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Editorial

This issue of the *Southwestern Journal of Theology* is devoted to biblical studies, bringing together some of the exegetical, historical, and theological contributions that are being offered by faculty within the Biblical Studies Division of the School of Theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The issue begins with Joshua E. Williams' demonstration that the Pentateuch is a book with a message that begins in the first chapters of Genesis and characterizes the entire development of the Pentateuch. Second, Sang-Wong (Aaron) Son examines the concept of the "one new man" in Paul's letter to the Ephesians with regard to the doctrines of man and the church. Dr. Son's well-considered exegesis and conclusions are thought provoking and should generate substantial interest in his upcoming reflections on the Pauline doctrine of the universal church. Third, James Wicker delves into the earliest history of the church by examining inscriptions from the earliest Christian buildings, providing substantial proof that pre-Constantinian Christianity displayed a high Christology at the popular level.

Fourth, John W. Taylor analyzes a little-known Greek lectionary manuscript that is housed in the Roberts Library at Southwestern Seminary, providing us with such important information as the purpose of the manuscript, its liturgical uses, its dating, etc. Fifth, B. Paul Wolfe, now Headmaster at the Cambridge School of Dallas, provides a subtle evaluation of recent literary trends among New Testament scholars. Finally, hearty thanks are extended to John W. Taylor for bringing the biblical studies essays together and providing the first round of editing. His contributions have been invaluable to the publication of the first issue of the 52nd volume of the new series of the *Southwestern Journal of Theology*.

Three review essays are printed in this issue. One review essay is provided by Southwestern New Testament scholar Herbert W. Bateman IV and considers *The Messiah in Early Judaism and Christianity*. Of note is a compilation of reviews on the essays collected in the recent popular systematic theology, *A Theology for the Church*. The reviews of the essays in *A Theology for the Church* are written by systematic theologians affiliated with Southwestern Seminary's Theological Studies Division.

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The Message of the Pentateuch

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The Pentateuch, the Torah, the Law of Moses—these designations apply to the first five books of the Bible, Genesis through Deuteronomy. Even though these books have been transmitted as five, they are, in fact, one book.¹ At the same time, this one book is a complex, diverse, and seemingly unwieldy text. It is composed of units of various forms: genealogies, universal narratives, family narratives, blessings, oracles, statutes, case laws, building reports, etc. Beyond the formal differences, there are also significant differences in content: the text moves from the creation of the world to the patriarchs to the exodus, camps out on Mt. Sinai, continuing on to the wilderness wanderings and closing with a series of admonitions by one important national leader on the plains of Moab. Furthermore, even within individual narrative units, there often exist textual peculiarities that strike the modern reader as disjointed or even secondary. Such “irregularities” have resulted in complex reconstructions of various stages of compositional activity in the production of the Pentateuch as it is now.²

One of the challenges for studying the Pentateuch is to answer the question, is there an inner coherence that spans the entire work? My aim is to demonstrate this type of coherence by articulating the message of the Pentateuch. In this context, “message” refers to “an idea that demands

¹The evidence for claiming the Pentateuch as one book may be summarized as follows: 1) Later references to the Pentateuch, especially those of Old and New Testaments (2 Chr 25:4; 35:12; Ezra 6:18; Neh 13:1; Mark 12:26), address it as a book, 2) the Pentateuch is unified by an overall plot beginning in Genesis and concluding with Deuteronomy, 3) literary and thematic threads run throughout the books, and 4) each of the books is tightly joined to the books surrounding it; cf. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to Promised Land*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 97–99; John Sailhamer, *Pentateuch as Narrative* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 1–2.

²Although much has been written on these theoretical reconstructions, Whybray’s criticism of compositional models is especially insightful, Norman Whybray, *The Making of the Pentateuch*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series [JSOTSup] 53 (Sheffield: Sheffield, 1987).

a response.”³ Such an idea is composed of a subject (topic) and a complement (predicate). The subject states what the text is about. The complement states something about the subject. Combined together, the subject and complement grammatically form a sentence.

Preliminary Considerations

Given this definition of “message,” any given work would have more than just one message. My aim goes beyond finding one of many messages of the Pentateuch to finding the central message, that is, a statement that exposes the coherence of the text from beginning to end. This type of message is closely associated with the literary concept of theme employed by Clines in *The Theme of the Pentateuch*: “the central or dominating idea in a literary work . . . the abstract concept which is made concrete through its representation in person, action, and image in the work.”⁴ However, my purpose is distinct from that of Clines. Although message and theme are closely related, I have chosen the language of message rather than theme because my concern is more than a literary one. Stating the theme of the Pentateuch leads one to its central or dominating idea as a piece of literature, but my concern is to perceive the text as Scripture. The word “message” is more suitable because the expression of the central or dominating idea is one that demands a response on the part of the reader; therefore, it is best suited for the exposition and proclamation of the text in teaching and preaching.

There are some dangers to avoid along the way towards accomplishing the task. In order to summarize the various individual details of the Pentateuch into a single statement, one must abstract them into more general terms. Since a text as complex as the Pentateuch is bound to be filled with certain tensions (e.g. grace and justice), abstracting the details requires that these tensions be resolved, usually by giving certain details of the text more prominence than others. The first danger is to resolve the tension by “shouting” the details that affirm one point while “shushing” the details that are in tension with it. Such a procedure leads to a misconstrued picture of the whole.

The second danger is to interpret the statement of the message of the Pentateuch as the only thing the Pentateuch has to say. As a summary, it cannot possibly say everything that the Pentateuch says, especially the way the Pentateuch says it. The statement of the message is not the kernel

³Bruce Waltke, *Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 49n1.

⁴W.F. Thrall and A. Hibberd, *A Handbook to Literature* (New York: Odyssey, 1960), 486, quoted in David J.A. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 2nd ed., JSOTSup 10 (Sheffield: Sheffield, 1997), 20.

for which the Pentateuch is merely the husk. The impact of the Pentateuch upon a reader cannot be replicated merely by abstracting its message in a general statement. Therefore, the message must not be viewed as a “reductionistic undertaking” but serve “as an orientation to the work.”⁵

The third danger is to interpret the statement of the message of the Pentateuch as the only way to say what the Pentateuch has to say. As my statement, it is affected by the questions, concerns, and values of my context. Although I lean heavily on those who have gone before me so that my understanding of the Pentateuch is not novel or unique, the way in which the various parts are balanced and articulated is my own. This fact does not deny the determinacy of textual meaning or validity in interpretation because the Pentateuch means something and does not mean something else. However, the formulation of its message is a provisional statement that remains open to correction and reformulation. As contexts change, they bring with them unforeseen questions and concerns that may then need to play a larger role in the formulation of the Pentateuch’s message. Since this situation is the case, the statement of the Pentateuch’s message is an invitation to a dialogue rather than the final word.⁶

The fourth danger is to abstract the text in such general terms that it loses its distinct character. For instance, one could abstract the message of the Pentateuch in the following simple statement: God is good. However, such a statement gives no clue towards the content and form of the Pentateuch. To avoid this danger, I will attempt to use the terms and patterns of the Pentateuch to articulate its message as much as possible.

Despite these dangers, the task is worth doing. First, since a person simply cannot hold all the details of a work in full attention at the same time, abstraction is an essential component of understanding. Therefore, stating the Pentateuch’s message should help one understand the whole better. Second, a well-crafted statement of the Pentateuch’s message will help illuminate connections within the Pentateuch that might otherwise be undetected. One measure of a statement’s usefulness is its power to bring about insight into the text and explain the literary “rationale” for its various components.⁷ Third, a statement of the Pentateuch’s message will aid in teaching and preaching the book as the various components are related to the central message. In fact, my primary reason for taking on this

⁵Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 20.

⁶An attempt to bring the entire Pentateuch together into a single statement is out of step with current trends in biblical scholarship even for those who are sympathetic to understanding the text as a given unit; cf. David Carr, “Untamable Text of an Untamable God: Genesis and Rethinking the Character of Scripture,” *Interpretation* 54 (October 2000): 347–62.

⁷Cf. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 20.

task is to provide a gateway into the Pentateuch that will aid in putting the various pieces together to facilitate teaching and preaching the various parts as well as the whole.

First Task—Identifying Importance of Creation and Fall

The storyline of the Pentateuch consists of the following elements: the primeval history, the patriarchal history, the exodus, Sinai, the wilderness wanderings, and the days on the plains of Moab in preparation for conquest. Within this overall storyline, there are three significant episodes that influence the other various parts: creation and fall, the call of Abraham, and the covenant at Sinai.

The choice to include creation and fall is significant. The vast majority of scholars view the entire primeval history of Genesis 1–11 as a mere prologue to Abraham and the Law. For this reason, these chapters, especially the Eden narrative of Genesis 2–3, are treated as a marginal text in the Pentateuch as well as the rest of the Old Testament.⁸ Since the study of the Pentateuch has been dominated by questions of its historical development, its interpretation has been linked to its role as specifically Jewish literature. In other words, one of the fundamental assumptions of pentateuchal research is that the Pentateuch must center around Israel because it functions as national literature.⁹ To include the creation and fall is to step outside the bounds of Israel.

My first task is to show that the first three chapters of Genesis, especially the Eden Narrative, serve as an important driving force and integrating factor behind the message of the entire Pentateuch. This influence affects both the Pentateuch's textual shape and its conceptual development. It is important to keep both factors in view because they guard against two dangers: the first is elevating a type scene to undue prominence for the message and the second is abstracting the text into terms that are completely foreign to it. At the same time, priority must be given to the verbal and structural connections in order to allow the text to speak for itself.

Before I can demonstrate this influence, an overall view of the first three chapters must be attained. To do so, I will outline some observations regarding their textual and thematic development. First, the text clearly demonstrates that the Lord God alone is the Creator of the universe. He alone speaks and His Word is done. He alone evaluates His work. He

⁸Cf. T. Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 25–26.

⁹For example, see the recent collection of essays in G. Knoppers and B. Levinson, *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance* (Winona Lake, IN.: Eisenbrauns, 2007), where it is clear that the Pentateuch's importance is associated with its role in Israelite/Samaritan life.

alone distinguishes between the various parts and names them appropriately. There is no other like Him.

Second, what is good in these chapters is what is beneficial for humanity in fulfilling God's plan (cf. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25; 2:9, 18). Humanity is the pinnacle of His creative work. God transforms a dark, barren, flooded land into a luxuriant garden perfectly suited for human habitation. God evaluates His own activity according to its direct benefit for humanity: it is good in the sense that it is good for humanity. Daylight, dry land, fruitful vegetation, luminaries in the sky, fish, birds, and livestock—all these are beneficial for humanity and therefore good.¹⁰ In contrast, the only thing that is not good is Adam's solitude, at least in part, because he cannot fulfill God's blessing to be fruitful and multiply without a suitable partner. There is also the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but this topic will be addressed below.

Third, God's first words to humankind are blessing, but His final words to them are curses. This contrast at the bookends of the narrative helps show that the movement from blessing to curse is a central concern of the narrative. The work that God has prepared for humankind is marked by blessing; however, after the fateful decision to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, humankind faces a world that is marked by curse.

Fourth, the narrative concerns life and death. Much of the tension in the narrative results from the threat of death that hangs over the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As the serpent begins to convince the woman to eat from the forbidden tree, the tension builds as one wonders whether the serpent is telling the truth, whether the woman will eat, and whether she will actually die. In the end, the woman, along with her husband, eats the forbidden fruit, but what the serpent said would happen happens (her eyes are opened) and without an apparent death.¹¹ However, there is real death, manifested in three ways: 1) God makes the tree of life inaccessible (3:24), 2) God pronounces curses (3:14–19), and 3) man and woman are exiled eastward from the garden (3:23).

Fifth, the narrative's characterization of the choice to eat the forbidden fruit is complex and multilayered. Despite the fact that this choice may appear an act of rebellion, ingratitude, self-exaltation, and the like, the narrative itself focuses its presentation on three aspects: 1) disobedience of a divine commandment, 2) usurpation of a divine prerogative, and 3) an improper search for wisdom.¹² The first aspect is rather transparent in

¹⁰Sailhamer, *Pentateuch*, 88.

¹¹Cf. R.W.L. Moberly, "Did the Serpent Get It Right?" *Journal of Theological Studies* 39 (April 1988): 1–27.

¹²Cf. Trygve Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative: A Literary and Religio-historical*

the narrative, for God gives the commandment not to eat (2:16), but the man and woman eat (3:6). The second aspect emerges from the serpent's conversation with the woman. His main argument is that eating the fruit will make one like God because it allows one to know good and evil (3:5), a claim that is later confirmed in the narrative (3:7, 22). The irony is that the man and the woman were already like God, made in the image and likeness of God (1:26). Despite their likeness to God, they sought this divine privilege without divine permission.

The third aspect stems primarily from the description of what the woman perceives of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is like the rest of the trees in the garden in that it is good for food and has a pleasant appearance, but it is distinct because it is also desirable for making one wise (3:6). Since the tree is connected with wisdom, the knowledge of good and evil is more likely to be understood in wisdom terms rather than moral terms.¹³ Thus, it is probably better to speak of the knowledge of good and bad or the knowledge of what is beneficial and what is harmful.¹⁴ This understanding lines up well with the use of good (טוֹב) in Genesis 1 since what is good is what is beneficial for man. Therefore, the narrative presents the choice to eat the forbidden fruit as an attempt to gain wisdom, knowing what is beneficial and what is harmful, apart from the wisdom of God demonstrated in Genesis 1.¹⁵

These three aspects are held together in the following way. God alone is wise, knowing what is beneficial and harmful to humanity. When the man and woman eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they break the law that God had commanded in order to gain for themselves what properly belongs to God: wisdom.

Sixth, the narrative presents humanity in kingly and priestly terms. Upon God's creating the man and woman, He blesses them as conquering monarchs who are to subdue the land and rule over its inhabitants (1:28). Such language is clearly kingly. At the same time, this authority accompanies responsibility. The purpose for placing the man in the garden is that he will work it and keep it (2:15). The two verbs used to describe the man's responsibility (עָבַד and שָׁמַר) are associated with worship and

Study of Genesis 2–3 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 60–64.

¹³For summary of the connections between wisdom and the Eden narrative, see Beverly J. Stratton, *Out of Eden: Reading, Rhetoric, and Ideology in Genesis 2–3* JSOTSup 208 (Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 1995), 223–27.

¹⁴Cf. John Sailhamer, "Wisdom Composition of the Pentateuch?" in *Way of Wisdom*, ed. J.I. Packer and Sven Soderlund (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000): 15–35.

¹⁵Such an understanding is similar to although not identical with, e.g., W.M. Clark, "A Legal Background to the Yahwist's Use of 'Good and Evil' in Genesis 2–3," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969): 266–78. Clark argues for moral autonomy whereas I am advocating a view towards what is beneficial rather than what is moral in a narrow sense.

keeping the Law, respectively.¹⁶ Therefore, the narrative portrays humans as priestly monarchs who are intended to rule while worshiping and obeying the Lord God.

Seventh, the narrative demonstrates that in the midst of God's punishment for disobedience, He mitigates that punishment.¹⁷ God does not destroy them utterly or instantly. In fact, the curse God pronounces affirms that His blessing to multiply and be fruitful is not annulled, only now accompanied by more severe birth pangs. His blessing to rule over the inhabitants of the land has now brought about dissension rather than communion between the man and woman. His provision of food is still in effect even though now that provision is gathered by hard labor (Gen 3:16–19).

Eighth, God promises the ultimate defeat of the serpent through the seed of the woman. The serpent is representative of an enemy of God. His words are lies and misrepresentations of what God had said. He doubts God's Word and questions God's motives. Those who are his seed are those who are like him. Yet, God promises that ultimately it is the head of the serpent, not his seed, that will be crushed. By contrast, it is not the woman who will crush the serpent, but the seed of the woman. The punishment of the instigator will be final and sometime in the future.

Bringing these observations together, we have the following picture that emerges from the beginning of the Pentateuch: God alone creates a place perfectly suited for humankind, a place of blessing, life, dominion, worshipful service, but humankind forsakes it for curse, death, toil, and exile by disobeying the divine commandment in order to gain wisdom that properly belongs to God. God is gracious even in His punishment as He affirms His prior blessings and promises the ultimate defeat of His enemy, the instigator.

Having established this narrative picture, I can show its influence throughout the rest of the Pentateuch. The first step is to point out where Genesis 1–3 influences the textual shape of the Pentateuch by sampling passages that appear to be intentionally shaped by the vocabulary and narrative structure of these chapters. This type of textual patterning provides a way for the author to connect one narrative event to another and provides a means for comparing and contrasting the elements connected.¹⁸

¹⁶Cf. Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part 1, From Adam to Noah*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes: 1961), 122–23. The significance of this observation will be made sharper in the discussion below regarding the echoes of the Garden in the Pentateuch.

¹⁷See Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis*, rev. ed. Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 152–53, who lays out this pattern within the first part of Genesis.

¹⁸Berlin brings out the importance of this common phenomenon; cf. Adele Berlin,

The second step is to look at the influence of Genesis 1–3 in the conceptual development of the Pentateuch by drawing attention to passages whose motifs reflect those of these chapters. These passages often share common vocabulary with Genesis 1–3, but are less closely connected in their overall structure.

The Influence on Textual Shape

Textual connections between the flood narrative and Genesis 1 portray the flood as a type of uncreation and then re-creation. As the waters burst forth from the depths and pour forth from the windows of the sky, the land is transformed back to its state in Genesis 1:2. Then, God sends the wind (רוח), the waters begin to recede, the dry land emerges, and God blesses Noah and his family by repeating the blessing He made in Genesis 1:28. Furthermore, Noah himself is a second Adam. On the heels of his deliverance and blessing, Noah plants a vineyard in contrast to God's planting a garden, becomes drunk, and uncovers his nakedness. The one who looks upon his nakedness is cursed while those who cover it are blessed.¹⁹ Although the narrative details do not line up precisely, the textual connections between the presentations of Adam and Noah suggest that Noah also, like Adam, failed and subsequently died (9:29). This same pattern persists forward to the sequence with Lot (Gen 19:30–38) and the episode of Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10:1–11).²⁰

The Pentateuch portrays the Promised Land as a new Eden.²¹ Three examples should suffice. First, the river Euphrates and the river of Egypt that define the land which God promises Abraham compare with the boundaries to the garden and the rivers that flow from it (Gen 2:10–14; 15:18).²² Second, in order to flee his angry brother and secure a non-Canaanite wife, Jacob flees to the land of the people of the east (29:1). As he moves from the east back towards the Land, he encounters angels (32:1–2) and wrestles a man apparently like God in order to secure a bless-

Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983), 136.

¹⁹Cf. Sailhamer, *Pentateuch*, 129–30.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 40–41, 174.

²¹By new Eden or returning to Eden, I am not suggesting a physical return to a particular geographical location. Although Eden is a geographical location, it also functions symbolically. It is the symbolic significance of Eden as a paradisiacal land prepared by God that is in view. This new Eden or return to Eden should not be understood in terms of a cycle, but as a movement forward in which the future land is similar to the past but also greater.

