of this: Sirach 14:15 and also a Mesopotamian song: "The coffin lay open, and people already helped themselves to my valuables; before I was even dead, the mourning was already done" (Arthur B. Ungnad, *Die Religion der Babylonier und Assyrier* [Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1921], 230). See also ANET, 183, for further precedent for the idea of pre-mortem plundering as a symbol of ultimate disgrace.

²⁴BDAG, s.v. "πλήρωω," 829.

²⁵J. R. Daniel Kirk, "Conceptualising Fulfillment in Matthew," *Tyndale Bulletin* 59 (2008): 81.

interpretation operates on the hermeneutical understanding that an OT text, with no conscious prophetic intent by its human author, may yet be discovered, after the fact and without the consent of that author, to contain “correspondences . . . which, from a retrospective view, are of a prophetic nature.”²⁶ Stephen Wellum elaborates, “Typology is a subset of predictive prophecy, *not* in the sense of direct verbal predictions, but more *indirectly* in the sense of predictions built on models/patterns that God intends, that become unveiled as later texts reinforce those patterns, with the goal of anticipating its fulfillment in Christ. As *indirect* prophecy, typology corresponds well to the Pauline sense of ‘mystery.’” He adds, “Types are *predictive* and *prospective* by nature because they are divinely designed, yet epistemologically speaking, they are sometimes *retrospective* as later authors recognize them as God-intended patterns. Types are not analogies that later readers draw; types are intended by God.”²⁷

Despite the popularity of this understanding, I remain skeptical. And that is because I find the idea of unconscious and unintentional meanings that are discovered to be prospective only retrospectively to be entirely out of step with an originalist hermeneutic or with the received, transcendental norms of language that every author of every document other than Scripture has employed and necessarily *must* employ to communicate effectively. The idea that one can be faithful to the meaning of a text and also suggest that at least part of this meaning is *unconscious* or *unintended* is incongruous. Ideas unconscious and unintended cannot, by definition, be *meant*. Furthermore, the clarifying solution of dual authorship (human and divine), with each author supplying his own meaning, exacerbates than the original problem, scuttling the bedrock principle of biblical inspiration by which the divine and human intentions are miraculously rendered one.²⁸ To suggest that the Bible is made up of material of distinctively human intention laced with secret, divine meanings that God activates at some later time is (1) to make nonsense of 2 Pet 1:20–21, (2) to render dispensable the intentions of its human authors, and (3) to place the locus of meaning somewhere other than the words. In short, it rips the text out of the purview of exegesis and places it into the hands of rather confident biblical theologians to be treated as a wax nose.

A **better answer** to the problem of the fulfilment formulae in the Gospels, Kirk argues, is not to manipulate variously the data so as to make true BDAG definition

²⁶G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2012), 14.

²⁷“Progressive Covenantalism,” in *Dispensational and Covenant Systems of Theology: Four*, Spectrum Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press), forthcoming.

²⁸I borrow here from the simple but profound definition of *inspiration* offered by John Frame, viz., “A divine act that creates an identity between a divine word and a human word” (*The Doctrine of the Word of God*, Theology of Lordship, vol. 4 [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2010], 140).

4a of *plēroō* (i.e., “the fulfillment of divine predictions or promises”);²⁹ rather, he proposes that we accept the more generic (and frequently idiomatic³⁰) definition 1, “to make (something) full.”³¹

Kirk begins his explanation of the fulfillment formulae as follows: “Saying ‘Jesus is like Moses [or in our case, like *David*]’ is not how we tend to conceive of Jesus as one who fulfils prophecy, but might it better approximate what Matthew [in our case, *John*] had in mind?”³² He adds, somewhat startlingly, “It seems that the more clearly a scholar keeps in view that Matthew [John] is not telling his readers how Jesus fulfils a predictive prophecy or messianic promise the better are that scholar’s readings of the passages in question.”³³ By so opining, Kirk paves the way for a simpler and far more ordinary understanding of the use of Ps 22:18 in John 19:24, viz., *simple analogy*.³⁴

By regarding John’s comments as analogy, we are able to preserve intact a standard hermeneutical approach to the psalm that had been used by countless believers for a thousand years prior to the crucifixion. Or, to borrow a more familiar parallel, we are preserving the hermeneutical approach with which believers *continue* to read Ps 23 some three thousand years after its composition—as a representative, inspired, and eminently relatable prayer/song that can grant assurance to the grieving soul when it is too tortured to offer up anything more creative. In Mays’s words,

²⁹He critiques, respectively, the approaches of (1) seeing the Gospel-writers as unscrupulous hermeneuts, (2) forcing prophecy into the OT passages in view, and (3) massaging the *péshe* technique of the intertestamental period into the more modern concept of typology (Kirk, “Conceptualising Fulfilment,” 82–89).

³⁰Among the many idiomatic uses of the term *plēroō* are the ideas of answering a prayer (Ps 19:6), concluding a speech (Luke 7:1), and summarizing a document (Gal 5:14).

³¹Kirk, “Conceptualising Fulfilment,” 89–98. For earlier approaches similar to Kirk’s, see Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981), 205; and esp. the fine article by Charles H. Dyer, “Biblical Meaning of ‘Fulfillment,’” in *Issues in Dispensationalism*, ed. Wesley R. Willis and John R. Master (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 51–72.

³²*Ibid.*, 89.

³³*Ibid.*, 90.

³⁴Unfortunately, Kirk develops a theory of “narrative embodiment” that I found unpersuasive. Having read it, I was left thinking that Kirk’s solution was very nearly as inventive, hermeneutically, as the typological approach that he was attempting to supplant. For a similar (dare I say *semi-typological*) approach in which Christ, rather than “atomistically” choosing Ps 22 based on the circumstances of the moment, deliberately takes up the communal lament of Israel and makes it his own, see Keith Campbell, “Matthew’s Hermeneutic of Psalm 22:1 and Jer. 31:15,” *Faith and Mission* 24 (Summer 2007): 46–58.

Like other psalms of its genre, Psalm 22 was composed for liturgical use. What one hears through it is not the voice of a particular historical person at a certain time, but one individual case of the typical. Its language was designed to give individuals a poetic and liturgical location, to provide a prayer that is paradigmatic for particular suffering and needs. To use it was to set oneself in its paradigm. *That is, first of all, what Jesus does in his anguished cry to God when he begins to recite the psalm.*³⁵

This is the enduring beauty of the Psalter, and Jesus, by citing Ps 22 on the cross, shows us, in the midst of unspeakable horrors, how believers of any age may read and apply the psalms.

If Jesus is using the psalm in this way (and I believe that he is), then the “fulfillment” here, such as it is, is not the completion of some prophecy or type (any more than our citation of Ps 23 at a present-day funeral is the “fulfillment” of a prophecy or type); in both cases, instead, the users are faithfully “fulfilling” (if we absolutely must use the English gloss) the authorially-intended *function* of the respective psalms.

Christ, as such, is not referencing Ps 22:1 *alone*, as some have suggested,³⁶ but *the psalm in its entirety*.³⁷ I find terribly short-sighted the understanding that Jesus, reminded of Ps 22 by the immediate citation of the eighth verse of that psalm by jeering onlookers,³⁸ seeing about him the sundry points of analogy to be made between his

³⁵Mays, “Prayer and Christology,” 323, emphasis added.

³⁶Matthew Rindge suggests that Christ, by restricting his citation of Ps 22 to the cry of despair, was using the lament only with reference to the negative tone with which the psalm begins, and without reference to the confidence with which it ends (“Reconfiguring the Adekah and Recasting God” Lament and Divine Abandonment in Mark,” *JBL* 131 [2012]: 755–74). Others so inclined include notables Douglas Moo, *The Old Testament in the Gospel Passion Narratives* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983), 272; Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 966; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 652–53; and Rebecca Cerio, “Jesus’ Last Words: A Cry of Dereliction or Triumph?” *ExpT* 125 (April 2014): 323–27.

³⁷So, e.g., Robert Holst, “The Cry of Dereliction; Another Point of View,” *Springfielder* 35 (March 1972): 286–89; L. Paul Trudinger, “‘Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani?’: A Cry of Dereliction? Or Victory?” *JETS* 17 (Fall 1974): 235–39; Robert Menzies, “The Cry of Dereliction,” *ExpT* 65 (March 1954): 183–84; R. E. O. White, “That ‘Cry of Dereliction’ ...?” *ExpT* 70 113 (March 2002): 188–89; Richard D. Patterson, “Psalm 22: From Trial to Triumph,” *JETS* 47 (June 2004): 213–33; John Yocum, “A Cry of Dereliction? Reconsidering a Recent Theological Commonplace,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7 (Jan 2005): 72–80; William Stacey Johnson, “Jesus’ Cry, God’s Cry, and Ours,” in *Lament: Reclaiming Practices in Pulpit, Pew, and Public Square*, ed. Sally A. Brown and Patrick D. Miller (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster/John Knox, 2005), 80–94; and esp. Holly J. Carey, *Jesus’ Cry from the Cross: Towards a First-Century Understanding of the Intertextual Relationship Between Psalm 22 and the Narrative of Mark’s Gospel* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2009).

³⁸Note the sequence in both the Matthean and Markan accounts.

situation and the psalm (not only in the grieving portions of the psalm, but also its triumphs),³⁹ and deeply familiar with the function of lament not merely to express anguish but also confidence, would treat the first verse of Ps 22 in isolation from the rest.⁴⁰ Thus (and finally I arrive at the point salient to this article), when Jesus cited Ps 22:1, **he did not see himself as fulfilling an ancient prophecy that God would “forsake” him; instead, he expressing ultimate confidence, even as David had a millennium earlier, that God *had not forsaken him and would not forsake him.*** Paul Minear elaborates of David and thus of Christ:

The first twenty verses of that Psalm [22] seemed to offer incontestible [*sic*] evidence that a righteous man had indeed been forsaken by the God in whom he had trusted. . . The closing verses of that Psalm, however, corrected all such appearances. Ultimately the forsaken Psalmist was rescued by his God “from the wild oxen.” Accordingly, after his cry of despair was heard. His protest gave way to praise (22:28). In the end, then, Psalm 22 reinforced the view that *God cannot forsake a servant who has been faithful to him.*⁴¹

Or, in the subsequent words of the psalmist himself, “[God] has *not* despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; *he has not hidden his face from him* but has listened to his cry for help” (v. 24).⁴² So emphatic is the confidence here that William Stacey Johnson is able to maintain of Christ’s appeal to Ps 22 that “the defining premise of the gospel is that *God did not abandon Jesus* when he cried out.”⁴³

³⁹So Ps 22:22 with Heb 2:12, and prob. Ps 22:31 with John 19:30 (so Patterson, “Psalm 22,” 229–31). Cf. also Christ’s use of a second psalm of lament—Ps 31:5 in Luke 23:46—in this case borrowing exclusively from the trust/confidence portion of the lament.

⁴⁰I am greatly satisfied with the decisive answer to the “atomistic” understanding of Jesus’s citation of Ps 22:1 in Carey, *Jesus’ Cry from the Cross*, esp. chap. 2; also Mays, “Prayer and Christology,” 322–23; and esp. Alfaro’s review essay of Carey’s work, “Did God Abandon Jesus at the Cross?” whose theological insights on the problem of divine abandonment are overwhelmingly compelling and figure prominently in the second part of this article.

In saying that Christ had the whole psalm in mind I do not intend to minimize his anguish when he uttered the terrible words, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” Far be it from us to make Albert Schweitzer’s suggestion that Jesus was “cheerful” on the cross or was delivering some sort of a relaxed hermeneutical lecture on the lament genre. His anguish was something awful. Still, in all that anguish, he never lost sight of the context of the psalm that he was citing as ultimately a psalm of confidence.

⁴¹Paul S. Minear, “The Messiah Forsaken...Why?” *HBT* 17 (June 1995): 69, emphasis added.

⁴²A verse, it would seem, that effectively counters yet another option, viz., that Jesus (1) was abandoned by the Father but (2) trusted God for restoration (held, e.g., by Claus Westermann, *The Psalms: Content, Structure, and Message*, trans. Ralph D. Gehrke [Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1980]: 124–25, and Patrick D. Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms* [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1986], 100–111).

⁴³Johnson, “Jesus’ Cry, God’s Cry, and Ours,” 80, emphasis added.

Christ himself bears out this conclusion in his later words on the cross, not only resting in the Father for the safekeeping of his spirit (Luke 23:46), but also granting assurance to a nearby thief that they would later that day be together in paradise (Luke 23:43).⁴⁴ Such assurances hardly seem those of a man convinced he has been rejected by God!

The advantages of this understanding are legion—most notably, perhaps, in the sphere of hermeneutics. But for this particular article, the great benefit is in relieving us entirely of all need to invent definitions of the divine “forsaking” that Christ supposedly endured on the cross—and flirt with all sorts of Christological heresy.⁴⁵ We need not, for instance, separate Christ’s human nature from his theanthropic person and suggest that his humanity alone was forsaken, or, alternately, propose that only his “lower soul” endured abandonment but not his “upper soul” (a bifurcation that perplexes me).⁴⁶ We need not agonize between the deeply troubling suggestions of a temporary exclusion from the Triune Godhead or the denial of access to certain divine prerogatives normally Christ’s by perichoresis.⁴⁷ We need not speak (as I once did) of the Father’s “judicial” forsaking of Christ,⁴⁸ or even

⁴⁴It is conceded that these statements of Christ do not appear in the Matthean and Markan accounts that include Christ’s appeal to Psalm 22:1. Still, by harmonizing the three accounts, there can be no doubt that both statements of confidence in Luke 23 (esp. v. 46, which occurs just before Christ “breathed his last”) occur long after his citation of Psalm 22:1.

⁴⁵For a dated but helpful summary of “erroneous” and “orthodox” interpretations of the divine forsaking from Roman Catholic vantage, see William J. Kenneally, “Eli, Eli, Lamma Sabachthani? (Mt. 27:46),” *CBQ* 8 (April 1946): 130–33; also see John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 180–82. Both sources suffer, however, from what Alfaro calls the “‘face value’ thesis,” Alfaro’s label for the idea that Christ was forsaken because he said as much (“Did God Abandon Jesus?” 205 n. 11).

⁴⁶This is the most common Romanist understanding, one championed by Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologica* 3.50.2, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 5 vols. [New York: Benzinger Bros., 1948], 4:2288), though not, incidentally, by Peter Lombard (*The Sentences*, Book 3: *The Incarnation of the Word*, trans. Giulio Silano [Toronto: PIMS, 2010], 89).

⁴⁷Leon Morris cites a loss of “communion,” (*The Gospel According to Matthew*, PNTC [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992], 721); R. T. France a “temporary loss of contact” (*The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007], 1076); James Edwards a “separation from God” (*The Gospel According to Mark*, PNTC [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002], 476); William Lane a “full alienation from God” and an instance of being “cut off from the Father” (*The Gospel According to Mark* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974], 573); Craig Blomberg a “spiritual separation” and “abrupt loss of communion” between Father and Son (*Matthew*, NAC [Nashville, TN: B&H, 1992], 419). None of these, however, offers a clear *theological* explanation of the event. In R. Alan Culpepper’s commentary, a troubling explanation is given: “The abandonment reflects an enmity between God and God that ‘requires a revolution in the concept of God,’” citing Moltmann (*Mark* [Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2007], 575).

⁴⁸This is the understanding that I was taught in seminary, an idea borrowed by my professor, I

(what is perhaps the most plausible alternative) that God gave Christ over to his enemies and simply “allowed this to happen and does nothing to help.”⁴⁹ Instead, it would seem that the only question in need of an answer is why it *seemed* to Christ, from the standpoint of his humanity, that he had been forsaken.⁵⁰

In summary, Christ’s citation of Ps 22:1 on the cross neither proves that God died or suffered on the cross nor defines that death as an act of abandonment or estrangement of God by God. The primary exegetical basis for Moltmann’s theory falls flat.

think, from John Walvoord, *Jesus Christ Our Lord* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), 118. D. A. Carson seems to concur, describing the forsaking as a “judicial frown” (*Scandalous: The Cross and Resurrection* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010], 33), but see below.

⁴⁹Richard Bauckham, “God’s Self-Identification with the Godforsaken in the Gospel of Mark,” in *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 257; see also Leo the Great, Sermon 68 “On the Passion,” part 17, available at <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/360368.htm>, accessed 4 November 2018; John Yocum, “Cry of Dereliction?”; Cameron Coombe, “Reading Scripture with Moltmann: The Cry of Dereliction and the Trinity,” *Colloquium* 48 (November 2016): 138. For a particularly well-conceived defense of this option, see Tom McCall, *Forsaken: The Trinity and the Cross, and Why It Matters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), chap. 1. I am amenable theologically to this approach, but I am not convinced that any of these contributions (1) answers the biblical affirmation that the Father did *not* turn his face away (v. 24) or (2) improves on the positions of Calvin and Turretin, detailed in the note immediately below, with which I am in full agreement.

⁵⁰This question exceeds the scope of the paper; however, I have found Turretin to be helpful here. Turretin suggests that while all the Father’s affections remain perfectly on and in Christ, the “affection of advantage,” by which Christ perceived God’s attentions in his humanity, became inconspicuous to him as he suffered. His cry was “as to withdrawal of vision, not as to a dissolution of union; as to the want of the sense of the divine love, . . . not as to a real privation or extinction of it” (Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison Jr., 3 vols. [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1994], 13.14.6, 2:354). Calvin, likewise, argues that Christ’s sustained union with the Father is absolute and necessary, but that the diminished perception of that union from the standpoint of his humanity (both body and soul) triggered his cry: Christ “*felt himself, as it were, forsaken by God*” (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols. [Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1960], 2.16.12, 1:519, emphasis added; excerpted from the larger discussion extending from 2.16.10–12, 1:515–520). For a helpful distillation of Calvin and Turretin, see Lucas W. Sharley, “Calvin and Turretin’s Views of the Trinity in the Dereliction,” *RTR* 75 (April 2016): 21–34. See Craig Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, WBC (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2001), 507, who speaks of Christ merely feeling abandoned.

For the contrary opinion that merely “seeming” to be forsaken is inadequate, see Moo, *Old Testament in the Gospel Passion Narratives*, 274; D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” in vol. 9 of the *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., ed. Tremper Longman, III, and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 647. Carson deftly avoids the pitfalls of explaining the nature of Christ’s “forsakenness” by affirming: “If we ask in what ontological sense the Father and the Son are here divided, the answer must be that we do not know because we are not told.” Others skirt the issue by appealing to “mystery” (David L. Turner, *Matthew*, BECNT [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008], 669; D. A. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, WBC [Dallas, TX: Word, 1995], 84; Morris, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 721; Patterson, “Psalm 22,” 229).

Atonement, Theanthropic Personhood, Impassibility, and Divine Death

It must be noted at this point that discrediting Christ's citation of Ps 22:1 as proof of divine death as Trinitarian breach (let the reader decide whether or not successfully) does not of itself lead to the necessary conclusion that God did not die. It merely takes away the *locus classicus* for one popular definition of divine death. We still have texts like 2 Cor 5:19 which indicate that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (i.e., that God in some way participated in the death of Christ in order that its value might extend to "the world") and also two key texts that indicate the Lord (*kyrios*) was crucified: (1) that evil men "crucified the Lord of Glory" (1 Cor 2:8) and (2) that "the Lord's church . . . he purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

On the other hand, we will have to deal with the equally difficult theological tensions raised by the divine attributes of immortality, immutability, and the disputed idea of impassibility, which together seem to exclude even the possibility of divine death.⁵¹ So powerful are the arguments from the divine nature that no less a stalwart than R. C. Sproul exclaimed, shortly before his recent death, that "we should shrink in horror from the idea that God actually died on the cross."⁵² It is to the harmonization of these theological ideas that we now turn.

⁵¹If by impassibility is meant the simple idea that God is necessarily without emotion or capacity for suffering, then impassibility surely precludes the possibility of his death. I am not, however, defending this modern caricature of impassibility. Instead, I defend the classic understanding of impassibility in which God is seen in perfect command of his *affections* and *emotions* such that they never intensify into *passions* (for distinctions of which see Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003]). In W. G. T. Shedd's words, while "God is complacent towards a creature's holiness, and displacent toward a creature's sin, this is not the same as a passive impression upon a sensuous organism, from an outward sensible object, eliciting temporarily a sensation that previously was unfelt" (*Dogmatic Theology*, 3rd ed., ed. Alan W. Gomes [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2003], 165, cf. 965). While God is bristling with emotion, he remains dispassionate since, in his absolute omniscience and sovereignty, no creature can "surprise" him so as to inflict any distress upon him that moves him inevitably to any thought, action, or feeling that he would otherwise not have had. God *can* experience affection, suffering, and death, but only to the degree that he sovereignly commands it to be so.

This understanding, I believe, explains the seeming paradox of an impassibly suffering God that is laced throughout church history and explained in Bruce Marshall's "The Dereliction of Christ and the Impassibility of God," in *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering*, ed. James F. Keating and Thomas J. White (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009); see also Thomas Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000); Richard D. Creel, *Divine Impassibility: An Essay in Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), chap. 7. Such is not really a "modified" impassibility (though some have called it that); any modification here is of the modern caricature, not the orthodox norm.

⁵²R. C. Sproul, "Did God Die on the Cross?" *Ligonier Ministries*, March 23, 2016, available at <https://www.ligonier.org/blog/it-accurate-say-god-died-cross/>.

Other Exegetical Evidence for God's Death

While I have identified above three NT texts that implicate God in Christ's death, I begin by noting that a plain statement of divine death is incredibly elusive in the Christian NT. If God's "reconstructive death" is really "the beginning of a truly Christian theology,"⁵³ the NT Scripture writers are remarkably lax in informing us of this fact. Never in Scripture do we find a statement that God (*theos*) died;⁵⁴ the two texts we have identified use the name *kyrios*—still a formidable argument for divine death, but not an airtight one, since the title *kyrios* is not restricted in biblical usage to the divine. Still, Paul's statement (they "crucified the Lord of glory," 1 Cor 2:8) seems compelling. The indivisible, singular person who experienced death on the cross was not a human person, but the Lord of the ages who came down from heaven and attached himself to an impersonal humanity wrought in Mary's womb. Peter's earlier remark in Acts 3:15 (that his hearers had "killed the author of life") bears further witness to this fact. Texts like these make it impossible to reject the unqualified statement that "God died"; further, church history bristles with evidence that this statement has long been considered orthodox.⁵⁵ Still, because of the disturbing expressions of kenoticism that attend many modern expressions of the "death of Christ as the death of God" model, I recommend against making this unqualified statement.

The Idea of Physical Death and God

The definition of death has always proved an elusive one. For impersonal, organic life forms, death is the disintegration of the life principle (that invisible and mysterious alignment of matter and motion that allows an organism to successfully grow, adapt, act, and reproduce), attended by the consequent dissolution of the form itself. In that the Holy Spirit is ultimately responsible for supplying the integrating "glue" by which all organisms are held in life (Ps 104:29), we may properly see death as a withdrawal of this activity of the Spirit, but secondary causation is such that this primary cause of death is often quite

⁵³So Moltmann, *Crucified God*, x.

⁵⁴The astute reader may object that in most English translations Acts 20:28 indicates that elders oversee "the church of God which he purchased with his own blood." However, two points may be noted: (1) the strength of this text as a proof text is weakened by a significant textual variant. In UBS5 the reading *tēn ekklēsiān tou theou, hēn periepoiēsato dia tou haimatos tou idiou* receives a meager "C" rating; in the Tyndale House version of the Greek NT, an alternative reading (*tēn ekklēsiān tou kyriou, hēn periepoiēsato dia tou haimatos tou idiou*) replaces it. And (2) even assuming that the *theou* reading is original, the use of the phrase "his own" (*tou theou*) makes at best an indirect reference to God, and possibly references some other antecedent (e.g., Jesus Christ) that would have been understood by the readers. The latter understanding gains traction when we note that God *as God* cannot "shed his own blood." God intrinsically has no blood; Christ has blood only by assuming human form.

⁵⁵See, e.g., Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 46.12.2. Cyril of Alexandria goes so far as to anathematize any who would deny that God died (*On the Unity of Christ*, trans. John Anthony McGuckin [Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995], 56).

occluded. Death in this case is not an annihilation, *per se*, but more a *disintegration* of the complex of functions that collectively earns for a form the scientific label *life*. Such death is normally permanent; there is no scriptural reason to believe that impersonal life forms ever reintegrate after disintegrating.