²²Cf. Cassuto, *Genesis*, 115–20, who argues that the four rivers form two pairs that are close in proximity, the Euphrates and Tigris, and the Pishon and Gihon. The first pair is associated with Assyria and Babylon while the second pair is associated with Egypt. Thus, the promise to Abraham marks the northern and eastern border while the river of Egypt marks the southern and western.

ing (32:24–31). This narrative structure recalls Eden, the place of blessing, guarded by angels.²³

Third, Deuteronomy portrays the generation of the Conquest as returning to Eden. The sons of Israel are gathered east of the land, awaiting the good land that God has prepared for them. They are described in terms of the first man and woman, not knowing good and evil (Deut 1:39). Furthermore, their continual dwelling in the good land that God has prepared for them requires their obedience to the divine commandments (e.g. Deut 4:39–40; 5:16; 11:8–9; 25:15; 32:47). Finally, among the final words of the Pentateuch, Moses himself closes with a challenge to the sons of Israel that is reminiscent of Eden: “See, I have set before you today life and good, and death and evil in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it” (Deut 30:15–16).

Apart from narrative material, the legal material at Sinai is also shaped by the first three chapters of Genesis. First, and most notably, the tabernacle is presented in terms of Eden.²⁴ These connections help illuminate the significance of both Eden and the tabernacle. The instructions regarding the tabernacle help clarify the type of activity suitable for Eden, namely worship, and its purpose, that God may dwell among His people, while the Eden narrative hints to the provisional nature of the tabernacle and helps clarify some aspects of the tabernacle’s structure, such as its entrance to the east, the cherubs guarding the way to the holy of holies, etc. Second, the regulations regarding uncleanness (e.g. Lev 13:1–14:57) reflect the same movement as the first man and woman from Eden. An unclean person is forced outside the camp to live alone in a “living death.”²⁵

Conceptual Development

Several passages in the Pentateuch also take up the same themes as Genesis 1–3. The following passages provide a sweep of the Pentateuch from beginning to end. The primeval history culminates at the tower of Babel/Babylon. In this narrative, the Lord descends upon the builders because they are attempting to overstep a boundary (Gen 11:4–6). The tower is an attempt to usurp a divine prerogative.²⁶ The patriarchal history centers

²³Cf. Sailhamer, *Pentateuch*, 197–98.

²⁴Cf. Gordon Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden,” in *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* 9 (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986), 19–25.

²⁵Gordon Wenham, *Leviticus*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 201.

²⁶Cf. Patrick Miller, Jr. *Genesis 1–11: Studies in Structure and Theme*. JSOTSup 8

around the motif of blessing. It begins the section (Gen 12:2–3) and the transition to Isaac (Gen 25:11) and Jacob (Gen 27:1–28:4) and concludes the section (Gen 48:8–49:28). The exodus centers around the motif that the Lord is God and the Lord alone (cf. Exod 5:2; 7:5; 9:14–16; 10:2; 15:11).

Sinai picks up on several motifs. It begins with an invitation that is cast in images of king-priests, “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exod 19:6). The overall tenor of the legal material at Sinai resonates with these motifs. In the law, obedience brings blessings and continued habitation in the land prepared by God while disobedience brings curses and exile from the land (cf. Lev 26 and esp. Deut 28). Life and death is a primary concern of the Sinai law as evidenced in the sacrifices with blood since life is in the blood (Lev 17:11–14), the repeated death penalty (e.g. Exod 21:12–17; Lev 20:2–16; 24:16–21; etc.), and certain laws of purification (cf. Lev 11; 21; Num 6:6–11; Deut 14).²⁷ Finally, the law makes clear repeatedly that the Lord is God alone.

Following Sinai, the wandering in the wilderness and Moses’ speeches on the plain of Moab carry on several motifs, especially as Israel draws closer to the Land. The Balaam narrative centers around blessing and cursing. Balaam blesses Israel rather than cursing them as they prepare to enter into the Land. Much of the structure of Deuteronomy reflects on language and concepts of Genesis 1–3. Deuteronomy itself ends with several motifs of Genesis 1–3 including Moses’ blessing, but also his prediction that Israel will disobey the divine commandments, resulting in death, destruction, and exile.

This survey of passages demonstrates that the first three chapters of Genesis are a driving force and integrating factor for the Pentateuch. They accomplish this function by shaping the Pentateuch at the textual and conceptual levels. Furthermore, the passages where they have the greatest textual and conceptual influence are at major junctures in the Pentateuch, especially the beginning and ending of major narrative sections. As a driving force behind the Pentateuch, they present Eden as past, present, and future: past because Eden was once lost, present because it is recast in the tabernacle, and future because it is symbolic of their destination in the Land.

(Sheffield: Sheffield, 1978), 22–24, in which he notes an important textual clue at play in the text as well, the use of the first person plural in a divine pronouncement (Gen 1:26; 3:22; 11:7).

²⁷Cf. Wenham, *Leviticus*, 176–77; 277–78.

Second Task—Exploring the Law

The first task for formulating the message of the Pentateuch was confirming the role that creation and fall play in moving the Pentateuch forward and integrating its various parts. The second task is to explore the way in which the law of Sinai functions in the Pentateuch. There is an important question that remains at the end of Genesis 3: How, if possible, can humankind return to the place of life, blessing, and dominion?

The covenant at Sinai appears to be the key. First, by far, more text in the Pentateuch is devoted to Sinai than anything else. The law and narratives of Sinai constitute Exodus 19–Numbers 10 and Deuteronomy is almost entirely a reflection on Sinai and the law given there. Therefore, understanding Sinai is important to understanding the Pentateuch and appears to be the most obvious place to turn for remedying the situation presented in Genesis 1–3.

Second, the law at Sinai presents itself as the key to recapturing Eden. With the law, there is life, land, dominion, priesthood, communion with God and others, and blessing. The law brings life to those who obey it (Lev 18:5). The law promises Israel an abundant land which the Lord gives them (Lev 20:24; Num 14:8; Deut 6:3, 10–11; 26:9). As Israel arrives at Sinai, God invites them to a covenant in which the sons of Israel become priest-kings, “kingdom of priests and holy nation” (Exod 19:6). The sacrificial system provides a means for making one ritually acceptable to God and restoring one’s place in the community.²⁸ Finally, the law secures blessing upon blessing (Deut 28).

Third, the narratives detailing the covenants with Noah and Abraham point to obedience to divine commandments as the key to recapturing Eden. God makes a covenant with both Noah and Abraham before He makes one with Israel at Sinai. The narratives focus on the obedience of both characters and the rewards of reversing aspects of the Fall. Noah does not die in the flood because he found favor in God’s eyes (Gen 6:8), walked with God (Gen 6:9), and did everything that the Lord commanded him (Gen 6:22; 7:5, 16). As a result, God established a covenant and renewed His original blessing through Noah and his seed (Gen 9:1–7). Abraham follows God’s commandments: he moves from his country (Gen 12:4), he circumcises himself and his household (Gen 17:26–7; 21:4), and he freely offers up Isaac (Gen 22:1–18). As a result, the Lord establishes or confirms His covenant with Abraham and his seed. The covenant promises to

²⁸Cf. Wenham, *Leviticus*, 25–29; Douglas Davies, “An Interpretation of Sacrifice in Leviticus,” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 89 (1977): 387–99.

Abraham also look back to the Fall as there is a promise of land, numerous descendants, and blessing (Gen 12:1–3).²⁹

The Pentateuch builds up anticipation that the covenant at Sinai is the key to returning to Eden; however, this anticipation is dashed as the Pentateuch points out that the Sinai covenant does not work. The first reason is found in the law itself. Exodus 19:6 recounts the invitation that the Lord extends to Israel: they are to be a prized possession, kingdom of priests, and holy nation. However, the law that follows at Sinai creates a different picture. Far from producing a kingdom of priests, the law severely restricts those who may serve as a priest. When Korah and the others with him make the claim that all the people are holy (Num 16:3), they are apparently claiming priestly rights for everyone (Num 16:8–10). It appears that since they are under the Sinai covenant, their claim of a holy people in which all are priests is illegitimate and punishable by death. Regardless of what should have happened at Sinai in Exodus 19 and 20, what follows Sinai reveals that the Sinai covenant could not provide the way forward to Eden.³⁰

The second reason is that the sons of Israel do not obey it. In Exodus 19, Israel quickly agrees to a covenant, but in the middle of receiving the commandments, they break the covenant by worshiping an idol. The generation that agreed to the covenant at Sinai perishes in the wilderness. Even Moses and Aaron, the great representatives of the Sinai covenant, perish in exile outside the land. Perhaps most important for the message of the Pentateuch, Moses' final words predict that the sons of Israel will disobey the covenant and suffer exile just as the first man and woman (e.g. Deut 31).

Therefore, although so much of the Pentateuch is devoted to the Sinai covenant and the laws that are a part of it, the Pentateuch shows that obedience to the laws of the Sinai covenant cannot ultimately reverse the effects of the Fall. It is important to point out that this failure of the Sinai covenant is not based on a failure on the Lord's part; He is faithful to operate according to the covenant. The failure lies with the Israelites themselves. They agree to the covenant, but they do not live according to it. Drawing together the observations regarding the Sinai covenant, one recognizes that one component of the message of the Pentateuch is that the Sinai covenant with its laws cannot restore humankind to a place of life, blessing, and dominion.

²⁹Cf. William Dumbrell, "The Covenant with Abraham," *Reformed Theological Review* 41 (1982), 46.

³⁰Cf. Sailhamer, *Pentateuch*, 51–57, for a discussion of the importance of the issue and the interpretive choices to be made.

Third Task—Discovering Hope

If the hope for returning to Eden is not found with the Sinai covenant, then it must come from somewhere else. In order to discover the source of hope, I will begin with the passages that describe the two most important points of failure after Sinai. These two points of failure are the unwillingness of the sons of Israel to possess the land (Num 14:1–12) and the failure of Moses and Aaron to act properly at Meribah (Num 20:1–13). The first failure has serious consequences as the Lord condemns that entire generation to perish wandering in the wilderness. The second failure is surprising and serious as the Lord condemns Aaron and Moses, two leaders instrumental in God's work, to perish without ever setting foot in the land. In both cases, the text characterizes the failure in the same way: a lack of faith (Num 14:11; 20:12).

In contrast, before Sinai the presence of faith characterizes the sons of Israel at the Red Sea (Exod 14:31).³¹ Immediately, following this characterization is Moses' song that looks forward to a day when the Lord will drive out the nations from the land and establish His people at His sanctuary (Exod 15:13–18). Faith is also critical for understanding the life of Abraham. As God affirms Abraham that he will have a child, Abraham believes (Gen 15:6). That faith is immediately followed by the affirmation of the gift of the land in a covenant ceremony.³² In these passages describing great failures and great successes, the theme of faith occurs.³³ Furthermore, faith is connected with the hope for returning to a place of life, blessing, and dominion.

At the same time, the actual return to Eden lies in the future.³⁴ The promises that Abraham believes are promises of the future. A future land, a future seed, a future nation, a future line of kings—these are the promises of the covenant that God makes with Abraham. There is also a significant shift with this covenant: the original blessing of all humanity (Gen 1:28;

³¹In fact, the theme of faith extends to the entire narrative of Exodus 1–14 and beyond; cf. Hans-Christoff Schmidt, "Redaktion des Pentateuch im Geiste der Prophetie. Beobachtungen zur Bedeutung der 'Glaubens'-Thematik innerhalb der Theologie des Pentateuch," in *Theologie in Prophetie und Pentateuch: Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Ulrike Schorn and Matthias Büttner, Beihefte Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 310 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 225.

³²For an explanation of the significance of the ceremony, cf. Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, Word Biblical Commentary 1 (Waco: Word Books, 1987); 332–35.

³³For more details regarding the development of this theme in the Pentateuch, see Sailhamer, *Pentateuch*, 66–77, and Schmidt, 223–30.

³⁴I am speaking of the present and future from the Pentateuch's point of view, not the contemporary age. I make the distinction because I am not attempting to promote a particular eschatological system as fundamental for understanding the message of the Pentateuch.

9:1–2) is now contingent upon the way in which humanity treats Abraham and his seed, for God promises Abraham and his seed that He will bless those who bless them and curse those who curse them (Gen 12:3; 27:29; Num 24:9). Therefore, the future for all humankind is wrapped up in one man and his seed.

The Pentateuch elaborates on this future hope by specifically addressing the end of days (אַחֲרַיִת הַיָּמִים). Sailhamer has pointed out that this phrase occurs at three important junctures in the structure of the Pentateuch: Genesis 49:1, Numbers 24:14; Deuteronomy 31:29.³⁵ Two important themes arise from these sections. First, in both the blessing of Jacob (Gen 49) and the blessing of Balaam (Num 23–24), there is a distinct emphasis upon a coming king from Israel, specifically Judah (Gen 49:9–10). Second, this king will bring judgment upon his enemies (Num 24:18–24). In connection with the Eden imagery, this king will strike through the forehead of Moab as the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent.³⁶

In drawing together the picture of faith or the lack thereof and its future fulfillment, one can see that all the themes of hope of a return to Eden are wrapped up in the promises to Abraham and his seed. These promises are oriented to the future, the end of days. However, in the present, faith in the Lord and His power to deliver on His promises is the appropriate course for one's life.

Fourth Task—Formulating the Message

As stated in the beginning of this study, there are three significant episodes that shape the entire Pentateuch: creation and fall, the call of Abraham, and the covenant at Sinai. Any understanding of the Pentateuch that does not take into account these three episodes is deficient.³⁷ Furthermore, a helpful statement of the Pentateuch's message should attempt to show the correlation between these parts. The account of creation and fall (Gen 1–3) present the original goodness that the Lord alone had prepared for humanity and the way in which humanity forfeited it. The call of Abraham and the promises made to him provide the ultimate way of return to the garden through Abraham and his seed. The Sinai covenant appears to

³⁵Cf. Sailhamer, *Pentateuch*, 35–37.

³⁶I should note that the same words are not used in both passages; however, the words are related in sense. Genesis uses the rare term שָׁוִי (“to bruise, crush”) while Numbers uses the more common term נִדְרָץ (“to strike through, beat to pieces, crush”).

³⁷This is one of the weaknesses of Clines' proposal for the theme of the Pentateuch. It emphasizes the promises to Abraham and his seed to such an extent that creation and fall and the covenant at Sinai become nearly absent from his statement; cf. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 30.

elaborate on this solution and ensure its fulfillment through Israel. However, the Sinai covenant does not work because of the unfaithfulness of Israel. Therefore, faith in the Lord and His future work is the way to be acceptable before the Lord God.

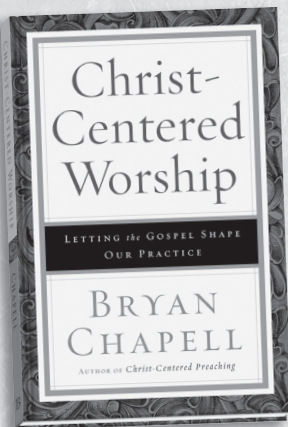
These observations may be summarized into the following single statement of the message of the Pentateuch: The Lord, who alone is God, prepared a good place for humankind to dwell, but they forfeited it so that the Lord initiated a way back through His future promises to Abraham and his seed, and those who participate in these future promises do so by faith rather than by the Sinai law. The good place that the Lord prepared is a place of life, blessing, communion, dominion, and worship. Humankind forfeits this place through disobedience to the divine commandment in order to secure for themselves the wisdom that belongs only to God. The future promises to Abraham and his seed are promises of a good land, good name, great nation, blessing, and a line of kings. Finally, one should recognize that faith and the Sinai law are not necessarily mutually exclusive. As stated above, the basic inadequacy of the Sinai law is the unfaithfulness of the Israelites who live under it.

My desire is that this statement will help expose inner connections within the Pentateuch and facilitate the proclamation of it. It is a challenge to attempt to work out this message systematically throughout the entire Pentateuch, showing how each and every unit within the text fits into this larger schema. Obviously, I have not done such a task, nor do I think it necessary at this point. My aim has been to provide a sense of coherence to the whole and provide a big picture for a book that is so important and so diverse.

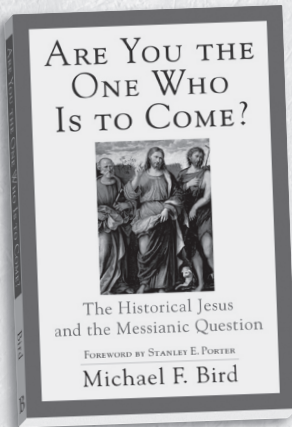
There are also some issues that I have left unexplored. For instance, if Sinai does not hold hope for returning to Eden, then why has it been included in the Pentateuch at all?³⁸ What role does the Exodus play in defining the relationship between the Lord and Israel? What is the nature of faith in the Pentateuch and its relationship to obedience? Furthermore, how does the message of the Pentateuch relate to the rest of the Scriptures. I have attempted to state the message of the Pentateuch without moving beyond its borders. However, I hope that it is not difficult to imagine how my statement of the Pentateuch's message would resonate with other parts of the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments. The answers to these important questions and the connections from the Pentateuch to the rest of the Scriptures are left for the reader to uncover.

³⁸For a helpful discussion of this topic, see John Sailhamer, "The Mosaic Law and the Theology of the Pentateuch," *Westminster Theological Journal* 53 (1991): 241–61.

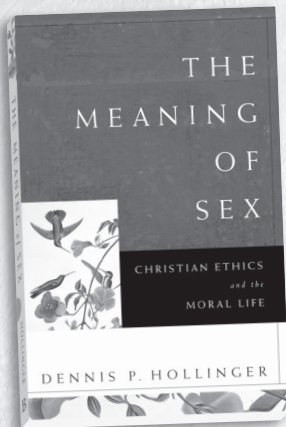
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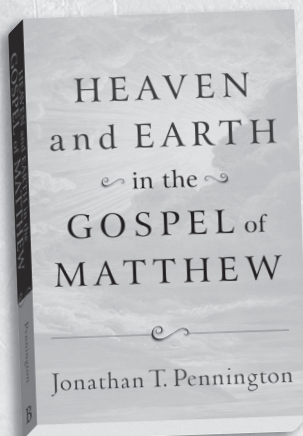
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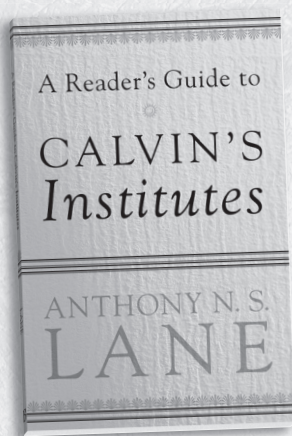
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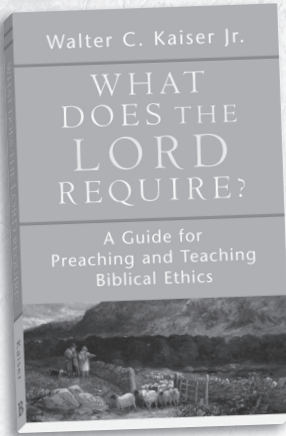
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The Church as “One New Man”: Ecclesiology and Anthropology in Ephesians¹

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Introduction

The church is one of the central themes of Ephesians,² and as such, it has been the subject of much scholarly debate.³ Many scholars agree (1) that in Ephesians, Paul⁴ uses the term ἐκκλησία and various church imag-

¹In this article, the generic term “man” is used to designate human being, both man and woman, because there is no other English term that embraces both the individual and corporate dimensions of human personality.