With spiritual/personal life (i.e., life for beings that have an enduring existence apart from a material form), physical death takes on a new dimension. Theologians routinely speak of physical death among humans as a “separation” of the material from the immaterial parts of a person, followed by (1) the disintegration of the material form and (2) removal of the detached immaterial to some other locus. Again, death is not an annihilation, *per se*, but more of a *deprivation* or an act of rendering incomplete. The person always survives physical death, but without certain features that it once had.⁵⁶ There is no scriptural reason to believe that persons, once in existence, ever cease to exist.

Since God has no intrinsic physicality, predicating physical death of God is ordinarily absurd (just as it is ordinarily impossible for him to be seen except for in Christ—John 1:18; Col 1:15). It is true, of course, that apart from Christ, God at times condescends to human understanding by assuming some other material form (e.g., a dove, a lamb, a lion, a fire, etc.), and that these assumed forms may cease to function or even to be. But we do not typically think of God as “dying” when these forms cease their function. Since these adopted forms are not, by definition, a *necessary* part of God’s essence, it follows that he is not rendered in any sense incomplete by the dissolution of the forms. So, for instance, we would not say that the third person of the Godhead “died” when the dove with which he was briefly clothed at Christ’s baptism ceased to be or that God died when the burning bush was eventually extinguished. We would not, either, say that God flew or burned due to the experiences of these forms. We might possibly say that the *dove* flew and eventually died or that the *fire* burned and died (metaphorically speaking), but not that God died. And that is because God adds and deletes such forms without any change in, limitation of, or effect to his immutable self.

The human Jesus is, of course, unique among the forms that God assumes, straining this comparison. Not only does all the fullness of God dwell in Christ in bodily form (Col 2:9), Christ also holds his humanity forever (Heb 7:24). Still, even here we must be reminded of several critical observations: (1) that the fullness of God dwells in Christ in bodily form does not allow us to assert that all three persons of the Godhead became incarnate in Christ; the Second Person alone did. Furthermore, (2) even the Second Person of the Trinity (John 1:14 notwithstanding) did not in Christ “become a man” in the transmutational sense that his original self was altered. God the Second Person did not cease to be what and where and when and how he always had previously been prior to the incarnation. Instead, the eternal Logos, the Second Person of the Trinity, “took on flesh” (Heb 2:14) and assumed “a body

⁵⁶Or in the case of those born “dead,” death deprives the person of what he might otherwise have.

prepared for him” (Heb 10:5) without any change or addition to his divine person. This seminal tenet of Christology has been regarded as orthodox since Chalcedon.⁵⁷

Thus, when Jesus hung on the cross, it may be said that his one, indissoluble, *and divine* person knew, through the sensations of his adopted humanity, the experience of physical death.⁵⁸ His adopted body went into a tomb, where its continued union with the divine kept it from decay (so Acts 2:31; 13:37), and his localized human immaterial, being fully human and thus not omnipresent, went elsewhere—also united with the divine.⁵⁹ In all this, however, his immutably impassible, and immortal divinity remained unaltered, and God in Christ experienced no diminution of his essence, attributes, consciousness, or command over his own experiences and emotions.⁶⁰ *Indeed, the Logos must necessarily have remained unaltered in order for Christ to remain all that is God.* As such, while the unqualified statement that God “died” or even that the Second Person of God “died” may be made, it must be tempered by the realization (and in homiletical contexts, an *explanation*) that God died merely with respect to his humanity, and not in the least with respect to his deity. Indeed, orthodox though it may be, the unqualified statement that God died should probably be made rarely (following the pattern of Scripture), and with great clarification, even as we must with many other Christological realities:

- While God in Christ understood “from the inside” personal dependency and the need for food and water in his humanity, we cannot for this reason deny the immutable aseity of God generally or of the Second Person of the Trinity specifically.
- While God in Christ understood weakness and fatigue in his humanity, we cannot for this reason deny the immutable omnipotence of God generally or of the Second Person of the Trinity specifically.
- While God in Christ understood ignorance in his humanity, we cannot for this reason

⁵⁷If we argue that the Logos was fundamentally altered so as to cease being immutably divine and to become instead a human, then we fundamentally violate Chalcedon by conflating his natures, and scuttle the very possibility of atonement as substitutionary sacrifice. More on this below.

⁵⁸Though Scripture might be cited to suggest it (e.g., Heb 10:10; Col 1:22), it is not correct to say only that his body died. For personal beings, death always involves the person. The person of Christ, as we shall argue, knew death *only with respect to his humanity* and not with respect to his deity; still, it is incorrect to say that his body died wholly without reference to his divine person. Persons die, not bodies.

⁵⁹Debate swirls over the destination of Christ’s immaterial, whether it “descended into hell” or ascended temporarily to the abode of his Father. I accept the Nicene formulation and not the latter option (so Eph 4:8–10; 1 Pet 3:18–20; cf. also John 20:17), but this determination is not salient to the question at hand. All that matters to this article is that he “gave up” his spirit such that it was detached from his body—he died.

⁶⁰See most especially the very fine treatment of this topic in Paul L. Gavrilyuk, “God’s Impassible Suffering in the Flesh: The Promise of Paradoxical Christianity,” in *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering*, ed. James F. Keating and Thomas J. White (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 127–49.

deny the immutable omniscience of God generally or of the Second Person of the Trinity specifically.

- While God in Christ understood localization in his humanity, we cannot for this reason deny the immutable omnipresence of God generally or of the Second Person of the Trinity specifically.
- While God in Christ understood birth in his humanity, we cannot for this reason deny the immutable eternity of God generally or of the Second Person of the Trinity specifically.⁶¹
- While God in Christ understood suffering and death in his humanity, we cannot for this reason deny the immutable impassibility and immortality of God generally or of the Second Person of the Trinity specifically.

In Gavriilyuk's summary,

The central aim of Chalcedonian Christianity was to keep God's divinity and humanity distinct, yet united. By blending the distinction between divinity and humanity as well as by attributing all human experiences of Christ directly to God, the contemporary passibilists have made the assumption of humanity in the incarnation superfluous at best and metaphysically impossible at worst. I repeat: God as God does not replicate what we, as humans, suffer. Yet in the incarnation God, remaining God, participates in our condition to the point of painful death on the cross. Remaining impassible, God chooses to make the experiences of his human nature fully his own.

To conclude, there can be no doubt of the fact that, at the Crucifixion, *Christ* died physically. Further, since the singular person represented in Christ on Calvary was emphatically God, then God may be regarded as dying. It should not go unnoticed, however, that a clear statement to this effect is as rare in Scripture as the statements "God is indigent," "God is impotent," or "God is ignorant." And while all the latter three statements, unqualified, are technically true—they reflect, however crudely, the Logos's participation in the experiences of his assumed humanity—we make them rarely if ever, and rightly so. And that is because, without explanation, such statements confuse most hearers. For the same reason, I would advise against unqualified use of the sensational statement that "God died."

⁶¹To say Mary that was the *God-bearer* is one thing—she did carry within her a localized expression of the Logos fused necessarily and irrefragably to an impersonal but fully and truly human substance. The mystery here is great and speaks powerfully to Christ's kenosis, but in no sense diminishes his deity. To say that Mary was the *mother of God* is quite another. And this is because being a mother connotes more than carrying a localized manifestation of God in her womb. It implies, to most who hear the phrase, involvement in the origin, development, and maturation of God's godness, in which Mary had no part, and the very idea which is scandalous.

The Idea of Spiritual Death and God

The fact that “God was in Christ” supplying the value necessary to atonement for “the world,”⁶² an idea apparently taught in 2 Cor 5:18–19,⁶³ muddies the conclusion just reached concerning divine immortality. It would seem, by this logic, that the expansiveness of the value of Christ’s death lay in the participation of his divine nature in his death. That is to say, Christ must have died not only with respect to his humanity, but also, in some sense, with respect to his divinity as well. And since God’s divinity is noncorporeal, this reasoning suggests, then his death must have had a metaphysical or spiritual dimension. As thorny as the question of physical death was, the question of metaphysical death is thornier. The definition of such a death is more elusive, the Christological options more numerous, and the debate more spirited.

We might begin with Paul’s identification of spiritual death in Eph 4:18 as “separation from the life of God.” But the context of the death under consideration in Eph 4 scarcely applies to Jesus Christ. Surely, Christ did not exhibit all of the insensitivity and hostility to the things of God that mark the spiritual death of Paul’s natural man in Eph 4.⁶⁴ The Scriptures clearly depict Christ as eminently sensitive to his Father throughout his passion; indeed, spiritual insensitivity and hostility on Christ’s part would be the undoing of the atonement. If Christ died in a metaphysical sense, then, it must entail something other than this classic idea of spiritual death.

It is for this reason that we find the multiplied definitions for God’s death raised above, including inter-Trinitarian “forsakenness,” “estrangement,” “interruption,” “turning away,” suspended “fellowship,” withdrawn love, “discommunication,” broken “contact,” and “filial loathing,” among others. But all of these proposals suffer equally from a serious problem, viz., they intimate a suspension of the divine *perichoresis* or *circumincession* of God, i.e., the understanding that for God to be God, all of his attributes must necessarily, eternally, and immutably “circulate” (as it were) *in se* between his three persons. If the doctrine of divine simplicity may be sustained (and I believe it may and must), then any explanation of “spiritual” death that envisions the interruption of *any one* of the shared inter-Trinitarian perfections necessarily involves the interruption of them *all*, and most critically for our thesis, his immutability, impassibility, and immortality—Christ ceases to be God. More than this, since within the Godhead fatherhood and sonship mean nothing without the sustenance of this divine perichoresis and the continuation of both persons,

⁶²The decision whether the “world” points to a universal or a limited atonement is ancillary to this paper. It is sufficient to observe that its value accrues to beneficiaries external to Christ himself.

⁶³Among others see Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 442–43.

⁶⁴As Paul notes in this very context, this separation from the life of God is normally attended by futility of thought, darkened understanding, ignorant and hardened hearts, list sensitivity to God, sensuality, and impurity (Eph 4:17–19).

the suspension of perichoresis means not only that the Son ceases to be the Son, but that the Father ceases to be the Father. And if either person fails to be what he eternally is, then both cease to be God. Indeed, God would cease to be.⁶⁵

Returning, then, to 2 Cor 5:18–19, if God died *as God* in Christ when Christ “became” sin on the cross (so v. 21), it would seem that during the very most crucial moment of the story of redemption, God ceased to be God and God was *not* in Christ reconciling the world to himself. Had Christ been “abandoned” by God, he would have lost his divinity, scuttling his sacrificial intention. In Thomas Torrance’s words, “Cut the bond in being between Jesus Christ and God, and the Gospel message becomes an empty mockery.”⁶⁶

In view of these observations, it seems necessary to conclude that in Paul’s statement, “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself,” his point was not that the *death* of God in Christ supplied expansive value to the atonement, but that the *living* God in Christ supplied contractual value to Christ’s human death and sustained him in it. As Barnett notes, the crucial clause in verse 19

has been taken either as “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself” (RV) or, preferably, as “in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself (RSV). The former would emphasize the incarnation, which, though mentioned in the letter (8:9), is not the burden of the passage. . . . “In Christ” in this verse equates with “through Christ” (see on v. 18), that is, through *that* death by means of which God reconciled the world to himself.⁶⁷

This mirrors the similar construction in Col 1:22, “[God] reconciled you through Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight.” As such, it was by the contractual arrangement of God with God that Christ’s *physical* death could stand as a substitutionary satisfaction. Only by understanding the text as the act of living God could this death have significance—and also make possible Christ’s resurrection. In short, Christ’s *physical* death is in view.

The only way to allow for God to die *as God*, it seems, is to abandon one of two crucial points of orthodoxy: (1) the unity/simplicity of God and/or (2) a substitutionary view of atonement. That is to say, we would need to render the Son separate in essence from the Father and thus capable of dying without implicating the rest of the Trinity in his death, and/or adopt a view of atonement that emphasizes incarnational solidarity apart from substitution. One or both of these radical changes, it would seem, is what Moltmann’s envisions in his call to “reconstruct” God.⁶⁸

⁶⁵Marshall, “Dereliction of Christ and the Impassibility of God,” 275.