²This is evident in the frequent use of the term ἐκκλησία and employment of various church images. The term ἐκκλησία is used nine times in Ephesians (1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32). When the size of the letter is considered, this is probably more frequent than in any of the other Pauline letters. Ephesians is also full of church images: (1) the body of Christ (explicitly, 1:22–23; 4:12, 15–16; 5:23, 30; and implicitly, 2:16; 3:6; 4:4); (2) the bride of Christ (5:25–27); (3) the people of God (2:19; cf. “saints”—1:1, 18; 3:18; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18 and “partakers of the promise”—3:6); (4) the family or household of God (2:19); and (5) the building or the temple of God (2:20–22).

Most commentators recognize the church as one of the central themes of Ephesians. For example, see Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary on Chapters 1–3*, Anchor Bible 34a (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 35–36; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary 42 (Dallas: Word, 1990), xciii; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary*, trans. Helen Heron (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 293; Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 33; and Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 25.

³Best, *Ephesians*, 622–41, provides a helpful bibliography and an essay on the church in Ephesians.

⁴Although Paul’s authorship of Ephesians has been rigorously challenged, I accept its authenticity. Those who question Paul’s authorship normally rest their case on the unique words, writing style, and theological concepts of Ephesians, but it seems that they do not fully consider changing circumstances or subject matter, the use of non-authorial preformed traditions, and the role of the amanuensis. For a detailed argument for its authenticity, see Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids:

es to denote primarily the universal church rather than the local churches,⁵ (2) that he places a strong emphasis on the unity of the church,⁶ and (3) that he relates the church closely to the triune God.⁷

Interestingly, in Ephesians Paul often describes the church and her relationship to Christ by employing anthropological terms or images. For example, (1) he designates the church as the body of Christ and Christ as the head (Eph 1:22; 4:15; 5:23),⁸ an image that is reminiscent of a human body. (2) He applies the “one flesh” concept that is derived from Genesis 2:24 and has significant anthropological implications to the relationship between Christ and the church (Eph 5:22–33).⁹ (3) More importantly, he calls the church “one new man” (Eph 2:15) and compares the full-grown church to a mature or perfect man, whom he later identifies as Christ (Eph 4:13–15).

These expressions often occur in the same context and are conceptually connected together. Their close interconnection in usage and concept indicates that in Paul’s mind anthropology, Christology, and ecclesiology are inseparably interwoven together. Despite this close interconnection, however, anthropology has rarely been brought up in the discussion of the ecclesiology or Christology of Ephesians.

It is for this reason that this study examines a few passages in Ephesians in which Paul employs anthropological images to describe the church—namely, “the body of Christ,” “one flesh,” and “one new man.” The purpose of the study is basically twofold: (1) to determine how anthropology and ecclesiology are related to each other in Ephesians and (2) to know how one’s understanding of Paul’s anthropology affects his or her understanding of Paul’s ecclesiology and vice versa. This study may also bring some new insights to one’s understanding of the nature of the so-called universal church and her relationship to the local churches.

Baker Academic, 2002), 2–61. Cf. Best, *Ephesians*, 6–36, who examines basically the same evidences, but concludes against Paul’s authorship.

⁵For example, see Best, *Ephesians*, 33; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, xciii–xciv; Barth, *Ephesians 1–3*, 33; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 294; and Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 112.

⁶For example, see Lincoln, *Ephesians*, xciv; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, New International Commentary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 237.

⁷The church is the body of Christ and the temple of God where the Spirit dwells. Best, *Ephesians*, 622–41, provides a good summary of the church’s relationship to the triune God evident in Ephesians.

⁸I have dealt with this concept elsewhere. See Sang-Won A. Son, *Corporate Elements in Pauline Anthropology*, *Analecta Biblica* 148 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2001), 83–120.

⁹For anthropological implications of “one flesh,” see Son, *Corporate Elements*, 147–77.

"The Body of Christ"¹⁰

Paul's reference to the church as the body of Christ occurs first in his intercessory prayer (Eph 1:15–23). At the conclusion of his prayer, he states, "And He [God] . . . made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body" (Eph 1:22b–23).¹¹ Two things are distinctively noticeable in this statement: (1) Paul uses the term ἐκκλησία to denote the church and specifically identifies it as the body of Christ. (2) He incorporates the "head" image into his "body" image to emphasize the cosmic role of Christ.¹²

Paul mentions one body in his discussion of the unity of Jews and Gentiles (Eph 2:11–22). While explaining the work of Christ that brought reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles, he states, "that He [Christ] might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross" (Eph 2:16). It is uncertain what "one body" specifically denotes. Some scholars insist that it refers to the individual body of Christ in the sense of "his flesh" as in the previous verse (Eph 2:14),¹³ but it is more likely that the church is in view. The reasons are as follows: (1) If Paul had the individual body of Christ in mind, he would have said "his body" rather than "one body."¹⁴ (2) The underlying idea of the passage is the unity of two groups of people in Christ,

¹⁰Paul's references to the church as the body of Christ occur in four of his letters: 1 Corinthians, Romans, Colossians, and Ephesians. The basic thought that underlies this image remains the same in all four letters. In Colossians and Ephesians, however, Paul introduces a new concept, namely, Christ as the Head of the church, and uses the body image not only to speak of the unity and the diversity of the church as in 1 Corinthians and Romans, but also to point out the growing aspect of the church. For full discussion, see Son, *Corporate Elements*, 83–120.

¹¹All translations are mine unless stated otherwise.

¹²Christ is depicted as the Head of the church also in Eph 4:15; 5:23; Col 1:19; 2:9, 10. The word κεφαλή occurs in 1 Corinthians 11:3 without reference to the church. The meaning of κεφαλή has been much debated. See Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard de Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 378–87; E. Earle Ellis, *Pauline Theology: Ministry and Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 41; Heinrich Schlier, "κεφαλή," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 3:673–81; Stephen Bedale, "The Meaning of κεφαλή in the Pauline Epistles," *Journal of Theological Studies* 5 (October 1954): 211–15; and W. Grudem, "Does κεφαλή Mean 'Source' or 'Authority over' in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples," *Trinity Journal* 6 ns (Spring 1985): 38–95.

¹³For example, see Ernst Percy, *Der Leib Christi (soma Christou) in den paulinischen Homologoumena und Antilegomena* (Lund: Harrassowitz, 1942), 39, 42; Lucien Cerfaux, *The Church in the Theology of St. Paul*, trans. Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker (New York: Herder and Herder, 1959), 326; and Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Church in the New Testament*, trans. W.J. O'Hare (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965), 174–75. Schnackenburg, however, seems to have changed his view. In his commentary on Ephesians, he states that "one body" refers to the church. See Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 117.

¹⁴C.F.D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 77; Best, *Ephesians*, 265.

namely, Jews and Gentiles. The “one body (ἐνὶ σώματι)” in verse 16 is clearly parallel to “one (ἓν)” in verse 14 and “one new man (ἓνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον)” in verse 15. All three expressions, therefore, must denote the same entity. Moreover, (3) the phrase “in one body” occurs also in Colossians 3:15, and there it clearly refers to the church.

In a similar context to the previous passage, Paul states that “the Gentiles are to become fellow heirs (συγκληρονόμα), members of the same body (σύσσωμα), and partakers (συμμέτοχα) of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (Eph 3:6). The phrase “in Christ Jesus” seems to modify all three nouns. The phrase “the same body . . . in Christ Jesus” is, then, not much different from “one body in Christ” (Rom 12:5) and the underlying idea is basically the same as that of the previous passage (Eph 2:16), namely, the unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ.

Paul employs the body image again in Ephesians 4:4, 11–16. The general context of the passage is very similar to that of 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12, namely, the unity of the church expressed in the diversity of the spiritual gifts. Although it is uncertain what “one body (ἓν σῶμα)” in verse 4 denotes,¹⁵ the “body of Christ (τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ)” in verse 12 clearly refers to the church. Here Paul depicts the church as an organic body that grows and once again identifies Christ as the head.¹⁶

An explicit reference to the church as the body of Christ and Christ as the head occurs once more in Paul’s household instructions for Christian wives and husbands (Eph 5:22–33). His exhortation is that wives submit to their husbands as the church to Christ (Eph 5:22–24) and that husbands love their wives as being their own bodies,¹⁷ as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (Eph 5:25–33). To support his instructions

¹⁵The majority of commentators think that it refers to the church, and I agree with them. See Best, *Ephesians*, 366; Bruce, *Ephesians*, 336; O’Brien, *Ephesians*, 281; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 514; and Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 238. Cf. Barth, *Ephesians*, vol. II, 464.

¹⁶Here the head appears to be a part of the body analogy, but in verse 16 Paul carefully distinguishes the Head (Christ) from the body (church) by saying, “the head, from whom (ἡ κεφαλὴ, Χριστός, ἐξ οὗ),” that is, from Christ, rather than “the head, from which.” If he had regarded the head as a part of the body analogy, he would have used the feminine relative pronoun rather than the masculine. For Paul the church is the complete body of Christ and not merely a headless body.

¹⁷The phrase ὡς τὰ ἑαυτῶν σώματα in Ephesians 5:28 can also mean “as you love your own bodies,” but in view of Ephesians 5:23 where the wife is implied as the body of her husband and of Genesis 2:24 cited at Ephesians 5:31, it seems more accurate to translate the phrase “as being your own bodies.” So, Best, *One Body*, 177; Ellis, *Pauline Theology*, 41; T.K. Abbott, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1897), 170–71; Barth, *Ephesians*, 629–30; Franz Mussner, *Der Brief an die Epheser* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 1982), 159. Otherwise, see Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 378, who insists that the phrase must mean “as you love yourself.”

for the wife’s submission to her husband (Eph 5:22–24), Paul appeals to the headship of the husband over his wife and that of Christ over the church. He thus states, “For the husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church, himself being the savior of the body” (Eph 5:23). There is no doubt that the body here denotes the body of Christ that is the church.¹⁸ To support his instructions for the husband’s love for his wife (Eph 5:25–32), Paul appeals to Christ’s sacrificial love for the church. He then states, “We are members of his body” (Eph 5:30). This statement is not much different from saying, “Your bodies are members of Christ” (1 Cor 6:15) and “You are . . . members of it [Christ’s body]” (1 Cor 12:27).

Paul’s designation of the church as the body of Christ raises a number of questions. In what sense is the church the body of Christ? How is this body related to the individual body of Christ? Should one understand Paul’s expressions literally or metaphorically? More importantly for this study, what does Paul’s concept of the church as the body of Christ and Christ as the head say about his view of human existence? Before answering these questions, it seems necessary to examine Paul’s concept of “one flesh” because it is inextricably connected with the body of Christ in Ephesians and has significant anthropological implications.

The “One Flesh” Unity

Paul refers to “one flesh (μία σάρξ)” in his household instructions for wives and husbands (Eph 5:22–33).¹⁹ To provide a biblical basis for his argument, he cites Genesis 2:24 at verse 31: “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.” A question often arises as to the role of Genesis 2:24 in Paul’s argument—whether it relates only to the second half of his discussion that deals with the “one body” unity between the husband and the wife (5:25–29) or also to the first half that speaks of the headship of the husband over his wife (5:22–24). J.P. Sampley, for example, argues that Genesis 2:24 relates to the whole passage which includes Paul’s discussion

¹⁸A question has been raised as to whether the last phrase αὐτός σωτήρ τοῦ σώματος refers only to the relationship between Christ and the church (e.g., Barth, *Ephesians*, 614–17; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 370; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 742–43) or also to that between the husband and the wife (e.g., W. Foerster, “σωτήρ,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 7:1016). Bruce, *Ephesians*, 385, suggests that it may refer to the husband’s role as his wife’s protector.

¹⁹The context of Ephesians 5:22–33 is very similar to that of 1 Corinthians 6:12–20. In both passages Paul (1) deals with the sexual union, (2) cites Genesis 2:24 to support his argument, and (3) applies the “one flesh” concept to both the human relationship and to the relationship between Christ and a believer or the church.

of the headship of the husband over his wife (5:22–31).²⁰ His argument is, however, not convincing for a number of reasons: (1) Paul's citation of Genesis 2:24 is directly related to the section where he exhorts husbands to love their wives as being their own bodies. (2) The underlying concept of Genesis 2:24 is the one flesh unity between Adam and Eve and thus between husband and wife in marriage and not subordination. It is true that Paul's concept of the headship of the husband over his wife is also grounded in Genesis, but it is grounded in the idea of Adam's priority and pre-eminence in creation (1:27–28, 2:18–22, 3:6, 13) rather than in the idea of one flesh (Gen 2:24).²¹ (3) The body and the head are not one and the same imagery,²² although these two images often merge together in Paul's writings.²³ They are two unique images and each has its own meaning and can be used without the other.²⁴ An exegetical confusion arises when these images are treated as if they are one and the same and understood in light of the body metaphor employed in 1 Corinthians 12:12–27. In a sense, the wife is the body of her husband, but the wife does not form "the rump or trunk of the body of which the husband is the head."²⁵ They together form a complete one flesh unity. Paul's citation of Genesis 2:24, therefore, qualifies only the second section (Eph 5:25–29) that deals with the one body relationship between the husband and the wife.

Significant for this study is Paul's application of the one flesh concept that is derived from Genesis 2:24 and has significant anthropological implications to the relationship between Christ and the church.²⁶ Right after citing Genesis 2:24 at Ephesians 5:31, he states: "This mystery is great, and I am speaking in regard to Christ and the church" (Eph 5:32). In Paul's mind, the one body unity that believers form together with Christ has something in common with the one flesh unity created between the husband and the wife in marriage.²⁷

²⁰J.P. Sampley, *"And the Two Shall Become One Flesh": A Study of Tradition in Ephesians 5:21–33* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 32–34, 113–16.

²¹See 1 Cor 11:7–9, 1 Tim 2:13–14, and 2 Cor 11:3.

²²See above, note 16.

²³Eph 1:22–23; 4:15–16; 5:22–33; Col 1:18; 2:19.

²⁴Thus, the head image is used without the body image in 1 Cor 11:3–10 and Col 2:10.

²⁵Ernest Best, *One Body in Christ: A Study in the Relationship of the Church to Christ in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul* (London: S.P.C.K., 1955), 179.

²⁶A similar application of the one flesh concept derived from Genesis 2:24 occurs in 1 Corinthians 6:12–20 in which Paul talks about the unity created in the sexual relationship between a believer and a prostitute and the unity created between Christ and a believer.

²⁷As he discusses the relationship between Christ and the church, Paul employs another image, namely, the church as the bride of Christ. Although he does not use the term "bride," the image is clearly seen in his expressions employed in Ephesians 5:26–27: "that he [Christ] might sanctify her [church], having cleansed her by the washing of water

Now more questions beg for answers: What does the one body (flesh) unity created between Adam and Eve, between husband and wife, and between Christ and the church denote? In what sense is the one flesh unity created between two individual human beings comparable to the corporate unity created between Christ and the church? More importantly, what is the fundamental assumption that underlies these expressions? Paul’s idea of the church as one new man (Eph 2:15) seems to provide a bridge between Paul’s anthropology and his ecclesiology.

“One New Man”

While speaking of the unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ (Eph 2:11–22), Paul states, “that He [Christ] might create in Himself one new man out of the two (ἓνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον)” (Eph 2:15). The first exegetical question is whether “one new man” should be understood individually or corporately? In other words, are Jewish and Gentile believers created as individuals into a new type of humanity or as groups into a new corporate person? Some scholars insist that “one new man” denotes a new individual self or nature for the following reasons: (1) If Paul had a new corporate community in mind, he would not have changed the neuter (ἓν) in verse 14 to the masculine (ἓνα) in verse 15. (2) “One new man” is identical with “the new man” in Ephesians 4:24, which denotes a transformed individual being. (3) The idea of one new man is basically the same as a new creation in 2 Corinthians 5:17 and in Galatians 6:15.²⁸ This argument, however, ignores the literary context in which “one new man” occurs and understands Paul’s expressions, “the new man” and “a new creation,” too individually.

Paul’s discussion in Ephesians 2:11–22 is thematically connected with Ephesians 2:1–10 and ultimately with Ephesians 1:20–23. After speaking of God’s power which was demonstrated in His raising and seating of Christ at His right hand (Eph 1:20–23), Paul describes the effect of Christ’s resurrection and seating at the right hand of God for individual believers: God made them alive, raised them up and seated them together with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph 2:1–10). In the present passage (Eph 2:11–22), Paul explains that as believers, Jews and Gentiles alike, are reconciled to God through Christ, they are also reconciled to one another

with the word, that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.” The citation of Genesis 2:24 that immediately follows also supports the idea that Paul depicts the church as the bride of Christ as Eve was the bride of Adam. Cf. 2 Cor 12:2–3.

²⁸Best, *Ephesians*, 261–62 provides a concise summary of this argument and a list of scholars in support.

in Christ, thus forming a corporate solidarity with Christ and with other believers in Christ. The focus of the passage is, therefore, not on the reconciliation of individual believers with God, but on the unity of two groups of people in Christ. In other words, Paul's attention has shifted from the vertical reconciliation of individual believers with God to the horizontal reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles in Christ.²⁹

The idea of Christ uniting two groups of people in one is repeatedly expressed in the middle section (Eph 2:14–16). This can be easily noticed when the text is arranged as follows:

v. 14	For he is our peace,			
	who <i>has made</i>	<u>both</u>	one	and
	<i>has broken . . .</i>			
v. 15	<i>has abolished . . .</i>			
	so that he <i>might create</i> in him	<u>the two</u>	into	one new
				man . . .
v. 16	and that he <i>might reconcile</i>	<u>both</u>	in	one body

In this layout, “the two” (v. 15) is parallel to “both” (vv. 14, 16),³⁰ and they all denote the two groups of people, namely, Jews and Gentiles. “One new man” (v. 15) is parallel to “one” (v. 14) and “one body” (v. 16), and they all denote a corporate unity created in Christ. Various images employed in 2:19–22 vividly illustrate this corporate unity that believers form with Christ and with one another in Christ.³¹

Why does Paul call the church one new man? In what sense is the church one new man? How does Christ create this one new man in Himself?³² Although the specific reference to the church as one new man

²⁹See Darrell L. Bock, “‘The New Man’ as Community in Colossians and Ephesians,” in *Integrity of Heart, Skillfulness of Hands: Biblical and Leadership Studies in Honor of Donald K. Campbell*, eds. Charles H. Dyer and Roy B. Zuck (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 161, where he emphatically states, “contextually this [one new man] cannot be a reference to some entity inside an individual. The context is once again thoroughly social and racial in nature. Jew and Gentile are reconciled into one new body, the church.”

³⁰The neuter, τὰ ἀμφοτέρω is used in verse 14 because it refers to two parties of classes under which Jews and Gentiles are grouped. Cf. Gal 3:22; 1 Cor 1:27f; Heb 7:7. See Best, *Ephesians*, 252; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 368.

³¹The images change from membership of a city to that of a household, to the building which contains the household, then to the temple of God, that is, the dwelling place of God. The body image is also implied in the expression “joined together and grows” (cf. Col 2:19). As the various parts of the body make up the single whole body and as the various parts of the building create the single whole building, so believers form a corporate solidarity. They are organically and structurally connected to Christ the cornerstone and to one another.

³²The phrase ἐν αὐτῷ must denote Christ himself. αἴμα is too remote, σάρξ is feminine, and σῶμα does not occur until verse 16.

occurs only in this passage, it is not an isolated idea. In Ephesians 4:13, Paul compares the full-grown church to a mature or perfect man (ἀνὴρ τέλειος).³³ Of course, one must determine first whether the perfect man here denotes the manhood of individual believers, of the church, or of Christ. Some scholars argue that since the perfect man is contrasted to “children” (νήπιοι) in 4:14, it denotes the maturity of individual believers.³⁴ An individual connotation should not be completely excluded; however, the main drive in the context is not individual but corporate, because the church is seen as a corporate entity and not as disparate individuals.³⁵ For this reason, other scholars think that the perfect man is analogous to the one new man of Ephesians 2:15 and refers to the church.³⁶ It is true that the maturity of the church is the focus of the passage and the perfect man is closely related to the one new man of Ephesians 2:15, but it is not likely that the perfect man denotes the church. The perfect man is depicted not as the church that grows, but as the goal which the church must reach. The syntactical analysis supports this conclusion.

- v. 11 and He made some apostles, some prophets, . . .
- v. 12 for (πρός) the equipment of the saints
for (εἰς) the work of ministry,
for (εἰς) the building up of the body of Christ,
- v. 13 until we all may *attain*
to (εἰς) the unity of the faith . . .
to (εἰς) a perfect man (ἄνδρα τέλειον),
to (εἰς) the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
so that we might be no longer children . . .

³³Paul uses the word ἀνὴρ rather than ἄνθρωπος, but this change should not affect the meaning because both words are used interchangeably in Eph 5:22–33.

The word τέλειος is used 9 times in Paul’s letters: Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 2:6; 13:10; 14:20; Eph 4:13; Phil 3:15; Col 1:28, and 4:12. It has a wide range of meanings. It can mean “whole,” “mature,” “complete,” or “perfect.” Most commentators think that ἀνὴρ τέλειος denotes the church and thus τέλειος should be translated “mature” rather than “perfect” (e.g., Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 555; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 256; S. Hanson, *The Unity of the Church in the New Testament: Colossians and Ephesians* (Lexington, KY: American Theological Library Association, 1963), 159; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 185; and O’Brien, *Ephesians*, 307). I, however, think that ἀνὴρ τέλειος denotes the corporate Christ and thus prefer to translate τέλειος as “perfect.” For helpful discussion, see Gerhard Delling, “τέλειος,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 8:67–78.

³⁴E.g., C.L. Mitton, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951), 154; John A. Allan, “The ‘In Christ’ Formula in Ephesians,” *New Testament Studies* 5 (October 1958): 61.

³⁵So, Best, *Ephesians*, 401; O’Brien, *Ephesians*, 307.

³⁶See Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 555n6, for the list of scholars who support this view.

v. 15 we may *grow*
to (εἰς) Him, who is the Head, Christ

The verbs “attain (καταντήσωμεν)” (4:13) and “grow (αὐχήσωμεν)” (4:15) relate to “the building of the body of Christ (δικοδομήν τοῦ σωματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ)” (4:12). Four prepositional phrases in 4:13 and 15, each beginning with εἰς, are in parallel and all denote the goal which the church must reach.³⁷ An indefinite “perfect man (ἄνδρα τέλειον)” in 4:13 is specifically identified as Christ who is the Head (4:15). As the Head, Christ not only is the ultimate standard of the growth of the church, but also joins and upholds the church and supplies all the needs for its growth.

In some respects, Paul’s idea of Christ as the perfect man continues in the following passage (4:20–24) in which he makes a reference to “the old man (παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος)” and “the new man (καινὸς ἄνθρωπος).”³⁸ Most Bible translators and commentators understand the old man and the new man as denoting the old nature and the new nature of an individual believer, but one should not completely ignore the corporate dimension or background of these expressions.

In Ephesians 4:20–21, Paul states: “You did not so learn Christ, assuming that you have heard about Him and were taught in Him, as the truth is in Jesus,”³⁹ and then adds three infinitive phrases in verses 22–24: ἀποθέσθαι ὑμᾶς . . . τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἀνανεοῦσθαι τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοῦς ὑμῶν, and ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον. The function of these infinitives in the sentence is difficult to determine. Most scholars agree at least that these three infinitives relate back to the verb, “you were taught” (ἐδιδάχθητε), in verse 20⁴⁰ and function as the object of the verb, either in the sense of imperatives or indicatives.⁴¹ When understood as imperatives, the meaning would be: “you were taught: Put off the old man, be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new man.” This translation, however, does not reflect the different tenses used in the infinitives. The first and the third infinitives (ἀποθέσθαι, ἐνδύσασθαι) are the aorist middle which typically denotes an inceptive action whereas the second infinitive is the present passive which denotes

³⁷Best, *Ephesians*, 399.

³⁸See also Col 3:9–10. Some scholars oppose this view because ἄνῆρ is used in Ephesians 4:13 but ἄνθρωπος is used in Ephesians 4:24, but as noted above (note 33), these two words are used interchangeably in Ephesians 5:22–33.

³⁹See Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 594.

⁴⁰Both infinitives and participles can sometimes function as imperatives, particularly in ethical codes (see Rom 12:9–15).

⁴¹For detailed discussion, see Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 598–602.

a repeated action.⁴² Although the infinitive may not carry the same implications in regard to time as the indicative and participles do, Paul seems to have used these two different tenses intentionally.⁴³ If so, the tense difference should be reflected in translation and this can be done when the infinitives are understood as indicatives. The basic meaning then would be, “you are taught that you have already put off the old man and have put on the new man and are now continually being renewed in the spirit of your minds.” This meaning suits the overall context well and is supported by the parallel passage in Colossians in which Paul employs two aorist middle participles and one present passive participle: “you have put off the old man (ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον) . . . and have put on the new man (ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον), which is being renewed (τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον) in knowledge after the image of its Creator” (Col 3:9–10).⁴⁴ Significantly, in the Colossian passage Paul adds the following statement: “Here there is no Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all” (Col 3:11). This statement clearly echoes Paul’s statement in Galatians 3:27–29: “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female; for you are all one (εἷς) in Christ Jesus.” What Paul says in these passages can be summarized as follows. When believers are baptized into Christ, they have put on the new man (Col 3:10) that is Christ (Gal 3:27).⁴⁵ As a result, they have become “one (εἷς) in Christ” (Gal 3:27) and they are to be continually renewed in the spirit or in knowledge after the image of its Creator.

Putting off or dying to the old man and putting on or rising with the new man are closely related to the idea of baptism and have significant ethical implications for the individual believers. This is evident in Romans 6:3–11 in which Paul states that those who have been baptized into Christ were baptized into his death and their old man (ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος) was crucified with Christ, the body of sin was destroyed, and the death lost its dominion. Paul’s expressions—“putting off and putting on” and “dying and rising,” however, have a supra-individual significance. They are not employed primarily in the sense of the two segments of one’s personal conversion.⁴⁶ They are undoubtedly connected with Paul’s Adam-

⁴²See Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 603 and Buist Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in the New Testament Greek* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 362.

⁴³Cf. Best, *Ephesians*, 433. Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 359–64.

⁴⁴Here Paul uses the aorist middle participles for “putting off” and “putting one,” but the present passive participle for “being renewed.”

⁴⁵Also see Rom 13:14 where the idea of putting on Christ occurs.

⁴⁶Ridderbos, *Paul*, 223.

Christ typology.⁴⁷ The new man denotes primarily Christ and the mode of existence in Christ. Correspondingly, the old man denotes Adam and the mode of existence in Adam. As believers are baptized into Christ, they have put off the old man Adam and have put on the new man Christ. They no longer belong to the old humanity that is subject to sin and death; instead, they belong to the new humanity that is characterized by righteousness and eternal life. In a spatial sense, they have been transferred from the sphere of existence in Adam to that in Christ.⁴⁸ Because of this fundamental change, they are encouraged to put off various vices that characterize the old man and put on various virtues that reflect the new man.⁴⁹

In light of the above discussion, one can conclude that “one,” “one new man,” and “one body” (Eph 2:14–16) all denote the same corporate entity created in Christ, that is, the church. For Paul, the church is not an inanimate organization; it is an organic, living body. More specifically, it is the corporate body of Christ that is derived from, identified with, and embraced in the person of Christ who is the Head. Furthermore, it is a new corporate humanity that is created in Christ the perfect or new man and that bears the image of its Creator. To a certain extent, this inclusive corporate humanity transcends racial, gender, and social distinctions, but without eradicating the individual person’s distinctiveness.

Conclusion

This brief investigation confirms that in Ephesians Paul employs terms and images that are anthropologically significant to describe the nature of the church and her relationship to Christ and that these images are conceptually interwoven. The body of Christ is closely connected with the one new man of Ephesians 2:11–22, with the perfect man of Ephesians 4:7–16, and with the new man of Ephesians 4:24. It is conceptually intertwined with “one flesh” in Ephesians 5:25–32.

What connects these images together? What is the fundamental assumption that underlies them? That assumption seems to be Paul’s anthropology, that is, his view of man as individual and corporate. For Paul, the individual man is not an isolated unit. Even though a man is separated from other people by the limits of his physical body, his existence is by no means limited by his physical boundaries. In certain respects, he extends himself beyond his physical contours and forms a corporate solidarity with

⁴⁷For a similar conclusion, see Andrew T. Lincoln, “The Theology of Ephesians,” in *The Theological of the Later Pauline Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 93–94.

⁴⁸The idea of the special transfer is clearly expressed in Col 1:13.

⁴⁹Cf. Col 3:5–17.

others, but without losing his own individuality. Adam, therefore, becomes "one flesh" with Eve (Gen 2:24). Likewise, the husband becomes one flesh with his wife in marriage and a believer (Eph 5:28–31), when joined with a prostitute in sexual union, becomes one flesh with her (1 Cor 6:16).

Man can form a corporate solidarity not only with other individuals but also with Christ, who also exists individually and corporately. As believers are baptized by the Spirit into Christ, therefore, they become one body with Christ and with other believers in Christ (Rom 6:3–5; 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:27–28). Paul's expressions, "the body of Christ," "one body in Christ," and "one new man in Christ" all denote this corporate reality. The corporate solidarity that the believer forms together with Christ involves the whole individual person, not just his soul or spirit, and is as real as the one flesh solidarity created between two individuals in the sexual union.

The church is the corporate body of Christ that is derived from and dependent upon Christ. It is the living body that is animated by the Spirit and the organic body that grows. It is, therefore, not just a structure, an organization, or even a collective society made up of the individual believers. In essence, it is the whole new corporate humanity, transformed in Christ and inclusive of all believers, that is derived from, identified with, and embraced in Christ the new man and the last Adam and that bears the image of its Creator. This means that the true nature of the church must be understood anthropologically in close relation to Christ the perfect man rather than sociologically as a human entity.

How does the Ephesian letter's understanding of the church affect one's understanding of the nature of the so-called universal church and her relationship to the local churches? It is impossible to explore this question to its full extent here. So, this study offers the following brief remarks to stimulate further discussion. (1) It is questionable that a sharp distinction between the universal church and the local churches ever occurred in Paul's mind. The church is after all a new corporate humanity created in Christ the perfect man. Paul may speak of a group of believers as the whole church manifested at a specific time and location, but he would never imagine multiple bodies of Christ or multiple humanities in Christ. (2) One must reject the notions that the church is simply an organization or a collective society of individual believers and that the universal church is the sum total of individual churches structurally connected together. The church that Paul envisions in Ephesians is an organism that all true believers form together with Christ and in Christ. It is the comprehensive human solidarity newly formed in Christ, the perfect man. (3) One must also refute the view that defines the universal church exclusively as an invisible, spiritual, and/or heavenly reality and places it over against the local churches that are visible,

physical, and/or earthly.⁵⁰ This view poses a danger of understanding the church in a Platonic dualistic sense. The church is the corporate body of Christ animated by the Spirit and inclusive of the whole person. In this sense, it is both physical and spiritual and both visible and invisible. The church is the new eschatological humanity that is already, in some sense, raised and seated together with Christ in the heavenly places but still exists on earth. In this sense, it is both heavenly and earthly.

⁵⁰This view is expressed by Robert Banks and Peter T. O'Brien. See Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in Their Cultural Setting*, Rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 37–43; O'Brien, "The Church as a Heavenly and Eschatological Entity," in *The Church in the Bible and the World*, ed. D.A. Carson (Exeter: Paternoster, 1987), 88–119, 307–11; and "Church," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald H. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 123–31, esp. 125–26.

50/19
τησα ἀποδίλωμι τ
πραπρωῶν. εἴπε δὲ
πρὸς αὐτὸ ὁ ἰσ. ὅτι
σημερομορῖα τῶ οἰκω
τούτου εἶέμετο. καθ
τη καὶ αὐτὸς ὑὸς αἶρω
ἀμ, ἐπιμ. ἤθεε γὰρ ὑὸς
τοῦ ἀνδρὸς κηθεσαι καὶ σὺ
σαι τὸ ἀπολλωλος :

1
ἰπε μὲ ὁ κς τὴν πωραμο
λιώ ταύτην. κριτῆς τῆ
λιώ σὺ πρι πάλαι. τὸ μθ
μηφομὸς κλῆρον
μη ἐμ τρεπόμνος. χῆ
ραδὲ ἐμ ἐμ τῆ παλειε
κῆμη καὶ ἤρχετο πρὸς
αὐτὸν. λῆρουσαι ἐκδι
κηθρὸς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀντι
δίκου μου. καὶ οὐκ ἔθε
λῆσμε ἐπιχρόμοι. με
τὰ δὲ ταῦτα εἰπὸν ἐ
μ ἐ αὐτῶ. ἔκλειτο μθ

οὐ φοβούμαι καὶ ἀνὸς
κὸν τρέπωμαι. διάτε
τομη πρὸς ἀνμοι κόπο
τὴν χεῖρα ταύτην ἐκ
δικήσω αὐτήν. ἴνα μὴ
εἰς τέλος ἐρχομένη ὑ
ποπιάξη με. εἴπε
δὲ ὁ κς. ἀκουσατε τὸ
κριτῆς τῆς ἀδικίας λε
γῆ. ὁ δὲ θεὸς οὐκ ἔποίησεν
τὴν ἐκδικήσιν τῶν ἐ
μ κλησὶν αὐ τοῦ τῶν β
ωμ τῶν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἡμ
ρασ καὶ φυκτὸς. κῆμ
κροθυμῶν ἐπὶ αὐ τοῖς.
λέγω ὑμῖν. ὅτι ποιήσεν
τὴν ἐκδικήσιν αὐτῶν
ἐν ταύται :

ἰπε μὲ ὁ κς τὴν παρα
βολεῖ ταύτην. ἀνο
διό ἀν ἐβησάν εἰς τὸ ἔ
ργον προσάξασθαι.

Κῆ 19
Τούτου χρονο, κηθεσαι

A Greek Lectionary Manuscript at Southwestern Seminary

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Introduction

The recent unearthing of a late Medieval Greek lectionary manuscript in the library at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary¹ has prompted this brief evaluation of a document which, though previously recorded, has to my knowledge never been fully assessed.² The manuscript is listed in Kurt Aland's *Kurzgefasste Liste* with the Gregory-Aland number *l2282*.³ The purpose of this paper is threefold: (1) to examine the text of the manuscript, (2) to attempt to establish its date, and (3) to consider its use in historical and ecclesial context.

The provenance of the manuscript is uncertain. The folder which held the manuscript only has a notation in pencil that it is a Byzantine "gospel book," and the absence of a notation referencing its character as a lectionary manuscript may suggest that whoever wrote the note was not fully aware of its contents.

¹I would like to express appreciation for the knowledgeable and friendly assistance of the curator of the Charles C. Tandy Archeological Museum, Heather Reichstadt, and the staff of the archives at the Roberts Library.

²There is no record of publication for this manuscript in J.K. Elliott, *A Bibliography of Greek New Testament Manuscripts*, 2nd ed., Society for New Testament Studies Monograph series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), nor in the two supplements published since ("Supplement I to J.K. Elliott, *A Bibliography of Greek New Testament Manuscripts*," *Novum Testamentum* 46, no. 4 [2004]; "Supplement II to J.K. Elliott, *A Bibliography of Greek New Testament Manuscripts*," *Novum Testamentum* 49, no. 4 [2007]).

³Kurt Aland et al., *Kurzgefasste Liste der griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments*, 2nd ed., *Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994), 361.

Lectionary Studies

Lectionaries have understandably not received the same level of attention given to biblical manuscripts. Modern textual studies of lectionaries only began in earnest in 1929 at the University of Chicago.⁴ One of the instigators of that movement complained in 1933, “All but a few textual scholars seem to feel it below their dignity to work upon lectionary manuscripts.”⁵ That negative assessment no longer holds to the same degree, particularly after the International Greek New Testament Project used lectionary evidence in its edition of Luke,⁶ and the fourth edition of the United Bible Society’s *Greek New Testament* included the testimony of thirty manuscripts for the gospels, and forty for the epistles. Even so, for some text critics, though the lectionaries have value as witnesses to the evolution of the text, they have little value in the attempt to establish the text as close as possible to the original. This is because of the late date of most lectionaries, because the majority of lectionary manuscripts are thought to reflect the Byzantine tradition—which itself is often discounted in text-critical studies—and despite the efforts of the Chicago scholars who considered that the lectionary text was in many places of Caesarean character.⁷ Colwell in 1932 suggested the possibility of delineating a standard lectionary text of the gospels,⁸ but although he showed that a majority of lectionaries followed a similar text, such an undertaking has proved impossible so far, because of the differences between the more than 2,400 lectionary manuscripts known to exist. There has only been a trickle of studies

⁴Allen Wikgren, “Chicago Studies in the Greek Lectionary of the New Testament,” in *Biblical and Patristic Studies: In Memory of Robert Pierce Casey*, ed. J. Neville Birdsall and Robert W. Thomson (New York: Herder, 1963), 96.

⁵Donald W. Riddle, “The Character of the Lectionary Text of Mark in the Weekdays of Matthew and Luke,” in *Prolegomena to the Study of the Lectionary Text of the Gospels*, ed. Ernest Cadman Colwell and Donald W. Riddle, *Studies in the Lectionary Text of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933), 25.