⁶⁶Thomas Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 8.

⁶⁷Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 306.

⁶⁸For a more proximate expression of this approach, see Tony Jones’s suggestion that God, as both

Conclusion

While the mystery of Christ's theanthropic person will surely continue to mystify, Chalcedon continues to inform. While it is true that everything predicated both of Christ's humanity and Christ's deity may be ascribed to his person, it remains incorrect to suggest that everything predicated of Christ's deity may be predicated of his humanity, or that everything predicated of Christ's humanity may be predicated of his deity. It is further incorrect to argue, since the singular person that both Christ's human and divine natures share is divine, that the divine therefore died. Any intended suggestion to that effect in the statement "God died" is incorrect and devastatingly so.

Instead, it is better to say that *the immutable and immortal God impassibly experienced suffering and death in his human nature without the least diminution of his divine essence, attributes, consciousness, or command over his own emotions, and without threat to the perichoresis by which God immutably remains in perfect union.*

Final Summary and Conclusion

This paper has attempted to answer two questions. The first question, "Shall we view the death of Christ as an instance of divine forsakenness, abandonment, estrangement, or 'turning away' of God from God?" I answered with an emphatic "No." Not only do the Scriptures not teach this (not even in Christ's appeal to Ps 22:1 in Matt 27:46 and Mark 15:34), but the theory itself is theologically destructive of the atonement and of God himself. The second question, "May we speak of God as dying?" I answered with a highly qualified "Yes." Since it is *persons* who die (and not natures), and since the person of Christ is emphatically divine, it may be affirmed that "God died." But since (1) the Scriptures seem remarkably disinclined to state that "God died," and (2) the unqualified statement "God died" is routinely both intended and interpreted as an excessively kenotic approach in which God temporarily suspends his immutability, immortality, impassibility, and/or Inter-Trinitarian perichoresis, use of this statement is discouraged.

Father and Son, was so fundamentally altered by the murderous savagery administered and received, respectively, that the Father abandoned his previous approach of atonement through violence (sacrificial substitution to satisfy an intransigent God), "undid" his what he had wrought on the Son through resurrection, and adopted a qualitatively new approach toward sin—one of incarnational solidarity and empathetic conciliation toward sinners. This compassionate approach, Jones argues, must now be adopted by the church as its distinctive mission. See the whole of his *Did God Kill Jesus?* (New York: HarperCollins, 2015).

***Best Bible Books: New Testament Resources.* By John Glynn. Edited by Michael H. Burer. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2018. 318 pages. Paperback, \$27.99.**

Best Bible Books is an update of John Glynn's *Commentary and Reference Survey*, which saw its tenth edition in 2007. Glynn was a freelance author and proofreader who, unfortunately, passed away in the year of the publication of his last edition.¹ Michael Burer has carried on Glynn work both as the editor as well as a contributor in this volume. Other contributors include Darrel L. Bock, Joseph D. Fantin, and J. William Johnston. Each of these scholars serve in the New Testament Studies Department at Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS), which requires that all faculty affirm "seven core doctrines of evangelical faith": "the authority and inerrancy of Scripture, the Trinity, Christ's full deity and humanity, the spiritual lostness of the human race, Christ's substitutionary atonement and bodily resurrection, salvation by faith alone in Christ alone," and "the physical return of Christ."² As a result, the reader can be sure that the lens through which these resources have been viewed is grounded within the evangelical camp. These contributors aim to follow Glynn's lead in providing laypeople, pastors, and seminary students with a guide for buying the best New Testament (NT) resources and commentaries with their limited budgets and busy schedules in mind.

Burer noted a few large and small changes from Glynn's previous approach. The first and most noticeable change is the omission of the Old Testament and theological resources, which he plans to include in future editions. The second change is a shift in the way that commentaries are handled. Each commentary is listed alphabetically with a mini-review denoting its approach, format, and usability. Each listing receives a rating of either good, better, or best. Burer divided the commentaries as either technical and semitechnical (focus on languages and history) or expositional (emphasis on application). The reader will find the structure and organization of these ratings to be simple to understand and user-friendly.

The heart of this work might be described as a commentary on NT commentaries. This large section is subdivided by NT books or groups of NT books as scholars commonly group them. Bibliography entries contained in this section are annotated with mini-reviews and are classified as noted above. Each subsection also includes bibliographies of non-commentary titles covering special topics related to the NT book in question. For example, the subsection on Matthew is followed by bibliographies of related special topics like Matthew as Story or the Sermon on the Mount. The volumes highlighted in these bibliographies are those which the contributors recommend as valuable resources.

¹Kregel Publications, "Authors | John Glynn | Kregel," <https://www.kregel.com/autores/john-glynn>.

²Dallas Theological Seminary, "About DTS," *Dallas Theological Seminary*, <https://www.dts.edu/about/>.

Burer and the other contributors divided up the subsections of NT books. Without compromising their own evangelical views, these scholars provided balanced assessments of each commentary, ranking them based upon the quality of their research, accessibility, and usability. Their mini-reviews will be a tremendous aid to anyone seeking wisdom on their next commentary purchase.

While the commentary reviews make up much of this resource, the non-commentary sections should not be taken for granted. For example, the two brief chapters, “Building a ‘Must Have’ Personal Reference Library” and “On Commentary Series” are saturated with wisdom and select resources for laypersons, pastors, and Bible students who wish to acquire the necessary tools and skills for NT interpretation. Readers of all levels of training will appreciate the way in which they have suggested the appropriate tools for their context. For example, a layperson who has just begun the journey of learning to interpret the Bible is instructed to first “learn how to conduct an inductive Bible study” with a recommendation of three different well-known hermeneutics books as a place to begin (19). Next, the layperson is given recommendations for Bibles and reference tools. Then guidance for seminary students and pastors is provided, including appropriate bibliographies that list essential tools to meet the demands and expectations of each. The quality and appropriateness of their multifaceted guidance demonstrated a level of maturity and experience.

In “On Commentary Series,” the authors created a paradigm with which to characterize complete commentary sets. Although it was admitted that commentary sets often contain various theological mixtures of dispositions from book to book, the theological descriptors of evangelical, moderate, and liberal were utilized to provide a rough guide to the inherent biases of these series. They utilized the label *evangelical* to denote an underlying “belief that all Scripture is inerrant” (27). They utilized label *moderate* to denote a view that “would affirm that the inerrancy of Scripture is restricted to its theological content rather than its historical or scientific statements” (27). They utilized the label *liberal* to denote a rejection of the divine origin and authority of all or parts of Scripture. While these labels might be taken as a reason to avoid certain commentaries, the authors insisted that “there is always much to learn from those with whom we disagree” (27). With that bit of wisdom in mind, their recommendations favored evangelical series but included some of each category.

Several other special topics were addressed in *Best Bible Books* including but not limited to “Jesus and the Gospels,” “New Testament Greek Resources,” and “Jewish Background.” These chapters are filled with bibliographies on virtually every topic important to the study of the NT. Seminary students, pastors, and exceptionally-motivated laypeople will find these selected resources and broader bibliographies to be a tremendous help in their journey to understanding God’s word.

In conclusion, I would highly recommend *Best Bible Books* for laypeople, pastors, and students. I find the mini-reviews of each commentary quite helpful. Their recommendations

take theological predisposition into account, but they nonetheless recognize the quality of one's scholarship even if they disagree with an author's conclusion. We will do well to learn from those with whom we disagree, and we cannot afford to be ignorant of their arguments. One criticism that I had was the omission of a section on Bible software such as Logos or Concordance. Bible software companies often provide huge discounts on commentary sets, package deals, and individual sales. Furthermore, I was initially uncertain of the value of a work like this in an age when websites like www.bestcommentaries.com are both free and more able to stay up to date with new developments in scholarship and publication. However, I found that the wise guidance, mini-reviews, bibliographies on special topics, and recommendations all combined to make a valuable and handy guide to serious NT research. This work has utility for both the novice and the experienced student of the NT. I can see why John Glynn's *Commentary and Reference Survey* saw ten editions. In the end, the goals of "recommending useful, practical resources that enable better understanding of God's word" and serving as a buyer's guide were done well.

- Shaun Grunblatt, *New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, Louisiana*

***Christ and the Created Order: Perspectives from Theology, Philosophy, and Science.* Edited by Andrew B. Torrance and Thomas H. McCall. Volume 2. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018. 304 pages. Paperback, \$36.99.**

Christ and the Created Order is the second volume of a two-volume collection from Zondervan presenting essays on the intersection of science, philosophy, and theology in the study of creation.¹ In this volume, editors Andrew Torrance and Thomas McCall focused specifically on the significance of Jesus Christ in conversations regarding creation. Essays were divided into thematic sections drawing from theology, biblical and historical studies, philosophy, and science. All twenty contributors are Christians, but each presented their work as an offering from their particular discipline. The essays were written to stand on their own, and they display little cooperation between authors. As a result, the essays did not build one comprehensive argument, nor does the volume take uniform stances on (relatively) minor theological-scientific disputes.

The professed goal for *Christ and the Created Order* was that "it advances the conversation by focusing on the specific relationship between creation and the person of Christ—considering the ways the doctrine of the incarnation can shape our understanding of the natural order so as to invite a decisively Christian conversation between theology and other sciences" (17). This aim of the editors resulted in several supporting themes throughout the collection. First, genuine dialogue required that the editors were not

¹Volume 1 contained essays on broader topics concerning the doctrines of God and creation and the relation of theology and science. See Andrew B. Torrance and Thomas H. McCall, eds., *Knowing Creation: Perspectives from Theology, Philosophy, and Science*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018).

seeking to incorporate Christ into professional scientific textbooks (18). Second, the presupposition that Christ is the means and end of the “created order” required that the contributors maintain the revelational and eschatological relevance of Christ throughout their writing (18).² All of the essays, therefore, provided explicit Christological interaction while sincerely presenting the findings of natural science.

Torrance and McCall provided a collection which is accessible to a multitude of audiences including Christian ministers, laymen, and academics. The only audience, however, which they intentionally sought to benefit was Christians working in natural science. *Christ and the Created Order* was intended to “help them see science not simply as a vocation that can be held alongside their Christian beliefs, but one that can be conceived as a Christian vocation” (18). By establishing the direct connection between Christ and the world which serves as the object of scientific inquiry, this collection helps Christians gain a greater appreciation for the scientific enterprise and helps scientists gain a greater awareness of the work of Christ. One of the most difficult obstacles for both contexts is the modern “conflict thesis.” This position, which James K. A. Smith indicated has developed its own cottage industry (179), asserts that religion and science are perpetually opposed in presuppositions, methods, and conclusions.³ *Christ and the Created Order* rejected the conflict thesis on the basis of Scripture and Christian tradition which hold Christ to be the agent, sustainer, and redeemer of creation. As such, natural science is only fully understood when *accounting for* Christ, not when rejecting him. Further, rejection of the conflict thesis demands that Christians develop concern for understanding and caring for the created order. Through its rejection of the conflict thesis, this collection will serve not only Christian scientists but also those Christians who are hesitant to engage science.

Several essays from the collection offered unique points of engagement for theology and ministry. From a theological perspective, Norman Wirzba successfully situated Christ in the doctrine of creation. All too often, Christian attention to creation is merely concerned with origins. The theological significance of the act of creation should not be lost as it establishes divine freedom and love, but overemphasis on origins detracts from the purpose of creation. Wirzba explained, “Creation isn’t simply a teaching about the beginning of things. More importantly, it is about the *character* of the world and its proper *orientation*, alerting us to the meaning, value, and purpose of everything that is” (40). As the

²Although arguing for the superior understanding of the natural order as “creation,” the editors suggested that believing scientists avoid creation terminology in their field to avoid needless arguments. See *Knowing Creation*, 20–21. This approach is consistent with Wilson C. K. Poon’s chapter in the present volume, “Science as the Foolishness of God,” where Poon argued for a scientific “theology of the cross” which methodologically avoids the god hypothesis in scientific enquiry.

³For recent Christian expositions of the supposed religion-science conflict, see Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) and Alister McGrath, *Science & Religion: A New Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

agent and ordering principle of creation, Christ is key to the character and orientation of all things. From a biblical perspective, N. T. Wright, Erin Heim, and Chris Tilling all argued for Christ's role as beginning and end of creation using Pauline metaphors. Particularly helpful in modern contexts, the biblical metaphor of adoption describes how unique persons throughout creation can participate in Christ's universal significance. Heim's "Christocentric anthropology" provided Christians with a model for human solidarity grounded in adoption into the family of God (148–49).