⁶The American and British Committees of the International Greek New Testament Project (IGNTP), *The Gospel According to St. Luke*, 2 vols., *The New Testament in Greek* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

⁷James Rodney Branton, *The Common Text of the Gospel Lectionary in the Lenten Lectons*, *Studies in the Lectionary Text of the Greek New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934); William Davenport Bray, *The Weekday Lessons from Luke in the Greek Gospel Lectionary*, *Studies in the Lectionary Text of the Greek New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959); Ernest Cadman Colwell, “Is There a Lectionary Text of the Gospels?” *Harvard Theological Review* 25 (1932); Bruce M. Metzger, *The Saturday and Sunday Lessons from Luke in the Greek Gospel Lectionary*, *Studies in the Lectionary Text of the Greek New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944); Riddle, “Character.” The very existence of a Caesarean text-type is now disputed, however.

⁸Colwell, “Lectionary Text.”

of individual lectionaries,⁹ and this study of what is only a brief manuscript hopes in some small measure to stimulate further investigation.

Description and Contents

The manuscript consists of a single sheet of paper, written on both sides, 30.5 cm in height and 21.7 cm in width. The text is in two columns and there are 23 lines of text on the page. The text consists of a portion of the Byzantine Greek lectionary. In this case, as was common, it is a lectionary with readings for Saturdays and Sundays only. All this is already recorded by Aland.¹⁰ It is a miniscule, written in black ink. Notations in the top and bottom margin on the first page, and in the bottom margin on the second page, inform the reader when to read the selections. The passages included are from the synaxarion, that part of lectionary with readings for the year, starting with Easter.¹¹ Because the date of Easter varied, so would the dates for the reading of these passages.

The lessons included on these two pages are from the Lukan portion of the lectionary. The first, Luke 19:8b–10, is the concluding portion of the Zacchaeus passage (Luke 19:1–10) which would be read on the fifteenth Sunday (κυριακῆ ιε´)¹² of the Lukan section of the lectionary. The next two passages, Luke 18:2–8 (the parable of the unjust judge), and Luke 18:10–14 (the parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee) were read on the sixteenth Saturday (σαββάτω ις´) and Sunday (κυριακῆ ις´) respectively. A note in a different hand from that of the scribe, in the right lower margin below the beginning of the reading from Luke 18:10–14, states του τελωνου και του φαρισαιου, “of the tax collector and the pharisee.” This was the name given in most lectionaries to this Sunday of the Lukan readings, and indeed to the whole week following. The last lesson, Luke 20:46–21:1, is incomplete in this manuscript. It is a portion of the reading

⁹For details see Elliott, *Bibliography*, and the supplements cited in note 2 above.

¹⁰Aland et al., *Kurzgefasste Liste*, 361.

¹¹See Carroll D. Osburn, “The Greek Lectionaries of the New Testament,” in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*, ed. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes, Studies and Documents 46 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 62. The other portion, the menologium, consisted of readings for feasts and saints’ days which had fixed dates.

¹²The Greek numbering system used letters of the alphabet, starting with α (alpha) for the number one. After the number, a keraia (´) was added, a mark something like an acute accent, to indicate that the letter or letters should be read as a number. The number ten is represented by the letter ι (iota). Numbers after ten use iota followed by the appropriate letter from alpha to theta for one to nine. The number six was indicated in medieval times by the otherwise obsolete letter stigma (ς), which when used as a letter was a ligature which combined the sounds of σ (sigma) and τ (tau), the approximate equivalent of the English “st”.

which normally includes 20:46–21:4, and consists of a warning against the scribes and the story of the widow’s mite. This would be read on the seventeenth Saturday (σαββάτω ιζ΄) of the Lukan cycle.

The three passages for which this manuscript has the beginning are presented in similar fashion. Above each reading is written ἐκ του κατὰ λουκαν, “from the [Gospel] according to Luke,” using red ink with stylization and abbreviation. An elaborate decorative letter begins the reading itself; in each case it is the letter epsilon, the first letter of εἶπεν. Each reading is introduced with an incipit, one of six standard introductory formulae.¹³

Collation of the Lectionary l2282

Although lectionaries have been traditionally collated against the Textus Receptus, it has become the scholarly practice to collate against the eclectic text of the NA27. This paper will collate the lectionary against both texts. No account has been taken of breathing marks or accents, but moveable ν has been included, as have itacisms and scribal errors. It has become increasingly apparent that collations need to take account of every variation practicable, if relationships between manuscripts are to be explored.

Collation against the NA27:¹⁴

κυρ. ιε΄ (Luke 19:8–10)
 19:9 εἶπεν] εἶπε
 19:10 ἦλθεν] ἦλθε

σαβ. ιζ΄ (Luke 18:2–8)
 18:2 Inc VI κριτης

¹³The six commonly used incipits in Greek gospel lectionaries are: Inc I: τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ (“at that time”); Inc II: εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ μαθηταῖς (“The Lord said to his own disciples”); Inc III: εἶπεν ὁ κύριος πρὸς ἐληλυθότας πρὸς αὐτὸν Ἰουδαίους (“The Lord said to the Jews who had come to him”); Inc IV: εἶπεν ὁ κύριος πρὸς τοὺς πεπιστευκότας αὐτῷ Ἰουδαίους (“The Lord said to the Jews who had believed in him”); Inc V: εἶπεν ὁ κύριος (“The Lord said”); and Inc VI: εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην (“The Lord told this parable”). There were others used in the epistles, such as ἀδελφοί (“Brothers”).

¹⁴The collations follow the standard form in which the base text (in this case the NA27) is presented first, followed by a parenthesis, and then the reading from the lectionary manuscript under discussion. The incipit which begins each reading in the manuscript is named, followed by the word which begins the biblical portion in the manuscript text. Thus it will be seen that for the reading for σαβ. ιζ΄, after the incipit (in this case incipit VI), the text of the lectionary reading begins with κριτης, leaving out the first word in other manuscripts of the verse, λέγων (“saying”).

- 18:4 ηθελεν] ηθελησεν ουδὲ ανθρωπον] και ανθρωπον
ουκ
18:5 το] το + μη
χηραν] χειραν
18:6 ειπεν] ειπε
18:7 ποιηση] ποιησει¹⁵
αυτω] προς αυτον
μακροθυμει] μακροθυμων

κυρ. ις' (Luke 18:10–14)

- 18:10 Inc VI ανθρωποι
18:12 οσα] ωσα
18:13 επαραι εις τον ουρανον] εις τον ουρανον επαραι
ιλασθητι] ηλασθητι
18:14 παρ' εκεινον] η γαρ εκεινος

σαβ. ιζ' (Luke 20:46–21:1)

- 20:46 Inc II προσεχετε
21:1 ειδεν] ειδε
εις το γαζοφυλακιον τα δωρα αυτων] τα δωρα
αυτων εις το γαζοφυλακιον

Collation against the Textus Receptus:

σαβ. ις' (Luke 18:2–8)

- 18:1 Inc VI κριτης
18:5 το] το + μη l80 l1579¹⁶
χηραν] χειραν

κυρ. ις' (Luke 18:9–14)

- 18:10 Inc VI ανθρωποι
18:12 οσα] ωσα
18:13 ιλασθητι] ηλασθητι
18:14 η εκεινος] η γαρ εκεινος

σαβ. ιζ' (Luke 20:45–21:1)

- 20:46 Inc II προσεχετε

¹⁵A correction, probably in a different hand, indicates that ποιηση (aorist subjunctive) should be read instead of ποιησει (future indicative).

¹⁶This indicates that the variant reading in 18:5 is shared also by the other lectionaries named.

Text Variants

It is clear from this procedure that far fewer variants are found when the collation is done against the Textus Receptus. This is unsurprising in that the lectionary text was, according to Metzger, “gradually brought into conformity with the prevailing Byzantine text,”¹⁷ and this movement would be likely to affect a late medieval manuscript such as this one. The following discussion will focus on variations from the Textus Receptus, or where the lectionary textual tradition is significantly divided.¹⁸

Luke 18:2: Inc VI κριτης. The use of Incipit VI (εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην) is standard in the lectionaries, and to be expected because of Luke’s own introduction in 18:1 which includes the words ἔλεγεν . . . παραβολὴν.

Luke 18:4: ηθελεν] ηθειλησεν. The reading of the aorist verb ηθειλησεν instead of the imperfect is late, supported in uncials by 036 and 037 (ninth or tenth century), and in lectionaries by l1963 (eleventh or twelfth century). This variant is not mentioned in the apparatus of the NA27.

Luke 18:5: το] το + μη. The variant itself is curious, the addition of μή amounting to a negation of the infinitive verb παρέχειν, so that the unjust judge says, “because this widow has *not* caused trouble to me, I will give her justice.” This seems to be in contradiction to the point of the parable, through which the disciples are encouraged always to pray, and to cry out to God day and night. Perhaps, because of the parallels drawn in the parable between the judge and God, a scribe felt reluctant to allow a parallel also between the widow’s “causing trouble” and the prayers of the church. Perhaps, with an attitude of medieval quietism,¹⁹ a scribe wanted to de-emphasize the idea of insistent prayer. Or perhaps a scribe felt that Jesus’ point was that prayer was *not* a trouble to God, and wanted to smooth out an apparent discrepancy in the text.

This rare reading is also found in lectionaries l80 (twelfth century) and l1579 (fourteenth century). The various manuscripts or their exemplars may of course have independently inserted μή. But it seems more likely that there is a relationship; perhaps all three manuscripts trace their Saturday readings to a common ancestor. Bray’s work in the *weekday* lessons from Luke in the lectionary claimed that l80 and l1579 were not strongly

¹⁷Metzger, *Saturday and Sunday Lessons*, 66. The Textus Receptus is reasonably close to the Byzantine text tradition. The modern eclectic text of the NA27 is substantially informed by the Alexandrian text tradition.

¹⁸Evidence taken from IGNTP, *Gospel According to St. Luke*, vol. 2; from the collation in Metzger, *Saturday and Sunday Lessons*, 86; and from the NA27.

¹⁹A thought suggested to me by my colleague at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Dr. Robert Caldwell.

related, with *l*80 being unrepresentative of the main lectionary text.²⁰ But the appearance of such an unusual variant in both, plus this evidence from *l*2282 could indicate that the two manuscripts are more closely related. Or perhaps the weekday lections were transmitted separately from the weekend lections.²¹ This is quite likely given that Saturday-Sunday lectionaries were used at an earlier date than complete lectionaries, and that their separate use continued, as evidenced by manuscripts such as *l*2282.

Luke 18:5: *χηρα*ν] *χειρα*ν. This substitution is most likely simple itacism, in which spelling is confused because certain letters and diphthongs sound alike. But in this instance the misleading result is the reading *χείρα*, “hand,” instead of *χήρα*, “widow.”

Luke 18:10: *Inc VI ανθρωποι*. The lectionaries are divided over the correct way to introduce this passage. The majority use incipit VI (*εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην*), and this has the advantage of similarity to the beginning and end of the text of Luke 18:9 (*εἶπεν . . . τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην*). Some lectionaries use incipit V (*εἶπεν ὁ κύριος*), and one (*l*524) uses incipit I (*τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ*). This indicates a divergence of opinion over whether the account of the tax collector and the Pharisee was a parable or a true story.

Luke 18:12: *οσα*] *ωσα*. This is most likely due to itacism.

Luke 18:13: *ιλασθητι*] *ηλασθητι*. This is most likely due to itacism.

Luke 18:14: *η εκεινος*] *η γαρ εκεινος*. Here *l*2282 agrees with a number of uncials which are Byzantine in the gospels, though not in other portions, including A, E, G, and H, as well as Δ, Ψ,^{f13} and a large number of miniscules and lectionaries. The reading *η εκεινος* is found in W and Θ, and a few other manuscripts.

Luke 20:46: *Inc II προσεχετε*. The use of incipit II (*εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ μαθηταῖς*) is widespread for this reading in the lectionary tradition, as would be expected from its similarity to 20:45b (*εἶπεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ*), particularly when the text is a speech of Jesus. Metzger suggested in his work on the Saturday-Sunday lectionary in Luke that there is evidence of influence from the lectionary text on non-lectionary manuscripts. He names nineteen places in Luke where such “contamination” occurs.²² But he fails to mention Luke 20:45, where manuscripts Γ (036), 179 and 669 have *εαυτου μαθηταις* for *μαθηταις αυτου*, quite

²⁰Bray, *Weekday Lessons from Luke*, 20–25.

²¹Either possibility would need to be established by work which is beyond the scope of this paper.

²²Metzger, *Saturday and Sunday Lessons*, 14–16. Osburn has called for further investigation into the influence of lectionaries on non-lectionary manuscripts. Osburn, “Greek Lectionaries,” 71.

likely under the influence of the use of incipit II in the lectionary reading.

Because what is available of lectionary /2282 is so short, it is impossible to determine whether the original manuscript as a whole would have adhered to one or another of the standard text types. What evidence is available however is clearly not Alexandrian, nor Western, but broadly in line with the lectionary tradition and the Byzantine text.

Text of the Lectionary

To facilitate discussion of scribal tendencies, the text of the lectionary is presented below, with an English translation for convenience. Spelling, punctuation marks, breathing marks and accents have been kept as close as possible to those in the manuscript, though in the original there are few if any spaces between words, and modern font used cannot represent the varieties of ligatures, and uncial and cursive letter forms found in the original. Accents over diphthongs have been placed according to the manuscript. Where the accent is placed over both letters in the manuscript it is placed over the first letter of the diphthong in the table. Where it is over a diphthong written as a ligature or combination, such that the position of the accent in relation to the individual letter is unclear, it is placed after the second letter in the table.

Luke 19:8–10

/ 2282	Translation
[καὶ εἴ τις τινός τι ἐσυκοφάν-]	[and if anything from anyone I
τησα ἀποδίδωμι τετραπλοῦν·	have de-] frauded, I will give back
εἶπε δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ ἰς· ὅτι	fourfold.” ⁹ And Jesus said to him,
σήμερον σῶν τῶ οἴκῳ τούτῳ	“Today salvation has come to
ἐγένετο, καθότι καὶ αὐτὸς υἱὸς	this house, because he is a son of
ἀβραάμ ἐστιν· ἦλθε γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς	Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man
τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ	has come to seek and to save that
ἀπολωλός :	which was lost.”

Luke 18:2-8

εἶπεν ὁ κς̄ τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην·
κριτῆς τις ἦν ἐν τινι πόλει, τὸν
θ̄ν μὴ φοβούμενος ἄν̄ον μὴ
ἐντρέπόμενος· χήρα δὲ ἦν ἐν τῇ
πόλει ἐκείνῃ καὶ ἦρχετο πρὸς
αὐτὸν· λέγουσα, ἐκδίκησόν με
ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀντιδίκου μου. καὶ οὐκ
ἠθέλησεν ἐπὶ χρόνον· μετὰ δὲ
ταῦτα εἶπεν ἐν ἑαυτῷ· εἰ καὶ
τὸν θ̄ν οὐ φοβῶμαι καὶ ἄν̄ον
οὐκ ἐντρέπομαι, διὰ γε τὸ μὴ
παρέχειν μοι κόπον τὴν χεῖραν
ταύτην ἐκ δικήσω αὐτήν, ἵνα μὴ
εἰς τέλος ἐρχομένη ὑπωπιάξῃ
με· εἶπε δὲ ὁ κς̄· ἀκούσατε τί ὁ
κριτῆς τῆς ἀδικίας λέγει· ὁ δὲ θς̄
οὐ μὴ ποιήσει τὴν ἐκδίκησιν τῶν
ἐκλεκτῶν αὐτοῦ τῶν βοώντων
πρὸς αὐτὸν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς,
ἢ μακροθυμῶν ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς, λέγω
ὑμῖν· ὅτι ποιήσει τὴν ἐκδίκησιν
αὐτῶν ἐν τάχει :

The Lord spoke this parable:

² “In a certain city was a certain judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. ³ But a widow was in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, ‘Give me justice over my accuser.’ ⁴ And for some time he was unwilling; but after these things he said to himself, ‘Even if I do not fear God and I do not respect man, ⁵ yet because this widow does not cause me trouble, I will give her justice, so that she might not wear me out by continually coming.’” ⁶ And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says; ⁷ But will not God bring about justice for his elect who cry to him day and night, and though having patience on them? ⁸ I say to you that he will bring about justice for them quickly.”

Luke 18:10–14

εἶπεν ὁ κς̄ τὴν παραβολὴν
 ταύτην· ἄνοι δύο ἀνέβησαν εἰς
 τὸ ἱερόν προσεύξασθαι· ὁ εἶς
 Φαρισῆιος καὶ ὁ ἕτερος τελώνης·
 ὁ Φαρισῆιος σταθεὶς πρὸς
 ἑαυτὸν ταῦτα προσηύχετο· ὁ θς̄
 εὐχαριστῶ σοι ὅτι οὐκ εἰμι ὡσπερ
 οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν ἀνῶν· ἄρπαγες,
 ἄδικοι, μοιχοὶ, ἢ καὶ ὡς οὗτος
 ὁ τελώνης· νηστεύω δις τοῦ
 σαββάτου· ἀποδεκατῶ πάντα ὡσα
 κτῶμαι· καὶ ὁ τελώνης μακρόθεν
 ἐστῶς, οὐκ ἤθελεν οὐδὲ τοὺς
 ὀφθαλμοὺς εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐπάραι·
 ἀλλ' ἔτυπεν εἰς τὸ στήθος αὐτοῦ
 λέγων· ὁ θς̄ ἡλάσθητί μοι τῶ
 ἁμαρτωλῶ· λέγω ὑμῖν· κατέβη
 οὗτος δεδικαιωμένος εἰς τὸν οἶκον
 αὐτοῦ, ἢ γὰρ ἐκεῖνος· ὅτι πᾶς ὁ
 ὑψῶν ἑαυτὸν ταπεινωθήσεται, ὁ δὲ
 ταπεινῶν ἑαυτὸν ὑψωθήσεται :

The Lord spoke this parable:
 “Two men went up into the tem-
 ple to pray. One was a Pharisee
 and the other a tax collector.¹¹
 The Pharisee, standing, was pray-
 ing these things to himself: ‘God,
 I thank You that I am not like
 the rest of men: swindlers, unjust,
 adulterers, or even like this tax
 collector.¹² I fast twice a week; I
 tithe all that I receive.’¹³ And the
 tax collector, standing far off, was
 not even willing to lift up his eyes
 to heaven, but was beating upon
 his breast, saying, ‘God, be merci-
 ful to me—to this sinner!’¹⁴ I say
 to you, this man went to his house
 justified rather than that one; be-
 cause everyone who exalts himself
 will be humbled, but the one who
 humbles himself will be exalted.”

Luke 20:46–21:1

εἶπεν ὁ κς̄ τ̄δ̄ις ἐάντ̄δ̄υ μαθηταῖς·
 προσέχετε ἀπὸ τῶν γραμματέων
 τῶν θελώντων περιπατεῖν
 ἐν στολαῖς, καὶ φιλόνητων
 ἀσπασμῶν ἐν ταῖς ἀγοραῖς
 καὶ πρωτοκαθεδρίας ἐν ταῖς
 συναγωγαῖς καὶ πρωτοκλισίας
 ἐν τῶν δειπνοῖς· οἱ κατεσθίουσι
 τὰς οἰκίας τῶν χηρῶν, καὶ
 προφάσει μακρὰ προσεύχονται
 ὅσσοι λήμψονται περισσότερον
 κρίμα· ἀναβλέψας δὲ εἶδε τοὺς
 βάλλοντας τὰ δῶρα αὐτῶν εἰς τὸ
 γαζοφυλάκιον πλουσίου·

⁴⁶The Lord spoke to his own disciples: “Beware of the scribes, who desire to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets. ⁴⁷They devour the houses of widows, and in pretense they pray lengthy prayers. These will receive greater judgment.” ^{21:1} And looking up he saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury.

Scribal Tendencies**Moveable N**

This manuscript uses the moveable ν in each of the three incipits (εἶπεν), and in the biblical text four times: in ἠθέλησεν and εἶπεν (Luke 18:4), and in ἦθελεν and ἔτυπεν (18:13). It is absent five times: in εἶπε (19:9), ἦλθε (18:10), εἶπε (18:6), κατεσθίουσι (20:47), and εἶδε (21:1).

Nomina Sacra

As was standard practice in Christian Greek texts, abbreviated *nomina sacra* forms are used for divine names and other common theologically significant terms. At least the first and last letters of a word were used, with a horizontal line placed above the text to indicate the abbreviation. The last letter indicates the case. Sometimes the abbreviation included some other

letters from the word. In this lectionary manuscript, *nomina sacra* forms are used for Ἰησοῦς (ἰζ̄ς), κύριος (κζ̄ς), θεός (θζ̄ς or θν̄ς), οὐρανός (οῦνδόν), ἄνθρωπος (ἀνδόν or ἄνον) and σωτηρία (σρία). This latter was not one of the standard fifteen *nomina sacra* found in Byzantine manuscripts,²³ but it is probably used by extension from the common abbreviation of σωτήρ. Somewhat unusually, there is no abbreviation of υἱός in 19:10.

Accents, Breathing Marks, and Punctuation

This manuscript uses accents and breathing marks throughout. The double dot (diæresis) is used once in ὅτι (19:9), and in φιλοῦντων (20:46). The grave accent is doubled for both δέ and μή in 18:6–7. This is unusual in that this doubling was normally used to point out the contrast to the reader of δέ with the correlative conjunction μὲν.²⁴ Only twice do the accents connect to the letters.²⁵

In five places there are errors in breathing marks. The name ἀβραάμ (Abraham) in Luke 19:9 should be ἀβραάμ. In 18:13 ἐστώς (“standing”) has smooth breathing where rough would be expected. The conjunction ἢ in 18:11 and 18:14 is rendered with ἦ and ἦ respectively, making it into the feminine definite article, a nonsensical reading in context. In 18:14 the imperfect ἔτυπτεν is written ἔτυπτεν.

The scribe frequently places the accent over the first letter of a diphthong, instead of the customary second. Of ninety-three diphthongs with accents or breathing marks, forty-one (44%) have the accents and/or breathing marks over the first letter. In fourteen instances (15%) the accents are spread over both letters. In ten instances (11%) the diphthong is a ligature or superposition, with the accents over the combination. Five diphthongs (5%) have the breathing mark over the first letter, and the accent over the second. In only twenty-three instances (25%) are both the accents and/or breathing marks clearly placed over the second letter in the diphthong. This is unusual, though the placing of accents and breathing marks on the first letter of a diphthong occurs occasionally in miniscule manuscripts, especially where the first letter of the pair is uncial or oversize.

Punctuation consists of the high point, middle point and comma. The question in 18:7 appears to be concluded with a comma. Each reading is concluded with a colon or double dot in black ink followed by a larger red dot in the middle position.

²³See the list in Bruce M. Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Palaeography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 36.

²⁴B.A. van Groningen, *Short Manual of Greek Palaeography*, 4th print. ed. (Leyden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1967), 53; Edward M. Thompson, *An Introduction to Greek and Latin Palaeography* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1912), 62.

²⁵The joining of accents to their letters was increasingly frequent in late miniscules.

The presence of unusual itacisms, the number of errors in breathing marks, and the variation in placement of accents may indicate that the scribe was copying by ear and not by sight, or at least was not careful with details.

Dating

External Evidence

The manuscript *l2282* is listed as sixteenth century by Aland.²⁶ On the folder in which it was kept in the Southwestern Seminary library is a penciled note which indicates a date of AD 1390. There are no other external indicators of the date of production.

Paleographic Evidence

The manuscript is nicely written in the standard and rather formal miniscule script common during the medieval period. The script is written continuously; it may appear that words are separated, but the spaces between letters in the same word that are not joined are just as large. There is little evidence of the move to a more relaxed or straggly cursive style that characterized cursives of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The manuscript uses multiple forms of many letters, sometimes depending on what letters are adjacent. Final sigma is written as ζ, σ, or c. A number of letters are enlarged, in uncial fashion, including gamma, epsilon, chi, lambda and tau. Long strokes and loops are found on some instances of alpha, delta and zeta. Uncial epsilon had appeared in miniscule manuscripts from the early tenth century.²⁷ There are numerous ligatures (combinations of letters which share strokes) and some superposition (one letter written above another), particularly towards the end of a line. Καί is twice abbreviated with the standard symbol (ϰ).

There is very little in the script that is not evidenced elsewhere as early as the twelfth century; in this regard the manuscript could be dated earlier than expected. However, it is well known that liturgical and biblical texts were written very conservatively, and what seems like an early style could easily have been written several centuries later.²⁸ There is no use of iota subscript or adscript, but this was common in manuscripts from 1200 onwards.²⁹ Breathing marks are rounded, not squared. Both types were in

²⁶Aland et al., *Kurzgefasste Liste*, 361.

²⁷V. Gardthausen, *Griechische Paleographie*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Leipzig: Veit & Co., 1913), 220.

²⁸“Certain classes, especially sacred and liturgical MSS, which custom had retained for special uses, were less tolerant of change.” Thompson, *Palaeography*, 220. See also Groningen, *Short Manual of Greek Palaeography*, 38.

²⁹William Henry Paine Hatch, *Facsimiles and Descriptions of Minuscule Manuscripts*

use between 1000 and 1300, but after 1300 round breathing marks were the norm.³⁰ Accents are used over *nomina sacra*, but this was the norm from the mid-eleventh century.³¹ But the circumflex accent is written mostly in the tilde style ($\tilde{\alpha}$) rather than the inverted-breve style ($\hat{\alpha}$) which prevailed for centuries. It was not until the fifteenth century that large numbers of documents appeared with a predominance of tilde-shaped circumflex accents.³² Of sixty-one circumflex accents in the text of the manuscript, forty-seven are tilde-shaped, while fourteen are of the inverted-breve shape. This suggests an earliest possible date of around 1400, with a greater likelihood that it is from the second half of the fifteenth century.

Material

The manuscript is on paper, whereas most early medieval manuscripts are on vellum. Paper had been used for codices as early as the eighth century,³³ but was not in widespread use for manuscripts until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.³⁴ In the Byzantine empire, paper of Arab manufacture was used at first, but from the mid-thirteenth century paper was imported from Italy.³⁵

What provides evidence for the date and provenance of the paper in the manuscript is the existence of a watermark. It was common for Western European paper manufacturers to make a design of wire, and tie or sew it onto the mold used to press the paper, thus creating an impression visible when the light is shined through the paper. The designs of the watermarks are used to date the production of the paper. The standard work is by Briquet.³⁶ Lectionary I2282 has a watermark which displays a set of scales within a circle, suspended by a rope or chain incorporating two circles from a six-pointed star. Papers with a similar design range from 1485

of the New Testament (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), 20–21.

³⁰Metzger, *Manuscripts*, 49.

³¹Ruth Barbour, *Greek Literary Hands A.D. 400–1600*, Oxford Palaeographical Handbooks, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), xxviii.

³²See for example manuscripts Vatic. gr. 1007 and Rav. 210 in Jean Irigoin, “Papiers Orientaux et Papiers Occidentaux,” in *La Paléographie Grecque et Byzantine, Paris, 21–25 Octobre 1974: Actes du Colloque International sur la Paléographie Grecque et Byzantine*, ed. Jacques Bompaigne and Jean Glenisson (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1977), 347–49; and Codex 17 in Hatch, *Minuscule Manuscripts*, 263. The shape may have developed from the larger circumflex accents used over breathing marks. See Gardthausen, *Griechische Paleographie*, 393.

³³Thompson, *Palaeography*, 34–35.

³⁴Metzger, *Manuscripts*, 15.

³⁵Irigoin, “Papiers Orientaux et Papiers Occidentaux,” 45. See also Groningen, *Greek Palaeography*, 22.

³⁶C.M. Briquet and Allan Stevenson, *Les Filigranes*, 4 vols. (Amsterdam: Paper Publications Society, 1968).

(Briquet No. 2455) to 1512 (Briquet No. 2599), but the closest match is to paper No. 2601, dated at 1494–1497, and used in Venice.³⁷ It is possible, of course, that paper was not always used immediately after it was produced, and so the date of the manufacture of the paper could pre-date its use by some time. Additionally, there are no other sheets of this manuscript available. If the whole manuscript was produced from the same paper it would heighten the possibility that it was written somewhere near the date of manufacture.

One issue to consider is where the lectionary was written. Constantinople had fallen in 1453, but the Greek churches were still in operation. There was also a large Greek-speaking community in southern Italy. It may have taken time for the paper to travel to its final destination. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to deduce that this manuscript was most likely written in the late fifteenth century, or early sixteenth, within the period 1490–1510—about the time when use of the printing press was becoming more widespread.

Ecclesial Use

Historical Setting

We now turn to a brief reflection upon the use of this lectionary in its historical context. The document was written especially for use in the Saturday and Sunday services of worship of the Byzantine church. Bible manuscripts of the same era were used frequently for the lectionary readings, and often have instructions for readers indicating the date on which a passage was to be read, and also the beginning and end of the selection. So why was a Saturday-Sunday lectionary necessary? The Byzantine lectionary readings were entirely from the New Testament,³⁸ but it would still have been cheaper and quicker to write such a document than to copy a full New Testament. This manuscript was possibly written for a church that had no full copy of the New Testament. The passages it contained may have been the only Scripture many participants ever heard. In that case, the

³⁷Ibid., vol 1., 184. A similar, though not identical watermark is recorded in a manuscript dated 1483 (Cod. 327) found in the Augustiner-Chorherrenstift in Klosterneuburg, Austria, Reference WMZA AT5000-327-171, in *Wasserzeichen des Mittelalters*, <http://www.ksbm.oew.ac.at/wz/wzma.php> (accessed July 15, 2009).

³⁸There is some evidence that Old Testament passages may have been read in the liturgy during Lent (David M. Petras, “The Gospel Lectionary of the Byzantine Church,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 41.2-3 [1997]: 115). In addition some Old Testament passages, especially psalms, were sung. A cynic might add that many modern churches have solved the issue of balancing Old and New Testament readings by omitting the public reading of the New Testament as well as the Old.

selection of passages, and the manner in which they were presented, was highly significant.

Although some churches required the Scriptures to be read in continuous fashion (the so-called *lectio continua*),³⁹ the Byzantine church, among others, developed a hybrid system where the requirements of special celebrations and the church calendar competed with the impulse to read through the Biblical books in order. The Saturday-Sunday lections appear to be disordered, but it has been noted that the Saturday readings and the Sunday readings, taken separately, follow a sequence quite close to the biblical order.⁴⁰

The Lukan section of the Saturday-Sunday lectionary begins with Luke 4:31–36 (concerning the man with an unclean spirit in the synagogue) and ends with Luke 20:46–21:4 (concerning the widow's mite). Only selections from Luke were read in this period, but many of the gaps were filled by readings at weekday services, for churches and monasteries which had them. After this Lukan and Matthean readings are mixed as far as Lent. The Lukan passion narrative is read just before Lent. The birth narratives were reserved for the advent period. The examination of the selection of passages for the lectionary is a task beyond the scope of this paper. It has been noted that there is "an emphasis on miracle stories," perhaps "at the expense of the teaching and parable sections."⁴¹

The Saturday-Sunday readings from Luke were used during the regular Byzantine mass or Eucharist, in a service which followed the so-called Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, which was the standard form.⁴² The service having begun with prayer and song, the lectionary or book of the Gospels was brought in, with solemn procession and candles—sometimes it had to be taken out first, if the book was kept in the church. This was called the "Little Entrance."⁴³ Immediately before the reading of the Gospel the priest called to the congregation, Σοφία. Ὁρθοί. Ἀκούσωμεν τοῦ ἁγίου εὐαγγελίου. ("Wisdom. Stand up. Let us hear the holy Gospel.") Then after the name of the Gospel was announced by the deacon, the priest said, Πρόσχωμεν ("Pay attention"). The passage was read by the deacon, after which the priest said to him, Εἰρήνη σοι ("Peace be with you"). The deacon then gave the book to the priest, who placed it on

³⁹See John Reumann, "A History of Lectionaries: From the Synagogue at Nazareth to Post-Vatican II," *Interpretation* 31.2 (1977): 124.

⁴⁰Metzger, *Saturday and Sunday Lessons*, 9–10.

⁴¹Petras, "Gospel Lectionary," 136.

⁴²The Liturgy of St. Basil and the Liturgy of the Presanctified were used on certain special occasions.

⁴³The "Great Entrance" involved the entry of the elements for the Eucharist.

the altar. This was followed by intercessory prayers, starting with Κύριε, ἐλέησον (“Lord, have mercy”).⁴⁴

This brief description covers only a small portion of a lengthy liturgy. It is clear that the reading was accompanied by the utmost solemnity and ceremony, with the congregation standing, and much prayer. The call of “wisdom” heightened the sense that the words about to be read were worthy of full attention, and the prayer for mercy afterwards could be thought of as a response. The gospel reading was given particular honor, as witness to Christ. But the purpose of all this was to prepare the people and the priest for the Eucharist. Even the designation “Little Entrance” indicates the priority: Christ is revealed in the Gospel “in a more perfect manifestation” than in the epistle, and then again in the “perfect and supreme manifestation” of the sacrifice of the mass which points to the cross.⁴⁵

In the veneration of the Gospel book or lectionary, the ceremony and prayer, and in the key place the reading is given in the liturgy, the Byzantine rite gave the readings symbolic value as much as or more than instructional value. Thus the fact of the reading is as important as its content. The content itself was recontextualized both through its place in the liturgy, and through the use of the lectionary form. It is quite possible that the New Testament writers expected their works to be read out in public worship, but it is unlikely that they expected such elaborate ceremony, nor for their writings to be broken up and read in a non-sequential fashion.

There is evidence also, in the way that the Byzantine lectionary selected and defined the limits of readings, that meaning was lost in the process. Examination of a number of the selections used in the Lukan portion of Saturday-Sunday lectionaries shows that passages were often removed from their immediate literary context with unfortunate consequences. It is obvious that passages read out of sequence lose their literary and historical context. But narrow introductory information too is often missing in the lectionary, and replaced with a standard incipit. Luke is very deliberate and careful to delineate who was present when Jesus was speaking, or to whom a teaching was addressed, in what circumstances a particular event happened, or what happened as a result of the event or teaching. All this is important for the interpretation of a passage, and much of the time it is lost in the lectionary. A full examination and presentation of this phenomenon is beyond the scope of this paper, but some examples will be given

⁴⁴Here I am following the sixteenth century version of the liturgy of St. Chrysostom, as found in C.A. Swainson, *The Greek Liturgies: Chiefly from Original Authorities* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1971).

⁴⁵According to the fourteenth-century Byzantine theologian Nicholas Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, trans. J.M. Hussey and P.A. McNulty (London: S.P.C.K., 1960), 62, 53.

from the first part of the Lukan portion of the lectionary, and then from the passages in the manuscript under examination, /2282.

The first passage, Luke 4:31–36 (σαβ. α'), is begun in the lectionaries with Inc. I (τῷ καιρῷ ἐκεῖνω) and adds ἦλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς (“Jesus went”) in place of καὶ κατήλθεν (“and He went down.”) At this stage little has changed. But the lectionary text omits verse 37, which indicates that after the expulsion of the demon, a report went out to the surrounding territory about Jesus. Luke includes this to further emphasize the astonishment that Jesus caused in the synagogue, and to set the stage for the contrast to be drawn later when Jesus faces powerful opposition.

The second, 5:1–11 (κυρ. α'), also starts with Inc. I, followed by the text of 5:1b, with a couple of adjustments for grammatical coherence. But the lectionary omits 5:1a: ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ τὸν ὄχλον ἐπικεῖσθαι αὐτῷ καὶ ἀκούειν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ (“And it happened, when the crowd was pressing around Him and hearing the Word of God.”) This introductory remark sets the stage for the account of the call of Peter. That is, Jesus called Peter to be a fisher of men in the context of a mass of people who wanted to hear the word.

The reading for σαβ. δ' (6:1–10) consists of a pair of accounts which describe Jesus' confrontations over the Sabbath. The lectionaries omit 6:11, the ominous conclusion: αὐτοὶ δὲ ἐπλήσθησαν ἀνοίας καὶ διελάλουν πρὸς ἀλλήλους τί ἂν ποιήσαιεν τῷ Ἰησοῦ (“But they were filled with fury, and were discussing with one another what they might do to Jesus.”) This is again a narrative element which helps make sense of later passages in Luke. But it also tells the reader that Jesus' act of healing on the Sabbath was not well accepted. Perhaps there was some reluctance to read passages where people are shown opposing Jesus.

The reading for κυρ. ζ' (8:26–35, 38–39) omits verses 36–37. In this portion the people of the Gadarene region⁴⁶ hear of the healing (ἐσώθη) of the demonized man, and out of fear ask Jesus to leave. Again the lectionary text omits a passage where Jesus is opposed.

There are two passages in the manuscript under discussion which have similar omissions which lead to interpretive problems. Luke 18:2–8 (for σαβ. ις') is introduced by Inc. VI (εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην). But Luke's introduction is found in 18:1: ἔλεγεν δὲ παραβολὴν αὐτοῖς πρὸς τὸ δεῖν πάντοτε προσεύχεσθαι αὐτοὺς καὶ μὴ ἐγκακεῖν (“Now He was telling them a parable so that they should always pray and not lose heart.”) Thus in the lectionary text the biblical interpretation of the passage is missing. Furthermore, the lectionary omits the end of the

⁴⁶The NA27 reads τῶν Γερασηῶν (“of the Gerasenes”) in Luke 8:26, with **ℵ**, **L**, **Θ** and **Ξ**, but the lectionaries have τῶν Γαδαρηῶν (“of the Gadarenes”), with **A**, **W**, **Ψ**, **f**¹³ and **℣**.

pericope, Luke 18:8b: πλὴν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐλθὼν ἄρα εὕρήσει τὴν πίστιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς; (“But the Son of Man, when He comes—will He find faith on the earth?”) Luke’s presentation of the parable finishes not on the high point of 18:8a, but on the sobering comment of Jesus as He looks to his return.