Solidarity was also the key for Marilyn McCord Adams in her support of the primacy of divine incarnation.⁴ She asserted, "God's overarching purpose is to sanctify matter, to make it holy first and foremost by indwelling material persons. *Functionally indwelt material persons . . . are the place where material stuff becomes as godlike as material stuff can be while still being itself. . . . Incarnation is the way God becomes as much like material creation as possible while still being Godself!*" (173). In this chapter, Adams accessibly introduced her philosophical argument for divine incarnation without reference to the human fall. Adams provided readers with a responsible view of creation as good yet home to uncontrollable evil while upholding a hopeful dependence on the miraculous solidarity God is using to solve creation's deficiencies, the incarnation of Christ.⁵ Finally, from a scientific perspective, Deborah and Loren Haarsma encouraged readers to confront hopelessness prevalent in the scientific world. As astronomical discoveries further show the vastness of creation and microscopic discoveries continue to account for the natural order through material explanations, Christians can proceed with assurance that Christ is the ordering principle of the cosmos which provides even more value to scientific inquiry.

Christ and the Created Order offers sixteen helpful essays which will challenge readers to embrace the scientific enterprise on the basis of Christ's role in creation. This work can be especially valuable for Christians who previously have submitted to the conflict thesis as the collection provides explicit theological, biblical, and philosophical refutation of the thesis. Some readers may be wary of several contributors' openness to biological evolution, but this and similar tangential issues are largely tabled for the sake of theological and biblical argumentation. Although a conclusion from the editors which drew together the constructive essays would have provided a stronger way forward for readers, the contributions of these acclaimed scholars stand together as a coherent call to affirm God's good purposes in creation. By explicitly emphasizing Christ as the key to the created order, Torrance and McCall have delivered a collection which stands to strengthen solidarity

⁴Notably, this chapter was one of the last works Adams penned. It is remarkable that in the face of terminal illness, she remained committed to seeking positive significance from participating in God's creation, even a creation beset with horrendous evils. For Adams's previous work on horrendous evils and incarnational solidarity see Marilyn McCord Adams, *Christ and Horrors: The Coherence of Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁵Adams's presentation of horrendous evils in creation seems consistent with Brian Curry's superb chapter on the powers which give rise to "the embattled nature of the world as it is today" (88).

between Christians and experts in the natural sciences and to encourage believers in scientific vocations to journey forward with assurance that their work gives glory to Christ.

- Thomas G. Doughty Jr., *New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, Louisiana*

***Christ From Beginning to End: How the Full Story of Scripture Reveals the Full Glory of Christ.* By Trent Hunter and Stephen Wellum. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018. 279 pages. Hardcover, \$22.99.**

The last twenty years has demonstrated a significant increase in the number of Christian television shows, podcasts, and blogs. Even so, there has been a decrease in biblical literacy as related to understanding the Bible's overarching story and interconnectivity. As Mark Dever states in the forward to *Christ From Beginning to End*, "We are in a day that is marked by both interest in the Bible and profound ignorance of it. People today don't know its basic storyline" (11). As such, Trent Hunter (pastor of preaching and teaching at Heritage Bible Church in Greer, South Carolina) and Stephen Wellum (professor of Christian Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) have written this book "as a way of helping us understand Jesus by understanding the Bible's full story" (11).

Thus, the authors state that they have two main goals for this book. First, they are convinced that the church should know "the whole counsel of God" as stated in Acts 20:27. Second, given the plethora of academic books recently written that seek to reconcile Christ with the Bible—specifically the Old Testament—the authors argue that such conversations are "not merely for academic interest but for the entire church" (15).

To achieve these goals, the authors have divided this book into two main sections, but it seems more helpful to view this book as having four parts. Part one discusses the nature of the Bible itself (chapters 1–4). Part two provides more details about the nature of this world in its present fallen state and the necessity of redemption (chapters 5–7). Part three explains how the human dilemma is addressed in both the Old and New Testaments (chapters 8–15). Part four is the conclusion to the book, and here the authors provide a general exegesis of John 17:1–5.

In chapters 1–4, the authors suggest a basic approach to reading the Bible. They use the illustration of a puzzle compared to a mosaic. While a mosaic "consists of many pieces taken from different things" and can be "arranged in a variety of ways to make it just about anything," a puzzle "is designed for a single purpose" so that when it is "put together correctly, it results in the same picture every time" (33). Though this illustration may oversimplify certain aspects of the Bible, it is helpful for understanding the Bible's overall purpose. As the authors state, Christ is the Bible's "subject and goal" (39). Thus,

they would argue that every reading of the Bible should lead one to seek the redemption that only Christ can give. While the authors note that not “everyone accepts this view of Scripture” (37), they provide the reader with enough information to formulate a basic case for reading the Bible this way.

In chapters 5–7, the authors explain how the world went from being created in a good state to needing redemption. They note that Adam was not created in a “glorified state, as we will be in the future because we are in Christ” but Adam was created in a “good state, and God delighted in the man he had made” (79). God’s delight was removed from Adam, at least temporarily, when he broke God’s commandment. This resulted in what the authors call the “fourfold effects of sin,” each having something to do with the world being “turned upside down” (87). Thus, instead of God allowing humanity to remain in their sin, he graciously allowed them to receive redemption. The authors explain Gen 3:15 as a “seed—a small promise that will eventually grow into a full-blown tree of God’s good news, the storyline of Scripture” (95). The authors then provide a short exegesis of Rom 3:21–26, which explains how Jesus is the “glorious solution first hinted at in Genesis 3:15” (100).

The authors provide in chapters 8–15 a survey of how the rest of the Bible’s story helps to clarify this message. The authors explain, “The reason there are so many pages between the problem and the solution” is that “God is providing for our instruction, endurance, encouragement, and, ultimately, our hope” (100). Thus, the authors examine how the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, highlights the themes of sin and redemption and looks forward to Christ’s final victory. They explain how the Bible contains moments of despair and how this is often overshadowed by the message of future hope. For example, they end their discussion of the Moses narratives by stating that “just as God rescued his people from their hardened enemies at the Red Sea, so he will one day drown all of our enemies in his wrath” (151). Similarly, they conclude this entire section by stating that “as a bride waits for her groom, so we wait for Christ’s return” (259) for then “the whole earth will be filled with the glory of the triune God” (242). The last section of the book serves as an anticipated response to the biblical story as the authors encourage every reader to follow Christ wholeheartedly (267).

In all, this work accomplished what it set out to do; it orients “us to the major landmarks” of the Bible (11). This is done in a pedagogical style that is often missing from books written for the average reader. The book contains numerous examples, metaphors, and illustrations that are memorable and enjoyable. Still, given the authors’ quick overview of much of the biblical narrative, there is much to be desired. For example, the authors state that Abraham spoke “better than he knew” (123) and that Moses did not enter into the Promised Land because of his anger (140). Both of these comments need clarification. As Abner Chou states, the Old Testament saints and writers “speak to bigger matters than we give them credit for.”¹ Also, Num 20:12 states that Moses did not enter the Promised Land

¹Abner Chou, *The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2018), 98.

because he did not “believe.” Thus, while this book is very useful and accessible, it should be read alongside a slightly more advanced book such as Chou’s.

- Ron Lindo, *New Orleans Theological Seminary, New Orleans, Louisiana*

***The Christian Doctrine of Humanity: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics.* Edited by Oliver D. Crisp and Fred Sanders. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018. 256 pages. Paperback, \$34.99.**

“What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?” (Ps. 8:4 NRSV). This is the question that the 2018 Los Angeles Theology Conference aimed to answer from a wide variety of disciplinary perspectives. *The Christian Doctrine of Humanity* is a collection of twelve diverse conference essays, furnishing the reader with a balanced perspective on the contemporary study of theological anthropology. The volume is co-edited by Oliver D. Crisp, professor of systematic theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, and Fred Sanders, professor of theology in the Torrey Honors Institute at Biola University. Both Crisp and Sanders are first-rate, well-published theologians, and they utilized their expertise in selecting essays that elaborate theological anthropology in conversation with other central Christian doctrines.

In chapter one, “Nature, Grace, and the Christological Ground of Humanity,” Mark Cortez develops an account, indebted to the second-century church father Irenaeus, that Christ is the archetypal image of God and that human beings are ectypes. So while the Incarnation involves the Son becoming like us, in so doing the Son discloses the fact that humanity had been created in his image from the beginning. To substantiate this notion, Cortez appeals to a controversial model of divine timelessness according to which there is no distinction in God’s perspective between a time when the Son was incarnate and a time when he was not incarnate. This still leaves unanswered how Cortez’s proposal escapes the logical problem of backward causation.

In chapter two, “Human Superiority, Divine Providence, and the Animal Good,” Faith Glavey Pawl persuasively defends the primacy of humans to nonhuman animals and the ordering of creation toward the human good. With the aid of Aquinas, she offers a view of hierarchy which avoids the error of thinking there are no constraints on what we may do with or to nonhuman creation as well as the error of perceiving nonhuman creation as lacking intrinsic value and having only instrumental value. Humans are called to imitate God, whose providential care extends to all creatures.

In chapter three, “The Relevance of Biblical Eschatology for Philosophical Anthropology,” Richard J. Mouw employs eschatology as a control belief in defense of substance dualism. Over against the excesses of the post-World War II biblical theology movement that dismissed any notion of humans possessing immaterial minds as a

misreading of Scripture based on Greek philosophy, Mouw refreshingly contends that substance dualism should be upheld by Christian scholars. Mouw impressively marshals both biblical and pastoral considerations to support his case.

In chapter four, "From Sin to the Soul," Hans Madueme ingeniously argues from the reality of sin to the existence of the soul. Madueme shows that neither Joel Green's neurobiological reading of Scripture nor Nancey Murphy's nonreductive physicalism nor Philip Clayton's emergentism can account for moral responsibility and culpable sin. Sans the human possession of an immaterial mind, free will, Madueme rightly notes, is impossible. However, Madueme seems to chop off the branch on which he sits by affirming sin as a compatibilist, not libertarian, phenomenon and positing a divine causal determinism that mysteriously avoids physical causal determinism. Since compatibilism and determinism of any stripe ostensibly preclude moral responsibility, it seems to this reviewer that Madueme would have been better served to ground his case in a Molinist account of providence.

In chapter five, "Human Cognition and the Image of God," Aku Visala furnishes a structural account of the divine image, identifying it with the potential to develop such uniquely human cognitive mechanisms as reason and will. Visala successfully defends this notion by appealing to recent work in the cognitive-evolutionary sciences showing the inherently cultural and relational nature of human reason.

In chapter six, "Vulnerable, Yet Divine," Gabrielle R. Thomas investigates the experience of being an *imago Dei*. Informed by the fourth-century church father Gregory Nazianzen, Thomas suggests that this experience entails porosity to God and also to other spirits and moral forces. While culturally unfashionable, Thomas rightly emphasizes the constant battle of the believer with Satan and delineates a Christocentric strategy for victorious Christian living.

In chapter seven, "Created and Constructed Identities in Theological Anthropology," Ryan S. Peterson contends that humanity's created identity in the *imago Dei* includes structures, relations, and vocations, which we then use to construct identities of our place in the world. Peterson reminds us that, in our identity constructions, we must contemplate God to ensure these align with the objective, transcendent frame of reference.

In chapter eight, "Adam and Christ," Frances M. Young emphasizes the corporate nature of the divine image by illuminating the world of patristic Christology. She points out how Athanasius's arguments about redemption presuppose human solidarity, drawing on either a Platonic conceptual background or some sort of realism about universals. Young's laudable agenda for theological anthropology is that only an account of genuine human unity can make sense of corporate sin, corporate guilt, and corporate judgment.

In chapter nine, "Life in the Spirit," Lucy Peppiatt provides an account of how a pneumatic Christological model, giving attention to the Spirit's empowerment, guidance,

and comfort for Christ and us, constitutes the most fruitful matrix for human development and spiritual formation. Peppiatt skillfully engages the theology of John Owen and Aquinas to avoid the defects of adoptionist, post-Trinitarian, and revisionist Spirit Christologies.