Finally, the passage for κυρ. ις’ (Luke 18:10–14), also introduced in the lectionary by Inc. VI, recounts the parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee. But Luke’s introduction in 18:9 is intended to shape its interpretation: Εἶπεν δὲ καὶ πρὸς τινὰς τοὺς πεποιθότας ἐφ’ ἑαυτοῦς ὅτι εἰσὶν δίκαιοι καὶ ἐξουθενοῦντας τοὺς λοιποὺς τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην (“Now He also spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised the rest.”) The lectionary version is missing this key to its understanding. The passage has been decontextualized in the process of adapting it to the liturgical context.

Conclusion

This examination of the short lectionary manuscript *l*2282 has shown that the text conforms largely to other lectionary texts, though one unusual variant is only found in two other lectionaries, both much earlier than this one. It is uncertain whether there is a direct relationship with those manuscripts. The presence of itacistic variants, and mistakes with breathing marks and accents suggest a certain lack of scribal care, but the manuscript as a whole is well presented with a pleasing miniscule hand. An investigation of the handwriting and of the paper used strongly suggests a date in the late fifteenth century, or possibly the early sixteenth century. A brief reflection upon the historical use of this lectionary has shown that it would have been used liturgically by a church, possibly under pressure after the fall of Constantinople and the rise of an Islamic empire, who read the Scriptures with respect in every service, and honored the reading of the Gospel as a true revelation of Christ. But it has also shown that the recontextualizing process of selecting and delimiting readings for use in the liturgy resulted in a decontextualizing loss of meaning unintended by the biblical authors.

Pre-Constantinian Nomina Sacra in a Mosaic and Church Graffiti

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Eleven years ago prison workers digging for a renovation of the Megiddo prison in Israel discovered one of the earliest extant house churches in the world: possibly dating to AD 230. Three years ago archeologists published the preliminary report from this site.¹ Since it has a mosaic that adds to the meager *nomina sacra* evidence in ancient Christian graffiti, it is time to examine this evidence along with that found at the house churches at Capernaum and Dura-Europos. This article will examine the information in the excavation reports for each of these three archaeological sites.²

What are *nomina sacra*? These “sacred names” are abbreviated (suspended) or contracted forms of “Jesus” and related sacred words. They appear in most ancient Greek Bible texts (OT and NT) copied by Christians

¹Yotam Tepper, and Leah Di Segni, *A Christian Prayer Hall of the Third Century C.E. at Kefar ‘Othnay (Legio): Excavations at the Megiddo Prison 2005* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2006), 5. This is the preliminary excavation report, and it is the only published report to date.

²There are other extant possibly pre-Constantinian churches, but the ones at Megiddo, Capernaum, and Dura-Europos have the best published epigraphic evidence for this study. In addition to the preliminary report mentioned above, this article will make primary use of: Emmanuele Testa, *I Graffiti Della Casa Di S. Pietro*, vol. 4 of Cafarnao (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing, 1972); and, Carl H. Kraeling, *The Christian Building*, part 2 of *The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Final Report VIII* (New Haven: Dura-Europos Publications, 1967). Other possibly early churches include ones at Aqaba, Yotvata, and the site of the Cenacle on Mt. Zion. See S. Thomas Parker, “An Early Church, Perhaps the Oldest in the World, Found at Aqaba,” *Near Eastern Archaeology* 61 (1998): 254; Gwyn Davies and Jodi Magness, “The Roman Fort at Yotvata, 2006,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 57 (2007): 106–14; Bargil Pixner, “Church of the Apostles Found on Mt. Zion,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* (5–6/1990): 23–26.

(but not by Jews) as well as on ancient mosaics, church walls, coins, lamps,³ ostraca,⁴ ossuaries,⁵ frescoes, and papyrus personal letters.⁶

Were these *nomina sacra* simply shorthand such as what today's seminary students use in taking class notes: X for Christ, Θ for God and HS for Holy Spirit? No. Huge mosaics, such as the ones in the Hagia Sophia church in Istanbul, have plenty of space to spell out Ἰησοῦς Χρῖστος ("Jesus Christ"). Yet, they use the simple $\overline{\text{IC}} \overline{\text{XC}}$ with a line over each *nomen sacrum* (note: the capital sigma was often written as 'C' rather than 'Σ'). So, if using *nomina sacra* was not for saving space, what was its purpose? There is general agreement among scholars that the practice had a sacral or reverential use.

Most writings about *nomina sacra* focus on the biblical texts; yet, the use of *nomina sacra* in a house church mosaic and wall graffiti is almost as ancient as the oldest extant New Testament manuscripts. This article will explore the use of *nomina sacra* in a mosaic inscription and graffiti in three ancient house churches—in Capernaum, Megiddo, and Dura-Europos—in order to ascertain its purpose for use in these media as compared with other media, such as Scripture texts. First, some background information will help orient the reader: a description of *nomina sacra*, mosaics, and house churches. Second, this article will describe the three ancient house churches and the *nomina sacra* found in each one. Third, some conclusions will show common elements and compare these findings to the present state of studying *nomina sacra* in ancient Christian writings.

Description of *Nomina Sacra*

L. Traube coined the term "*nomina sacra*" and wrote the first book on the subject just over 100 years ago.⁷ Paap carried the research forward with the next monograph on these sacred names and showed their abundance in early papyri.⁸ More recently, L.W. Hurtado has written a number of

³See S. Loffreda, "The Greek Inscriptions on the Byzantine Lamps from the Holy Land," in *Christian Archaeology in the Holy Land. New Discoveries: Essays in Honour of Virgilio C. Corbo*, ed. G.C. Bottini, L. Di Segni, E. Alliata (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing, 1990): 475–96.

⁴Ostraca are broken pieces of pottery (potsherds) that have writing on them, like people use scraps of paper or Post-it notes today.

⁵An ossuary is a stone burial box for bones—much smaller than a sarcophagus.

⁶For *nomina sacra* in papyrus personal letters, see AnneMarie Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord: Early Christians and the Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Harvard Theological Studies 60 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 57–78.

⁷L. Traube, *Nomina Sacra: Versuch einer Geschichte der christlichen Kürzung* (Munich: Beck, 1907), 17–18.

⁸Anton Herman Reinier Everhard Paap, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri of the First Five Centuries AD: The Sources and Some Deductions* (Leiden: Brill, 1959).

articles shedding more light on the origin and significance of *nomina sacra* in Scripture. He proposes that the use of *nomina sacra* began in the late first century AD.⁹ It is clear that the use of *nomina sacra* among Christian scribes was widespread from the second century on. Hurtado points out, “Among the 300 or so indisputably Christian manuscripts from before 300 CE, those that demonstrably did not have any *nomina sacra* forms can be counted on fingers of our two hands.”¹⁰ He importantly notes the impressive factors of the early emergence and the surprisingly wide adoption of *nomina sacra* among Christian scribes.¹¹

Roberts gave a helpful classification of the fifteen *nomina sacra* that Traube identified: (1) the four consistent and earliest words used as *nomina sacra*: Ἰησοῦς (“Jesus”), Χριστός (“Christ”), κύριος (“lord”), and θεός (“God”), (2) the three words found as *nomina sacra* fairly early and relatively consistently: πνεῦμα (“spirit”), ἄνθρωπος (“man”), and σταυρός (“cross”), and (3) eight words used irregularly as *nomina sacra*: πατήρ (“father”), υἱός (“son”), σωτήρ (“savior”), μήτηρ (“mother”), οὐρανός (“heaven”), Ἰσραήλ (“Israel”), Δαυεῖδ (“David”), and Ἱερουσαλήμ (“Jerusalem”).¹² *Nomina sacra* appear in three forms: (1) suspension, as was common in secular abbreviations, such as $\overline{\text{IH}}$ for IHCOYC (“Jesus”), (2) contraction,¹³ in which the first and last letters of the word are used, which is helpful in depicting the grammatical case of the word, such as $\overline{\text{KN}}$ for KYPION (“Lord”), and (3) a longer contraction, in which one or more intervening letters appears along with the first and last letter, such as $\overline{\text{IHC}}$ (thus, $\overline{\text{IHS}}$ on modern Lord’s supper tables) for IHCOYC or $\overline{\text{PNA}}$ for PNEYMA (“Spirit”).¹⁴ In addition, a bar appears over most *nomina sacra* letters. This overbar signified to the reader that the word could not be pronounced

⁹Larry W. Hurtado, “p52 (P. Rylands Gk. 457) and the *Nomina Sacra*: Method and Probability,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 54 (2003): 4. See also, Idem, “The Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*: A Proposal,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117 (1998): 655–73. This writer would like to thank Larry Hurtado for reading this article and offering helpful corrections.

¹⁰Hurtado, “p52,” 5. Roberts, in an important chapter on *nomina sacra* (see ch. 2), cites the few exceptions not using *nomina sacra*. Colin H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 38. However, Hurtado notes that none of those examples used texts that eventually formed the OT or NT canon. Hurtado, “p52,” 5.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 27. This paper will refer to these three groups of *nomina sacra* as category one (most consistent and early), category two (fairly consistent and early), and category three (inconsistent). Hurtado mentions a few other *nomina sacra*, but they are rare, such as $\overline{\text{MICH}}$ (“Michael”), $\overline{\text{NOWE}}$ (“Noah”), $\overline{\text{SAR}}$ (“Sarah”), and $\overline{\text{ABRA}}$ (“Abraham”). Hurtado, “The Origin,” 656.

¹³Rarely contractions used letters from the beginning and middle of the word, such as $\overline{\text{KPI}}$ for $\overline{\text{KYPIW}}$ or $\overline{\text{OP}}$ for $\overline{\text{OWTIPPOC}}$. Paap, *Nomina Sacra*, 102, 112.

¹⁴Philip Comfort, *Encountering the Manuscripts: An Introduction to the NT Paleography & Textual Criticism* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 200.

exactly as written. Scribes used a similar practice for writing numbers as letters, such as \overline{IA} for eleven and \overline{IB} for twelve, but this overbar was *never* used for contraction of regular words. However, contraction with an overbar was the most common form of *nomina sacra*.¹⁵ *Nomina sacra* appear mostly in Greek texts, but they also appear in Armenian, Latin, Coptic, and Slavonic.¹⁶ Yet, there is no consensus as to why Christian writers used *nomina sacra*. Hopefully, this article will shed some light on the subject.

Few people in antiquity would have actually seen *nomina sacra* in the biblical texts for several reasons. First, books and scrolls were expensive, and private ownership was prohibitive except for the wealthy. Second, few people actually read Scripture. Rather, they heard Scripture as one reader read aloud the text a congregation owned or borrowed. So, only the reader would see that a *nomen sacrum* was present, and when he came to that place in the text no doubt he said the full word aloud. Thus, the listener would likely not even have known there was a *nomen sacrum* in the text. Third, literacy was rare in ancient times: only 10–20 percent of an ancient population was literate.¹⁷

Interestingly, most scholars focus on *nomina sacra* in the medium where it was seen the *least* by early Christians: the biblical text. Of course, the most abundant extant evidence of *nomina sacra* is in the biblical texts, and this goes back into the second-century texts—likely with origins in first-century texts.¹⁸ The abundant extant evidence has allowed fruitful examinations. However, this paper will look at *nomina sacra* where it was seen the *most* by early Christians: in mosaic inscriptions on the floors and

¹⁵Comfort notes scribes commonly used overbars for abbreviations (by suspension, not contraction), and this practice, along with using an overbar for numbers written as letters, may have influenced the use of the overbar in *nomina sacra*. Ibid. However, Hurtado notes the common word abbreviation overbar appeared differently: over the final letter or two and extending a distance to the right of the abbreviation. Hurtado, “The Origin,” 660.

¹⁶Ibid., 656.

¹⁷Harris wrote about how many people could read and write in the Greco-Roman world. He proposes only a 10–20 percent general literacy in the ancient world because the important preconditions necessary for widespread literacy were never present in the Greco-Roman world. W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 3, 12–13, 327. Gamble concurs with these findings but uses different methods to reach his conclusion. H. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 3–7. However, see Millard, who notes the high expectation of literacy among ancient Jews. Also, he notes “all of the considerations, together with the material presented in Chapter 4, suggest many non-professionals wrote to some extent, keeping accounts, putting names on pots, ossuaries, and other possessions, perhaps writing for their own information memoranda and notes and even copying books in Aramaic or Hebrew or Greek, as we know others did in Egypt at the same time and at Dura Europos [sic] a century or two later (179).” A. Millard, *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 157, 179.

¹⁸Hurtado, “The Origin,” 659.

in graffiti on the walls of house churches. Much of this epigraphic evidence has come to light only in the last few decades—some in the last few years.

Mosaics

Mosaics were the carpets of the ancient world. Although pebbled floors date as far back as the eighth century BC, mosaic floors date back to the fourth or fifth century BC in Greek, Roman, and Punic areas. They started with simple geometric designs, but in the Roman period the pictures became quite complex with many nuances of colors and shading.¹⁹

Mosaicists used tesserae: small, colorful, cubed stones, for their work. One can find mosaics in ancient houses, villas, palaces, shops, sidewalks, churches, and synagogues.²⁰ They have excellent durability since they often employ the natural colors of stone—thus with no paint to rub off. For instance, limestone occurs naturally in various shades of white, yellow, red, and green.²¹

Until the last century, archeologists and historians paid little attention to the historical value of mosaics. They preferred examining architectural remains, literary texts, ceramics, and coins. Yet, now they understand the valuable religious, social, and political information mosaics reveal.²²

Archeologists have discovered the remains of hundreds of churches in ancient Palestine dating to the Roman-Byzantine period—mostly from the sixth to eighth centuries. They typically had mosaic carpets on the entire central floor as well as in the naves, aisles, inter-columnar area, entrance, and courtyard.²³ Dedicatory inscriptions on mosaics listing the donor are common in these churches. Most are in Greek, but there are some inscriptions in Aramaic, Armenian, Syriac, Latin, Arabic, and Christopalestinian. They occur in rectangular, circular, and *tabula ansata* (a panel with handles or “wings”) form.²⁴

¹⁹Herr, “Magic Carpets,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* (3–4/1996): 3. Ben Dov and Rappel call the Byzantine era the golden age of mosaics in the Holy Land. Meir Ben Dov and Yoel Rappel, *Mosaics of the Holy Land* (New York: Adama Books, 1987), 37. However, this article focuses on a pre-Byzantine mosaic at Megiddo.

²⁰Herr, “Magic Carpets,” 3.

²¹Katherine M.D. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 279.

²²G.W. Bowersock, *Mosaics as History: The Near East from Late Antiquity to Islam* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 2.

²³Rachel Hachlili, *Ancient Mosaic Pavements: Themes, Issues, and Trends; Selected Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 219–20.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 232. The inscriptions also sometimes contained Scripture verses, dates, names of bishops or other clergy, builders, emperors, notable church members, and the name of the mosaicist (236).

There is little known about the mosaicists. However, archeologists can make assumptions based on the similarity of motifs and patterns, stylistic idiosyncrasies, tesserae size and consistency, and letter styles to determine if one or more mosaicists laid the mosaics in a church as well as compare the work from church to church. Sometimes the mosaic inscription mentioned their name. From the names mentioned, it is evident that usually Jewish mosaicists laid mosaics in synagogues and Christian mosaicists did their work in churches.²⁵

House Churches

L. Michael White calls the original meeting place of Christians—typically an unaltered house—a house church, well-attested in Paul’s mission and letters (1 Cor 16:19; Rom 16:3–5; Phlm 1–2; Col 4:15).²⁶ Then—likely over an indeterminate period of time (from extant data available)—Christians renovated it into a *domus ecclesiae*²⁷ (a “house of the church”), such as the Dura-Europos church.²⁸ For instance, the Christians at Dura enlarged the dining hall (*triclinium*), now called room four. There is

²⁵Ibid., 240–42. However, some mosaic workshops may have serviced both churches and synagogues, so a Jewish or Christian artist may have worked in both types of worship buildings (240).

²⁶L. Michael White, *Building God’s House in the Roman World: Architectural Adaptation among Pagans, Jews and Christians*, vol. 1 of *The Social Origins of Christian Architecture*, Harvard Theological Studies 42 (Valley Forge, PN: Trinity Press, 1997), 149. See an in-depth description of the ancient literature and architecture of house churches in L. Michael White, *Texts and Monuments for the Christian Domus Ecclesiae in its Environment*, vol. 2 of *The Social Origins of Christian Architecture*, Harvard Theological Studies 42 (Valley Forge, PN: Trinity, 1997), 33–120 (literature), 121–257 (architecture).

²⁷This Latin term can be either genitive singular (“house of the church”), nominative plural (“house churches”), or genitive plural (“houses of the churches”), depending on the context.

²⁸Michael White, *Building God’s House*, 111. Although many scholars do not differentiate between a house church and a *domus ecclesia* (or *domus ecclesiae*—see above), this writer likes White’s nuanced distinction and will use the terms in this way. Contrast this use with Tzaferis, who says Christians used “congregation rooms” in the apostolic age and in the rest of the first century. In the second century they used the provisional *domus ecclesia* (“house church”). These were houses in which members of the congregation lived, and the congregation moved from house to house, not dedicating any of them as permanent places of worship. Towards the end of the second century and into the third Christians used more permanent places dedicated not only to worship but also used for teaching rooms, vestries, apartments for clergy, and other uses. At this time the so-called (by Patristics) *domus Dei* (house of God), *ecclesia*, or *dominicum* became more like a synagogue in that it was the center of the religious and social life of a Christian. The Eucharist table (*trapeze eucharistion*) and offering table (*trapeze proforon*) became fixed objects in the church. There was a relative peace for Christians from the second half of the third century until the persecution under Diocletian (AD 303–313). Vassilios Tzaferis, “To God Jesus Christ: Early Christian Prayer Hall Found in Megiddo Prison,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* (3–4/2007): 45, 48.

no clear evidence Christians used the house as a house church prior to this renovation.²⁹ Yet, that is the nature of extant house churches today. Since the building was not altered at first there is usually no evidence Christians used it. In the second half of the third century Christians needed a larger room in the structure, and they used an *aula ecclesiae* (“hall of the church”). Then after AD 313 they adopted the basilica style of civic buildings.³⁰ Interestingly, the Megiddo prayer hall seems to be an early and unique example of an *aula ecclesiae*, being a part of a civic building which also housed Roman army officers.³¹

Caveat Lector

Several weaknesses of this study must be disclosed. First, there are few extant mosaic inscriptions in house churches and *domus ecclesiae*. The House of St. Peter³² at Capernaum (first century AD) and the Dura-Europos *domus ecclesiae* by the Euphrates River in Syria (AD 232) have none.³³ However, the recently-discovered prayer hall at Megiddo (AD 230) has three mosaic inscriptions (but only one with *nomina sacra*). Graffiti and dipinti³⁴ fare better: the House of St. Peter yielded 175 inscriptions, and the Dura-Europos church has twenty. Second, in examining the ruins of ancient house churches, unless a given church was mentioned in an early church council or by Eusebius as being orthodox, it could be the ruins are from a heterodox or otherwise quasi-Christian group, thus not reflecting the norm. Third, some graffiti readings are unclear due to the fragmentation of the plaster surface on which they were carved. Fourth, the date of the Megiddo church is in much debate, so its findings may have less impact if it is post Constantinian in date.³⁵ Fifth, this writer is not a paleographer and must depend upon those who are to date the evidence, so most of the Capernaum graffiti have a range of two centuries.