In chapter ten, “Flourishing in the Spirit,” Joanna Leidenhag and R. T. Mullins explain how Christ’s humanity is instantiated and unlocks flourishing for the rest of humanity. Their employment of the neo-Chalcedonian Christological distinction between *anhypostasia* and *enhypostasia* powerfully accounts for the insight that Christ’s human nature could not exist apart from the Incarnation. By differentiating the work of the Son from the work of the Spirit, they successfully demonstrate that the unique, divine, and personal presence of the Spirit effectuates transformative sanctification.

In chapter eleven, “Mapping Anthropological Metaphysics with a Descensus Key,” Matthew Y. Emerson adopts the “two compartments of Sheol” model to explain how Jesus could descend to the realm of the dead (i.e., Paradise, the upper compartment) between his death and resurrection. Emerson argues that the only way such a descent would be metaphysically possible is if Jesus—who was “like his brothers and sisters in every respect” (Heb. 2:17 NRSV)—were an embodied soul, which by implication means that we are embodied souls as well.

In chapter twelve, “The Upward Call,” Ian A. McFarland furnishes a satisfying account of the relationship between nature and grace through the category of vocation. To be called by God is to be summoned to a *telos* compatible with human nature but lying beyond it and not intrinsic to it. This model of vocation is immune to the problems of making grace part of human nature and making human nature complete in itself.

While grounded in the historic Christian doctrine of substance dualism, the essays in this volume directly and indirectly illustrate the holistic nature of the *imago Dei*, encompassing body-soul and male-female distinctions while fostering racial and cultural unity. Accordingly, this book should be required reading for any undergraduate or graduate course in theological anthropology.

- Kirk R. MacGregor, McPherson College, McPherson, Kansas

***Contemporary Theology: An Introduction: Classical, Evangelical, Philosophical & Global Perspectives.* By Kirk R. MacGregor. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019. 412 pages. Hardcover, \$34.99.**

Kirk MacGregor serves as assistant professor of philosophy and religion and chair of the Department of Philosophy and Religion at McPherson College in Kansas. He has produced several books and articles, including *Luis de Molina: The Life and Theology of the Founder of Middle Knowledge* (Zondervan, 2015) and *A Molinist-Anabaptist Systematic Theology* (University Press of America, 2007). He graduated from Miami University (AB), Biola University (MA), and the University of Iowa (PhD).

Contemporary Theology is a sweeping survey of several individual theologians, philosophers, and theological movements. The author intends to “provide a clear and unbiased perception of the theological landscape of the past two centuries” (12). The first of the 38 chapters deals with the philosophical backgrounds to the contemporary era. The pattern in this and other chapters is to highlight selected individuals (Descartes and Kant in this chapter) and trends (empiricism and rationalism). Each chapter has a conclusion offering a brief assessment of the theological figure or movement and a short bibliography.

The next several chapters deal with the nineteenth century and the early-twentieth century. MacGregor offers short chapters (about ten pages each) on Schleiermacher, Hegel, Kierkegaard, early Dispensationalism, Princeton Theology, Spurgeon, revivalist theology (especially Dwight L. Moody), and the Roman Catholic Vatican I council. Although the scope of the book is broad, the discussions are concise by design, focusing primarily on Protestant thought.

Moving into the twentieth century, MacGregor surveys a wide range of views. A reader unfamiliar with theological history might be overwhelmed with the diversity of views in the last century. For instance, the author devotes short chapters to the social gospel (especially the contribution of Rauschenbusch), fundamentalism, Karl Barth, and Christian realism (Reinhold Niebuhr and H. Richard Niebuhr). The “global” dimension of the book surfaces dramatically in the discussion of “Pentecostalism and Latin American Pneumatology.” The chapter on Wittgenstein’s philosophy of language and religion displays the author’s expertise in philosophy as well as theology.

Focusing on the mid-twentieth century, the author describes the emergence of contemporary evangelicalism, highlighting the contributions of Harold John Ockenga, Carl F. H. Henry, and Billy Graham. Chapters are then devoted to Bultmann and Tillich. The brief chapter on the “death of God” theologies focuses on Paul Van Buren and Thomas J. J. Altizer. MacGregor returns to developments in Roman Catholic theology moving from Vatican II to the present.

The author’s presentations on the last decades of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first century display the amazing ferment of theological and philosophical discussions around the world. Short chapters highlight process theology (Whitehead and Cobb especially), the theology of hope (Pannenberg and Moltmann), and the Anabaptist theology of John Howard Yoder. The chapter on “Liberation Theology” focuses on Latin American and Black theologies. The next chapter delineates three versions of feminist theology. Returning to the evangelical trajectory, MacGregor devotes a chapter to the debate about the role of women as presented by complementarianism and egalitarianism. The discussion of Reformed epistemology highlights the work of Alvin Plantinga. The global horizon of contemporary theology appears again in the chapter on African Christology (especially Jesus as healer and ancestor). The discussion of postmodern theology focuses

on authors such as John Caputo. Returning to evangelical theology, the author treats the emergence of open theism (especially Boyd and Sanders). The chapter on recent philosophy of religion and analytic theology highlights the “renaissance of philosophical apologetics” (304). The chapter concludes with a treatment of the Molinist response to open theism. A short chapter deals with “Chinese Eschatology,” especially the “Back to Jerusalem Movement.” The discussion of postliberal theology includes Hans Frei and George Lindbeck. The author steps outside the confines of traditional historical theology and philosophy a bit to tackle the theology of the arts movement, focusing on the work of Jeremy Begbie. MacGregor then presents the “new perspective” on Paul’s doctrine of justification as an example of the ferment in biblical theology. A further and broader discussion of the Bible comes in the chapter on the theological interpretation of the Bible (Kevin Vanhoozer as a key example). The relation of the Bible to science is highlighted in the chapter on “Evolutionary Creation”; John Walton’s recent work on the book of Genesis is the focus here. The last chapter treats “Postconservative Theology.” The author primarily discusses the work of Roger Olson with some attention to Stanley Grenz.

Overall, this book is a stellar example of a textbook that is academically sound while being clear and accessible to many readers. The author explains complex theological terms and arguments clearly and frequently illustrates them in terms lay readers will appreciate. The author’s brief evaluations of the trends are fair and balanced, although he clearly fits within the broad camp of evangelicalism. Over recent years other books have covered some of the same territory, but most treat fewer theologians and movements. Some readers might wish for more details, but the author’s aim to be concise is commendable. The suggested readings, as well as the endnotes in each chapter, will direct interested readers to fuller discussions. Evangelicalism receives ample treatment, and MacGregor clearly understands how contested even the term “evangelical” is today for some people. Baptist theology receives special attention, for instance, in the discussion of Rauschenbusch, Spurgeon, and Olson. Developments in Roman Catholicism are highlighted, but Eastern Orthodoxy receives minimal attention. The attention to Pentecostalism is salutary in light of its rapid growth around the world. Although the author mentions biblical theology frequently, a short discussion on the flourishing of the Biblical Theology Movement in the mid-twentieth century might have balanced the treatment of Bultmann.

This book might be valuable to many different types of readers. College and seminary students could use the work as a handbook, full of clear, fair presentations on people and trends. Pastors and other church staff members might benefit from seeing the ferment in contemporary theology. Lay people who might think all theologians are either liberal or conservative might need to know that serious Christians still disagree on some issues while striving to love God with their minds.

- Warren McWilliams, Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, Oklahoma (senior professor of theology, retired)

***Dealing with Demons.* By Charles H. Kraft. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2018. 129 pages. Paperback, \$20.00.**

Expertise in the field of spiritual warfare requires an openness to uncommon experiences (according to western standards) while being situated in a worldview informed and guided by historic Christian doctrines. Among those Christians who affirm that Satan and demons operate in the world today, some of those scholars offer little instruction on how to engage in spiritual warfare with the enemy, beyond noting that Christians are to submit to God and resist the devil. One segment of Christians advances a view known as power encounters. This is the view that demonic forces can be confronted and expelled from individuals by the power and authority of Jesus Christ. In this book *Dealing with Demons*, Charles H. Kraft advocates a power encounter philosophy of ministry. Kraft (PhD, Hartford Seminary Foundation) is professor emeritus of anthropology and intercultural communication at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. Many of his books have focused on spiritual warfare, such as *Christianity with Power: Your Worldview and Your Experience of the Supernatural* (Vine Books, 1989), *I Give You Authority: Practicing the Authority Jesus Gave Us* (Chosen Books, 1997, revised 2012), and *Two Hours to Freedom: A Simple and Effective Model for Healing and Deliverance* (Chosen Books, 2010).

After making a brief case for the reality of demons in the world today (ch. 1), Kraft suggests that the western worldview dissuades Christians from expecting to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to bring healing and deliverance to people (ch. 2). In chapter 3, Kraft distinguishes between types of demons (cosmic or ground level) and suggests ways a person can be demonized (by invitation [conscious or unconscious], by invitation of someone in authority over the person, through inheritance, or through curses). Kraft notes ten false beliefs in chapter 4; one example of a false belief is that demons cannot live in a Christian. Kraft teaches, instead, that a demon can live in four parts of a Christian—in their body, mind, emotions, and will—but not in a Christian's spirit (18). In chapters 6 and 7, Kraft presents then evaluates three methods of dealing with demons. The first two approaches err by attempting to deliver the person through raw power encounters without addressing the issue of inner healing. The third approach, for which the author advocates, attempts to address inner healing of the individual then calling demons to attention, binding them, and sending them to a spiritual locked box which is separated from the person by the authority of Jesus's cross and resurrection. The remainder of the book employs the metaphor of demons as rats and emotional wounds or sin as garbage. According to the metaphor, rats are attracted to garbage; the priority should be to address the garbage (emotional hurt or sin) before one deals with the rats (demons). Chapters 8–16 provide specific steps for dealing with both inner healing and demons. Appendix A offers several sample spiritual warfare prayers and Appendix B offers a brief spiritual warfare bibliography.

Kraft's book reveals several strengths. First, those who affirm the enemy's activity in the world today through demons as well as God's desire to bring freedom in Christ will

benefit from Kraft's instruction manual for healing and deliverance because he seeks to observe biblical guidelines as well as concern for physical safety and a loving environment for the one being healed and delivered. Second, Kraft's insight that demons are sometimes granted authority to reside in a person and also gain strength through that person's inner hurts such as bitterness, shame, and unforgiveness should be considered by Christian theologians and counselors. Third, Kraft's instruction that Christians should not allow their western worldview from believing and acting on the truths that demons disrupt, deceive, tempt people, and support their compulsions—all while leading people to either fear them or deny their existence (57–62). Fourth, Kraft is clear throughout his book that any power that a person might have over spirits so they can give commands, require spirits to speak, or send them away is only a delegated authority located in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Despite the strengths noted above, Kraft's manual for inner healing and deliverance left this reader with several concerns. The first concern is that Kraft's book is largely a presentation of anecdotal evidence with only occasional references to published writings—primarily his own writings. In 118 pages of text, only four sources are cited in the footnotes, one time each. When dealing with an unusual topic such as inner healing and deliverance from demons, readers should be assured the ideas they are reading are not unique to the author. Instead, they want to know that the theology and practice described in the book reflect the wider Christian community. Perhaps Kraft's ideas reflect the wider community of scholars and practitioners. Or, it is possible that Kraft cites himself and only a small number of other works because his ideas and methods are outside of the mainstream. Without reading other sources, readers will not know.

The second concern is that Kraft's book contains several claims which struck this reader as problematic. Consider these examples:

- “Jesus did not use his divinity on earth. Rather, he laid aside his deity (Phil 2:5–8) and worked totally under the power of the Holy Spirit” (6, also 24). In reply, since Chalcedon in 451, the church has understood Jesus to be one person with two natures, one which was/is truly divine. According to this view, divinity was not a power Jesus could lay aside. Likewise, Phil 2 should be understood as a statement of Jesus's humility and servanthood, perhaps that Jesus did not always exercise divine attributes—not that Jesus did not use or laid aside of divinity during his earthly ministry.
- “I would estimate that at least 50 percent of the leaders we have elected have been demonized” (25). Kraft makes no attempt to support this bold claim.
- “Yoga, Karate and *Tai Chi* instructors regularly commit themselves and their students to evil spirits” (26, italics his). Again, Kraft makes no attempt to support this striking claim.
- Kraft writes, “At this point in our discussion it would be good to look at how we go about casting demons out. We don't get much help from Scripture on the matter, for the scriptural authors simply show Jesus commanding them out” (31). One wonders if Jesus's method of casting out demons is precisely the method that should be followed today rather than adding the steps of sending demons into spiritual locked boxes (103) and praying warfare

prayers (119–26), both of which are taught by Kraft but neither of which are mentioned in Scripture.

- Kraft recommends a method of inner healing that assumes all memories are retained and can later be recalled by a person, including memories of events that occurred while an infant in the womb. Through a process called “faith picturing,” a person can receive healing by visualizing Jesus as present during painful events. Consider this illustration that Kraft affirms as a proper method: “Bruce suggested that we ask the Holy Spirit to take Randy back to conception to see if there are any memories there that could be the roots of his present problems. This he did by having Randy close his eyes and picture Jesus’ hands with a sperm in one hand and an egg in the other, then picturing himself putting Jesus’ hands together for the sperm to fertilize the egg. In this way, Bruce explained, Randy would be agreeing that it was alright with him as well as for Jesus for him to be conceived” (43; see also 44–45, 69–71). Early trauma can impact people later in life. Also, visualizing Jesus as present at difficult times in our life can be justified—although some of those events could include the sinful acts of others. But asking the Holy Spirit to take one back to infant—even pre-birth—memories seems problematic.

None of these five claims on their own would merit concern in a book review. However, the accumulation of these questionable statements raises a concern about this work. While there are many positive aspects to Kraft’s book, I cannot recommend it as a resource for those who are developing their theology and ministry of spiritual warfare.

- Adam Harwood, *New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, Louisiana*

***Free Will Revisited: A Respectful Response to Luther, Calvin, and Edwards.* By Robert E. Picirilli. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017. 140 pages. Paperback, \$20.00.**

The issue of human free will has been debated for centuries, but understandably is of particular interest to the author, who serves as professor emeritus of New Testament and philosophy of Welch College, a Free Will Baptist college in Gallatin, Tennessee. In the first part of the book, Picirilli discusses the definition of free will, the worldview of naturalism and determinism that is incompatible with free will, and an overview of the biblical materials relating to free will. Picirilli’s definition of free will is “that a person is capable of making decisions, that a person can choose between two (or more) alternatives when he or she has obtained (by whatever means) the degree of understanding of those alternatives required to choose between them” (4). This view has been called libertarian free will or self-determinism. Picirilli distinguishes this view of free will from indeterminism, which some mistakenly confuse with arbitrary or random decisions. These are conscious, rational choices of sentient human beings, by their souls, minds, or selves. This free will is constitutional to humans because they are created in the image of God. Picirilli notes that free will is rejected by both naturalistic determinism and theological determinism, and the problems inherent in such views. Picirilli then surveys some Old Testament and New Testament teachings which appear to affirm free will. This chapter is one of the strong contributions of the book.

The second part of the book surveys the challenges to free will made by three oft-cited theologians, Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Jonathan Edwards. The discussion of Luther and Calvin is primarily their interaction with another contemporary interlocutor—Luther with Desiderius Erasmus and Calvin with the fifteenth century Dutch Catholic theologian Albert Pighius (unfortunately confused by some with the fifth-century Catholic monk Pelagius). Edwards’s discussion is an outlier in at least two ways; (a) he is not interacting with a contemporary scholar, but simply presenting his view, and (b) his is almost exclusively a philosophical discussion, whereas Luther and Calvin are more biblical and theological. Picirilli presents the point-by-point arguments of each thinker in their best-known works on this topic – Erasmus’s *On Free Will* vs. Luther’s retort in *On the Bondage of the Will*, Pighius’s *Ten Books on Human Free Choice and Divine Grace* (a response to Calvin’s *Institutes*) vs. Calvin’s *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will* and Edwards’s *Freedom of the Will*. Picirilli offers a balanced, helpful, careful summary of these discussions, which is a real contribution. Picirilli offers these summaries with minimal expression of his own opinions, which he collected in the final section of the book.

Unfortunately, Picirilli does not deal with the question of whether Luther’s representation of Erasmus’s views and Calvin’s representation of Pighius’s views were accurate. In particular, it appears that Luther significantly misrepresented what Erasmus was saying. He accused Erasmus of denying any role for the intervention of the grace of God in human freedom, although Erasmus insisted that humans could not get to God apart from grace. Picirilli does reference A. N. S. Lane, the editor of the Baker version of the Calvin volume, saying that Calvin was privately embarrassed by some of Luther’s overstatements, but did not want to disturb Protestant unity.

Picirilli presents his own views in the final section of the book. These views are clear and cogent. In particular, he demolishes Edwards’s view of freedom. It is difficult to give sufficient detail of the arguments he presents, but in the brief fourth section he does summarize his position with five affirmations (130–34):

- (1) “The sovereignty of God is just as strong, if not stronger, in a world where human beings have the power of choice between alternatives.”
- (2) “Human depravity is such that no person ever would respond to the gospel apart from a work of grace initiated by God.”
- (3) “[T]he work of salvation is wholly and exclusively God’s. A person’s accepting the gift contributes nothing to the work and subtracts nothing from the Giver.”
- (4) “God’s exhaustive foreknowledge of the future offers no contradiction of free will. Rightly understood, foreknowledge is knowledge in advance, not foreordination.”
- (5) “Nor do the laws of cause and effect contradict free will. . . . Minds and wills are aspects of persons, and persons originate thoughts and volitions.”

In the final analysis, however, it is Picirilli's understanding of Scripture that is the arbiter of his convictions.

This is a well-written, succinct summary of what important theologians and Scripture itself affirms about human free will, consistent with Picirilli's experienced scholarship. I highly recommend *Free Will Revisited*.

- Steve W. Lemke, *New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, Louisiana*

***A New Testament Theology.* By Craig L. Blomberg. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018. 769 pages. Paperback, \$49.95.**

Craig Blomberg is Distinguished Professor of New Testament at Denver Seminary, where he has served since 1986 (16). He studied at Augustana College, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and the University of Aberdeen (PhD), where his mentor was I. Howard Marshall (12). Early in his career, he taught at Palm Beach Atlantic College, and he was ordained to the ministry in a Southern Baptist church. A prolific author, he has written monographs on biblical theology on subjects such as stewardship and Jesus's table fellowship. He also has written commentaries, such as the New American Commentary on Matthew.

Blomberg's volume is not as detailed as some larger one-volume works on New Testament theology, but he intends to be comprehensive as possible in his treatment of the subject. He hopes his work might be useful for "a one-semester class on NT theology in colleges or universities and seminaries" (13). His book clearly reflects a lifetime of dedicated study of the New Testament. In his "Introduction," Blomberg quickly reviews some other recent NT theologies and identifies his overall position as closest to a "redemptive-historical approach" (7). Among the many possible major themes in the New Testament, he decides to highlight the theme of promise and fulfillment. He often uses the "already but not yet" summary for the theme, but near the end of his work Blomberg notes that "already/even more" might be a more suitable slogan because what occurs in redemptive history after the return of Jesus is "incomparable in its glory" (693). In terms of scope and emphasis, he suggests his book is similar to recent works by G. K. Beale and Thomas Schreiner (11).

A brief summary of this large book can only begin to give the flavor of Blomberg's magisterial study. In general, he treats the New Testament books in chronological order, presuming the traditional views of authorship. His first chapter focuses on Jesus as depicted primarily in the gospel of Mark and Q. Here he highlights events such as Jesus's temptations and resurrection as well as themes such as the kingdom of God, Jesus's titles, and messianic ethics.

Chapter 2, “The Earliest Church,” focuses on the first part of the book of Acts. Blomberg highlights Luke’s overall theology as well in a later chapter. Here, however, the author occasionally uses the categories of systematic theology, such as soteriology and ecclesiology, to organize his material. He includes a brief section of Luke’s emphasis on caring for the poor.

Blomberg treats the letters of James and Jude together in chapter 3, suggesting they both were written early. On James, he highlights issues such as wealth and poverty. On Jude, he treats several themes briefly, including Christology, Scripture, and eschatology.

One of the longest chapters, over 100 pages, treats ten of Paul’s letters. Blomberg opts to treat the pastoral letters in a later chapter. Chapter 4 begins with a quick overview of the fulfillment theme in the ten letters. Then Blomberg treat major themes such as Christology, soteriology, and Christian ethics. At key points, he includes helpful studies of significant Greek terms, including, for example, “body” and “propitiation.”

The next three chapters discuss Mark, Matthew, and Luke-Acts. Although Mark’s Gospel was a major resource for the earlier Jesus chapter, here Blomberg digs deeper into topics such as the so-called messianic secret and discipleship. Chapter 6 on Matthew reviews several themes, including the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and the kingdom of God. Chapter 7 on Luke-Acts focuses on themes such as the Holy Spirit, the great reversal, and ecclesiology.

Still following a generally chronological pattern, in chapter 8 Blomberg turns to Paul’s pastoral letters. As usual, he stresses theological issues but helpfully tackles ethics as well. The topics of church government and leaders emerge for careful attention.

Blomberg dedicates chapter 9 to the letter to the Hebrews. He highlights themes such as covenant, Christology, apostasy, and perseverance. As usual, he offers a thoughtful perspective on highly controversial issues.

First Peter and Second Peter are the focus of chapter 10. Although 2 Peter and Jude are similar, Blomberg opts to highlight the letters by Peter together. Topics such as incipient Trinitarianism, angels and demons, and theodicy are discussed.

A very long chapter 11 (over 100 pages) treats the five books traditionally attributed to John. Blomberg identifies numerous themes shared by these books, but he also highlights the distinctive emphases in each book. Christology, pneumatology, eschatology and the Christian life are among the issues receiving detailed discussion here.

The final chapter is a brief “Conclusion,” which offers a review of Blomberg’s overall emphasis on “already but not yet” as well as some suggestions for practical application.

Evaluating such a massive volume in a short review is challenging. Blomberg clearly is a dedicated evangelical scholar attentive to the needs of church members, ministry students, and ministers. Throughout his impressive career, he has communicated his exegetical insights clearly. Although this work, by necessity, does not include as much practical application as some of his earlier works, he demonstrates the relevance of New Testament theology for individual Christians and the church. One of the major strengths of this book is its scope. Blomberg does not neglect any part of the canon. Smaller books, often overlooked in volumes that highlight the Gospels and Paul, are given serious attention by Blomberg. Also, the author demonstrates an irenic spirit on controversial issues. For example, on the topic of women in Paul's pastoral letters, Blomberg presents rival views fairly (474–81). Another example is his thoughtful treatment of millennial views in the treatment of Revelation (679–80). Overall, Blomberg displays a healthy humility about his work. Early on he granted that his emphasis on fulfillment is not “the only legitimate answer to the question of the most central and integrating theme of the NT” (11). He deliberately chose the title “A Theology of the New Testament” rather than “The Theology of the New Testament” to reflect his stance.

Blomberg's work should appeal to many kinds of readers. College and seminary students will definitely find a wealth of information useful to them. Although there is no complete bibliography offered, the copious footnotes would guide students to relevant resources for further study. Pastors and other ministers might like the canonical organization, which would facilitate preparation for Bible study and sermons. The detailed table of contents could allow the study of a theme throughout the canon.

- Warren McWilliams, Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, Oklahoma (senior professor of theology, retired)

***People are the Mission: How Churches Can Welcome Guests Without Compromising the Gospel.* By Danny Franks. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018. 208 pages. Paperback, \$17.99.**

Danny Franks has served at The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, for the past fifteen years. He currently serves as the Connections Pastor and previously served as the Pastor of Guest Services, though his work has been much of the same in both positions. Franks oversees guest services for more than 11,000 people attending ten campuses each weekend. *People are the Mission* is his first book, though he has written much on the topic of guest services, primarily in a thirty-page booklet available online at his personal website, entitled “Five Plumb Lines for Guest Services.” *People are the Mission* includes much of the same information, though with more detail.

Franks's overall purpose in *People are the Mission* is simple enough. His presupposition is stated in the book's title: “People are the mission” (11). He restates this throughout the

book (23, 77, 100, 116, 147, 177, 180, 181). Franks offers what he believes is a gospel-centered approach to reaching guests. His model fits between two extremes, the “guest-centric” church and the “gospel-centric” church (23). In this, Franks touches on his view of the attractional-incarnational paradigm. He believes that “honoring the stranger doesn’t stand at odds with honoring the Savior” (23). The fact that a church is outwardly focused does not mean it cannot be gospel-centered, and in a church’s desire to be gospel-centered, it does not have to forsake the importance of appealing to guests to some degree. Important for his thesis is the fact that he uses the word *guest* “quite liberally” (17). A guest is one “who shows up at your church at any time. . . . A first-timer, out-of-towner or longtime neighbor, lead pastor, or brand-new volunteer—they are all your guests” (17). And Franks focuses on how to adequately care for first-time guests.

The book is split into two parts, one on “outward hospitality” (chapters 1–3) and the other on “inward discipleship” (chapters 3–6). In chapter 1, Franks notes that the gospel should be a church’s only offense. Until the time one hears the gospel, “(We) should . . . (do) everything possible to pave the way with rose petals and puppy fur” (47). This chapter is where Franks initially exhorts the reader to remember that *the sermon starts in the parking lot*. He further expounds on this point in chapter 2. Churches must have guests in mind before the service ever begins. The surrounding culture is already *easily offended*; therefore, churches must take great care to be *inoffensive*. If they are offensive, guests may be turned away from a potential relationship with Christ. Franks helpfully provides practical advice to help (68ff). In chapter 3, he states that though churches should seek to be hospitable, they will often be confronted with the hostility of outsiders. Like Jesus, churches should have a “posture of love,” seeking to meet others’ hostility with gospel-centered hospitality (85).

In chapter 4, Franks goes deeper into the attractional-incarnational paradigm; he believes churches can be both attractional *and* incarnational. Churches should both *attract* guests and *go* to them and in both methods, displaying biblical hospitality. In chapter 5, Franks addresses what seems to be an insurmountable difficulty for many church leaders—the “older brother” complex of already-established church members. In short, church leaders should teach long-time members the value of appealing to the desires of outsiders in hopes that those outsiders might be drawn to Christ. Ultimately, the salvation of the lost is at stake, so appropriate measures must be taken. In chapter 6, the final chapter, Franks writes about the motivation for guest services, the gospel. In much of the book previous to this chapter, Franks delivers what could be viewed as a *guest-centered view* of the church, though he makes his biblical motivation clear at points, especially in his interwoven narrative of Zacchaeus. Nonetheless, he makes it abundantly clear in this chapter, writing, “If we’ve received love, we have to give love” (168). The reason churches seek to love guests in myriad ways is because Christ has done the same for his people. “People were the mission of Jesus, and people are still our mission today. Let’s love them because we understand just how much he has loved us” (181).

Only a few weaknesses are worth mentioning. First, Franks takes much liberty with the narratives of both Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10) and the prodigal son’s older brother (Luke 15:11–32). Some might see his takes as overreaching; Franks himself says, “(Maybe) I’m exaggerating a bit,” and “I’m speculating” (136, 145). His use of both of these narratives as illustrations for guest services appears to be a minor “stretch” of the biblical text; his work would have sufficed even without these narratives. Second, Franks depends on Andy Stanley a great deal (119, 123, 138), which is troublesome considering the recent controversies surrounding Stanley’s view of a Christian’s relationship to the Old Testament. The third weakness is a *sin of omission*, in that Franks does not adequately consider how important generational gaps are in attempts to reach outsiders. Rarely are all church members upset with changes made to appeal to guests, for many changes made to reach modern generations are welcomed by younger members.

The fourth, and most significant, weakness is Franks’s failure to deal with the possibility that churches must *keep* new members with what *attracts* them. Franks shows some wishful thinking: “(We) will use methods that appeal to consumers to establish relationships with them. But we don’t want to leave them there” (132). He later states that a modern problem with many churches is that “regular attenders are professional consumers” (133). Yet, are professional consumers not created by the very church leaders who appeal to first-time guests’ desires? An overarching problem is that Franks communicates that it is *right* for guests to be consumers, while it is *wrong* for members to be. In the appendix, he writes, “(Church members) . . . will have to die to their personal comfort constantly in exchange for the comfort of a guest.” This goes directly against Franks’s position, stated earlier in the book, that *all are guests*. Appealing to an outsider’s consumeristic nature—from the start—might be a reason for struggles experienced later. What if, in Franks’s suggested model, churches are actually creating those “older brother” types within the church? Not to mention, there is no conceivable way to appeal to everyone’s preferences simultaneously. At some point, one demographic has to be chosen over the other, and in that, one guest will feel more welcomed than another.

Still, this book is both ecclesiologicaly insightful and immediately applicable. Though *People are the Mission* is mostly concerned with the “why” of guest services, Franks has also written a practical and readable book that should prove helpful as churches seek to answer the “what” and “how” of guest services. One of Franks’s often-stated points is that there is no *one-size-fits-all* option for every church to apply. The model used at The Summit Church will likely differ from the one needed at the reader’s church. Franks believes context is key. He is rightly concerned with the *upholding of gospel truth* and *adequate care of guests*, though he is clear that the former is most important. He writes, “(Unless) your driving vision is centered on the gospel, you’ll leave your guests empty and yourself exhausted” (57). The application of this principle will look different at each church; nonetheless, every church must do something (197).

Moreover, Franks's understanding of God's sovereignty leads him to an appropriate view of success. In a book on guest services, one might expect an over-emphasis on numerical results and too great a focus on pragmatism. After all, what many churches are after, in their attempts to provide guest services, is higher attendance. This book does not fit in with the Church Growth Movement of yesteryear. Franks rightly reminds his reader: "(You) can't change these people. . . . That is the role of the Holy Spirit. Your role is to pray that the Spirit would speak loudly, and they would listen sensitively" (170). What is more, Franks writes with great skill and uses humor effectively, which serves to make the book even more readable. For the topic addressed, Franks's book should prove to be essential reading—especially for popular-level readers—for years to come.

- C. J. Moore, *Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri*

Reading Genesis Well: Navigating History, Poetry, Science, and Truth in Genesis 1–11.
By C. John Collins. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018. 336 pages. Paperback,
\$36.99.

C. John Collins begins this book by stating that "anyone familiar with Judaism and Christianity recognizes that these religions place great value on the book of Genesis, especially on its first eleven chapters" (17). Still, the interpretation of these chapters is not entirely uniform. Instead, as Collins notes, interpreters have approached Gen 1–11 from numerous perspectives: myth, historical narrative, poetry, etc. This implies that each of these interpreters has approached the beginning chapters of Genesis with different methodologies, or strategies for reading. Sadly, one's methodology is often "assumed rather than warranted" (17). In other words, Collins argues that many have read Gen 1–11 and only arrived at certain conclusions because they began with an unwarranted reading strategy. As such, Collins has written *Reading Genesis Well* with two goals in mind. His first goal is "to provide guidance to those who want to consider how these Bible passages relate to the findings of the sciences" and his second goal is "to establish patterns of good theological readings" (32).

Given Collins's educational background—a graduate degree from MIT and a PhD in Hebrew and Comparative Semitic Linguistics (29–30)—he is in a unique position to speak to both of his goals. The readers who are familiar with some of Collins's other works—*Science and Faith* (2003), *Genesis 1–4* (2006), and *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist?* (2011)—will find that in *Reading Genesis Well*, Collins continues to provide new insights into these chapters and their overall purpose in theology and faith. In the end, Collins achieves these goals in both a comprehensive and didactic manner.

While Collins has divided *Reading Genesis Well* into eleven chapters, it seems helpful to organize these chapters into three major sections. In section one (chapters 2–6), Collins explains the nature of written communication and guides his readers

towards a “pragmatic and sociolinguistic perspective to reading” Gen 1–11 (107). In section two (chapter 7), Collins provides his readers with a very broad and insightful “integrated rhetorical-theological reading of this portion of the book of Genesis” (158). Lastly, in section three (chapters 8–11) Collins surveys how both ancient and modern scholars have read Gen 1–11 while providing an evaluation of his own reading.

Within chapters 2–6, Collins explains the basics of text-linguistics, rhetorical criticism, literary criticism, and speech-act theory. Anyone familiar with any of these fields will find nothing new here in regards to the fundamentals of the various methodologies. Still, these chapters present a unique perspective by means of Collins’s utilization of the works of C. S. Lewis. As Collins reminds his readers, Lewis was not simply a fiction writer, but “a prominent Cambridge scholar” of English literature (34). As such, Lewis wrote some articles and books related to the field of sociolinguistics, which is the nature of “how people can choose and manipulate their words in order to wield social power” (43). While much of the content within these chapters is highly technical, the most helpful parts will probably be found in Collins’s explanation of Lewis’s distinction between the different types of language: ordinary, scientific, and poetic. Ultimately, Collins concludes that Gen 1–11 is “*exalted prose*” (157, italics original). This is to be distinguished from what is known as “antiquarian history” (141).

As noted above, in chapter 7 Collins presents a very broad “rhetorical-theological reading” of Gen 1–11 that “combines the . . . text-grammatical approach . . . with literary sensitivity . . . and awareness of the social function of a text for the community—all the while showing respect to the theological interest of the Bible” (159). Still, the amount of space Collins devotes to “different sections” of Gen 1–11 is “disproportionate to the amount of text” (159). Thus, this section of the book may leave some readers wanting. However, Collins explains how the cohesion of Gen 1–11 helps to clarify the authorial intention of these narratives. As Collins states, when these chapters are read accordingly, “many scientific questions” become “irrelevant to the telling of the story” (130); these questions simply “fade into the background” (165).

In chapters 8–11, Collins concludes his work by surveying how ancient and modern readers have approached Gen 1–11 in light of his rhetorical-theological reading of these same chapters. Collins includes intertestamental literature (with an emphasis on the Apocrypha), the New Testament, later Old Testament writers, the writings of Josephus, and some well-known modern scholars such as John Walton. In the end, Collins simply wants his readers to “appropriate these chapters of Genesis responsibly,” not seeking to press them “into a scientific theory, whether of the young-earth or old-earth or evolutionary kind,” especially if this is due to “faulty exegesis” (290).

As Collins states in his introduction, “one’s view of the biblical texts depends on one’s interpretive approach” (17). While Collins work does not cover every aspect of the biblical

interpretation of Gen 1–11, he does present a platform for developing a critical methodology for reading the Bible as a whole. For example, Collins notes that many readers of Gen 1 have determined that the ancient Israelites believed the earth was stationary since they wrote about the sun rising. In response to this, Collins provides an illustration from a sociolinguistic standpoint. He states that “if a medieval person told us ‘The barbarians attacked as the sun rose, and the battle continues until the sunset,’ we would in almost all cases allow his statement to be true, so long as there were a real attack and the fight lasted throughout the daylight” (244). Thus, Collins’s illustration is helpful in at least two ways.

First, it should remind readers of the Bible that God used human authors and human means of communication to provide his people with his word. Second, it should also awaken readers to the fact that the Bible does contain “conventional expressions” (244), just as the English language does. In other words, as Collins argues throughout the book, to read the Bible literally is to read it according to authorial intention. Another example is found in Ps 93:1. While this psalm does state that the earth “shall never be moved,” readers must remember that this text is poetry. As such, when the context is examined the point of Ps 93:1 is to argue that “the stability of the world is under God’s governance. . . . Physical immobility has no bearing in such a context and to find it there is a misreading” (251). Thus, Ps 93:1 literally means that the Earth cannot be moved out of God’s hands and does not signify that the ancient authors believed that the Earth did not move in a planetary orbit.

In all, Collins’s work is extremely valuable, helpful, and insightful. This book would be useful for any introductory hermeneutics course. Though there are a few places where Collins’s work exhibits shortcomings—such as his lack of interaction with Matt 24:37–38 and Luke 17:26–27 in his discussion of the “sons of God” in Gen 6:1–8 (187–188)—these are overshadowed by his well-crafted arguments about what “an ideal audience” would have realized when reading Gen 1–11 (256).

- Ron Lindo, *New Orleans Theological Seminary, New Orleans, Louisiana*

A man in a dark suit and purple tie is speaking and gesturing with his hands in a classroom. In the background, several students are seated at desks with laptops open, listening attentively. The overall scene is a professional academic environment.

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