²⁹Michael White, *Building God's House*, 120–21.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 127–28, 134.

³¹Yotam Tepper, and Leah Di Segni, *Christian Prayer Hall*, 5–6, 21–22.

³²Although this writer does not believe in specifying certain Christians as saints (all Christians are saints: Acts 9:13, 32; 26:10; Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2), the conventional name for this house is the House of St. Peter.

³³The fifth-century octagonal church at Capernaum has a mosaic, but this article is focusing on pre-Constantinian Christian mosaics.

³⁴A graffito (plural: graffiti) is an inscription or figure that is carved on a wall or object; whereas, a dipinto (plural: dipinti) is an inscription or figure that is painted on a wall or object.

³⁵Helmut Koester warns that the enthusiastic early date of hundreds of ancient churches had to be revised after later assessment. “Oldest Church Found. Well, Maybe,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* (11–12/1998): 22.

The House of St. Peter in Capernaum

This *domus ecclesiae* is likely the oldest extant church in the world. It is located in what was likely Jesus' headquarters city in his Galilean ministry. Capernaum is located on the northwest side of the Sea of Galilee. Excavations began at Capernaum in 1905 and continued until 1914. When excavations resumed in 1921, Gaudence Orgali discovered the ruins of a Byzantine octagonal church, which he misidentified at the time due to incomplete excavation. Excavations did not resume until 1968. As a result of renewed excavation, the original structure is identified as the first-century house of the apostle Peter (see Mark 1:29–31; 2:14; Matt 8:14–15). In the fourth century it was rebuilt; in the fifth century the octagonal church was built above it.³⁶

The *domus ecclesiae* was a part of the larger house of Peter. Of course, there is no way to prove this house belonged to Peter, and there are scholars who dispute this claim.³⁷ Yet, this is the traditional claim, and Christian veneration of this site clearly goes back into the first century. There is no compelling reason to doubt the genuineness of this site.

The fifth-century octagonal church has a large mosaic floor in the venerated hall number one with a peacock in the middle, an ancient Christian symbol for eternal life. Underneath the mosaic excavators recovered thousands of fragments of plaster, broken from the walls of the *domus ecclesiae*, some of which have graffiti from an earlier time.³⁸ Emmanuele Testa wrote the definitive book on this graffiti, and he dates the oldest graffiti back to the early third century AD on paleographic grounds, and other graffiti date as late as the early fifth century. There were 151 samples in Greek, 13 samples in Paleo-Estrangelo, 9 in Aramaic, and 2 in Latin.³⁹ Testa believes the graffiti were pious messages left by Christian pilgrims, and many of the graffiti contain Semitic names.⁴⁰

Of the 151 sections of Greek inscriptions (some composed of several fragments pieced together), some of them contain only one letter (e.g.,

³⁶Virgilio Corbo, "The Church of the House of St. Peter at Capernaum," in *Ancient Churches Revealed*, ed. Yoram Tsafrir (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993), 71–72, 74. Virgilio C. Corbo, *The House of St. Peter at Capharnaum: A Preliminary Report of the First Two Campaigns of Excavations, April 16–June 19, Sept. 12–Nov. 26, 1968*, trans. Sylvester Saller (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing, 1969), 1–3, 69–71. Testa, *Casa Di S. Pietro*, 11.

³⁷Joan E. Taylor, "Capernaum and its 'Jewish-Christians': A Re-examination of the Franciscan Excavations," *Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society* 9 (1989–1990): 26.

³⁸Corbo, *The House*, 69.

³⁹Testa, *Casa Di S. Pietro*, 183. See a different number in Stanislao Loffreda, *A Visit to Capharnaum* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing, 1976), 32.

⁴⁰Testa, *Casa Di S. Pietro*, 9, 183.

fragments #2, 7, 54, 55, 76), some contain just a fragment of a letter (e.g., #4, 5), and many contain just two letters (e.g., #15, 16, 18, 26, 30, 31, 32, 58, 61, 63, 65, 84).⁴¹ The following inscriptions contain more than two letters as well as certain or probable *nomina sacra*, given in their order of importance for this study.

Number 89 contains three category one (see note 12 above) *nomina sacra*, all with overbars: $\overline{K[E]} \overline{IC} \overline{XE}$,⁴² paleographically dated to the third century (due to the square sigma and epsilon). It is an invocation deeply carved inside a rectangular frame on the red plaster, just next to the white-cream plaster, so it may be about the donor. The epsilon of the first *nomen sacrum* is missing (the piece is broken there, but due to the small amount of space present it is clear that it is a *nomen sacrum* next to the other two). This inscription is in six pieces fitted together, but the inscription is clearly legible. It reads $\overline{K[E]} \overline{IC} \overline{XE} \text{ BOH}\Theta\text{I} \dots [?] \text{N KAI IZI}[?]$, and it likely had other lines and ended with \overline{AMHN} (“Amen”).⁴³ Written out in full, the first line would be $\overline{K(YPI)[E]} \overline{I(HCOY)C} \overline{X(PICT)E} \text{ BOH}\Theta\text{I}$, “Lord Jesus Christ, help!” This was a typical Christian prayer, and the verb $\beta\omicron\iota\eta\theta\iota$ is linked with the number 99—the number of sheep the Good Shepherd had after the one was lost.⁴⁴ “Jesus” is in the nominative rather than the vocative case (\overline{IY}), but Testa says it was probably because both “Jesus” and “God” were such popular names in the nominative case.⁴⁵ All three *nomina sacra* are contractions, the most common form of *nomina sacra*. Since this is probably a dedicatory inscription, and such inscriptions invoked help from a god (for the pagans) or God (for the Jews), clearly this Christian inscription is treating Jesus as God.

Number 44 has a contracted category one *nomen sacrum* and possibly a second one, but it is broken after the theta, so there is no way of knowing about the second one. It is small: 4.5 x 4.5 cm and 0.7 cm thick. It reads $\overline{XE} \Theta[?]$. The first word is missing the left side of the chi, but it has an overbar (even though the overbar extends some to the right of the word),

⁴¹Ibid., 52, 56, 61, 63, 68.

⁴²This article will follow the common convention using parentheses, (), to indicate supplied letters the *nomina sacra* omit and using brackets, [], to indicate missing letters: either no longer visible or being broken off of the surviving fragment. A question mark indicates undetermined missing letters of a word, and ellipses indicate undetermined missing words. Obviously letters supplied in brackets are guesses, but they often are very accurate educated guesses!

⁴³Testa, *Casa Di S. Pietro*, 68, 72–74.

⁴⁴P.E. Testa, *Il Simbolismo Dei Giudeo-Cristiani* (Gerusalemme: Tipografia Dei PP. Francescani, 1962), 396–99. Adding the Greek letters in $\beta\omicron\iota\eta\theta\iota$ equal to 99: $\beta = 2 + \omicron = 70 + \eta = 8 + \theta = 9 + \iota = 10$. Thus, the epsilon in the imperative $\beta\omicron\iota\eta\theta\epsilon\iota$ was dropped to fit the symbolism: $\beta\omicron\iota\eta\theta\iota$. Testa, *Casa Di S. Pietro*, 74.

⁴⁵Testa, *Casa Di S. Pietro*, 73, 75.

so it is most likely \overline{XE} , the contracted vocative form of Christ. On the next word the right side and top of the theta is broken off, so it is not possible to know the other letter(s) or if an overbar was originally present, but Testa ventures a plausible educated guess. It is most likely the contracted vocative form of God, $\overline{\Theta(E)[E]}$, because that matches \overline{XE} and is more common than the suspended form. Less likely is the suspended vocative, $\overline{\Theta(EE)}$ or $\overline{\ThetaE}$, or the suspended or contracted nominative form of God, $\overline{\Theta(EOC)}$, $\overline{\Theta[E](OC)}$, or $\overline{\Theta(EO)C}$. If this inscription does read “Christ God,” it is of great theological and epigraphic value,⁴⁶ similar to the mosaic inscription recently discovered at the Megiddo church.

Number 94 contains one definite category one contraction *nomen sacrum* with an overbar and one possible category three suspension *nomen sacrum*. It measures 9 x 6 x 1.3 cm, and it is five pieces which were glued together in situ. It reads $Y\Psi\text{ICT}[W] \overline{XO} \text{CWT}[HPI]$.⁴⁷ Written out in full, it says $Y\Psi\text{ICT}[W] \overline{X(PICT)O} \text{CWT}[HPI]$, “Most High Christ Savior.” It was common in ancient inscriptions to use $\upsilon\psi\iota\sigma\tau\omega$ for a god by pagans or for God by Jews, so it was natural for a Christian to use it for Jesus. The omicron in “Christ” is unfinished on the right side, and it is possible the person was wavering between whether to use an omicron or an omega. Testa says those two vowels were used interchangeably in inscriptions and symbols.⁴⁸ Due to fragmentation it is impossible to know if “Savior” were written in full or as a suspended *nomen sacrum* or if it had an overbar. However, since it followed a contracted *nomen sacrum* and CWT was definitely not a contracted *nomen sacrum*, it was probably written in full.⁴⁹

Number 90 has a clear contracted category one *nomen sacrum* and one word usually appearing as a *nomen sacrum* that is spelled out. This two-lined graffito is 6.5 x 3 cm and is less than 1 cm thick. It is on the white cream wall near a red border. The two words appear on two lines with inscribed lines above and below both rows of text, so it is impossible to know if an overbar were present for the *nomen sacrum*. It reads $KYPI[E] XE$, and written in full it is $KYPI[E] X(PICT)E$, “Lord Christ.”⁵⁰

Some graffiti contain words fully written that usually appear as *nomina sacra*. Here are two examples that are unusual because each

⁴⁶Ibid., 56, 59.

⁴⁷Note the capital omega (Ω) was often written as a large lower-case omega (ω).

⁴⁸Ibid., 78, 79. Thus, one finds \overline{XO} or $\overline{X\omega}$ rather than the more correct $\overline{X\Omega}$. Interestingly, it looks as if a lower-case omega were carved originally and an omicron carved on top of it. In his description Testa wrongly shows the second word as $X\rho\iota\sigma\tau(o)$ rather than $X(\rho\iota\sigma\tau)O$ or $X(PICT)O$ (78).

⁴⁹See Paap, *Nomina Sacra*, 96, 112, which lists no suspensions of $\sigma\omega\tau\eta\rho$, 12 contractions, and 30 occurrences of it written in full in first through fifth-century Greek papyri. He notes one inscription with the suspension $\sigma\rho$ for $\sigma\omega\tau\eta\rho\varsigma$.

⁵⁰Ibid., 68, 76.

contains a category one word, which may reflect an early date. Even though the left and right sides of number 88 are broken off, it reads [XPI]CTE ΕΛΕΗC[ON], “Christ, have mercy [on us],” so Χρίστε was clearly written out on this 3 x 4 cm graffito.⁵¹ Number 40 measures 4.5 x 4.5 cm and reads ΕΙΠΕΝ Ο ΘΕΟ[C] . . . ΝΙΚΗ ΤΗ ΓΥ[ΝΑΙΧΙ],⁵² “God said . . . victory to the woman.” The right side of the omicron in “God” is broken off, but most likely the entire word was written.⁵³

Some other inscriptions have nothing to do with *nomina sacra*, but they are interesting. For instance, #34 has WA—the alpha and omega (in reverse order). Number 36 has IWA[NNHC], “John,”⁵⁴ and #77 has [I] ΧΘΥC, the Greek word for “fish” used by Christians as an acrostic for the phrase “Jesus Christ God’s Son Savior.”⁵⁵

The graffiti at the House of St. Peter also contain some symbols and monograms.⁵⁶ Of the eighteen carved on the walls of the church, number 121 is noteworthy. It is 5.5 x 5.5 cm. It reads IHC T (or, less likely, IH C T). The “T” stands underneath IHC (or IH C) but it clearly is from the same hand and probably stands for the cross of Christ. So, written in full the *nomen sacrum* is either a contraction IH(COY)C T (“Jesus” + the cross), or it is two suspensions: IH(COYC) C(WTHP) (“Jesus Savior” + the cross). It is probably a contracted *nomen sacrum* since the eta is closer to the sigma than it is to the iota. There is no overbar over IHC, but since the piece is broken it is hard to be sure.⁵⁷ Interestingly, a Hebrew monogram $\tau\eta$ appears twice—both with the letters superimposed on each other (or connected to each other in a stylized manner) as a monogram, and one monogram above the other—to the left of the tau and underneath the iota of the first word.⁵⁸ To the left of both Hebrew monograms is an archaic, angled Hebrew tau. It is hard to know which inscription was written first, but Testa says the Hebrew one is an attempt to have Hebrew letters that looked like Greek letters mirror the IH of Jesus—the Greek eta (H) mistakenly written as a

⁵¹Ibid., 68, 71–72.

⁵²All three epsilons were written as lowercase. Ibid., 56.

⁵³Ibid., 56–57.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid., 63, 66.

⁵⁶A monogram is a combination of two or more letters, sometimes superimposed, to form a symbol.

⁵⁷Ibid., 163–65.

⁵⁸Testa, *Symbolismo dei Giudeo-Cristiani*, 378–79. This monogram looks like what Testa says is the most archaic monogram to express the word IH(COUC), “Jesus,” a graffito on an ossuary in the Dominus Flavit church in Jerusalem. See other similar examples on p. 379.

Hebrew he (ה) and the iota written as a yod, and it was written twice for good luck!⁵⁹

Number 114 is a 7 x 7 cm fragment with a combination of a monogram and a category one *nomen sacrum*. It reads Y KYP. The upsilon is a monogram with four applications: ὕ(ιός), “son,” to refer to Christ, ὕ(ιοθεσία), “adoption,” to refer to Christians, to indicate the two ways of light and darkness by the way the top of the upsilon points in two directions, and to represent “the cross of two horns,”⁶⁰ a typical stylized monogram cross that has the top and/or both horizontal ends split into two directions like a upsilon. The KYP is a suspended category one *nomen sacrum*. Written in full, it is KYP(IOC) (“Lord”).⁶¹

Number 127 is a 5 x 3.5 cm monogram of IHC (or, less likely, IH C—see #121 above) with no overbar: either a contracted *nomen sacrum*, IH(COY)C (“Jesus”), or it was two suspended *nomina sacra*, IH(COYC) C(WTHP) (“Jesus Savior”). The piece is broken on both the left side of the iota and the right side of the sigma, so it is possible that the name was written in full, or it may be a *nomen sacrum* or *nomina sacra* with an archaic tau following, as in monogram number 121. It does appear that a beginning of a letter starts next to the sigma which could be the crossbar of the tau.⁶²

Testa notes the following aspects of faith and belief the pilgrims reflected in their graffiti at the House of St. Peter in Capernaum: (1) the divinity of Jesus Christ, (2) faith in Christ’s redeeming work on the cross, (3) private prayer—especially asking Christ for help and rescue, and (4) respect for the Bible (since they reflect biblical truth).⁶³ Thus, they are an important ancient Christian witness.

Prayer Hall in Megiddo

While digging to prepare the ground for an expansion of the Megiddo high-security prison compound, workers unearthed some remains of the ancient Jewish village of Kefar ‘Othnay on the Megiddo police-station hill. It was located next to a Roman legion camp, from which this Legio region got its name (El Laijun). From 2003–2005 some 3,000 square meters (three dunams) were excavated, including a large residential building in area Q on the outskirts of Kefar ‘Othnay. Measuring twenty by thirty meters, this building contained four wings, twelve large rooms, other service rooms,

⁵⁹Testa, *Casa Di S. Pietro*, 164, 166.

⁶⁰Testa, *Symbolismo dei Giudeo-Cristiani*, 247–48. See many examples on p. 248.

⁶¹Testa, *Casa Di S. Pietro*, 154, 158.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 164, 169.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 187–89.

an outer courtyard and an inner courtyard. Part of the building was used as quarters for Roman army officers. The western wing contained what Tepper and Di Segni call a Christian prayer hall, consisting of an anteroom and a service room some five by ten meters in size.⁶⁴ It may date to ca. AD 230. Although there is debate about this early date, the first excavation report dates it so.⁶⁵ In addition to Tepper's early dating of the prayer hall, epigraphic expert Di Segni dates the mosaic to the first half of the third century on the words used and style of lettering.⁶⁶

The best preserved part of the complex is the mosaic floor in the Christian prayer hall. It was covered through the years by many broken pieces of plaster from the colorful frescos on the walls. The uniform size and shape of the mosaic tesserae indicate a single mosaicist did all of the work, even though the craftsmanship is not professional. Composed of ten shades of limestone tesserae, the mosaic floor consists of four panels that surround a podium, upon which the Lord's Supper table likely sat—the focal point of the room. The east and west panels contain geometric patterns—common in ancient pagan, Jewish, and Christian mosaics.⁶⁷

On the north side of the podium, the north mosaic panel includes a medallion containing two fish in it—one of the earliest symbols for Christianity, predating the cross symbol by 200 years. It also contains the Gaius inscription in Greek, the church dedicatory inscription. It measures 37 x 287 cm, with black letters 8–10 cm in height, a white background, and a black band surrounding the inscription. It lists the benefactor and the mosaicist. It contains no *nomina sacra* nor any words typically used as *nomina sacra*. Interestingly, it does contain a Greek chi above a rho: a common abbreviation for ἑκατοντάρχης, “centurion,” in the second and third centuries AD.⁶⁸

The southern mosaic panel contains two Greek inscriptions opposite each other, facing out. The inscription on the western side is the Akeptous inscription. It is a 67 x 80 cm rectangle with a black frame and black letters, which are 7.5–9.0 cm in height. The fourth line contains three *nomina*

⁶⁴Yotam Tepper, and Leah Di Segni, *Christian Prayer Hall*, 5, 10, 13, 24–26.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 50. This date is based on evidence from ceramics and coins. However, this is the preliminary report. Future reports will give additional archeological findings from subsequent digs at this site. See Vassilios Tzaferis, “To God Jesus Christ: Early Christian Prayer Hall Found in Megiddo Prison,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* (3–4/2007): 40. Yet, some scholars date it to the fourth or fifth century. Although they raise no convincing arguments, see the doubts from Edward Adams in “The Ancient Church at Megiddo: The Discovery and an Assessment of its Significance,” *The Expository Times* 120 (2008): 65–67 and Andrew Lawler, “First Churches of the Jesus Cult,” *Archaeology* (9–10, 2007): 49.

⁶⁶Tepper and Di Segni, *Christian Prayer Hall*, 34.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 24–26. See Rachel Hachlili, *Ancient Mosaic Pavements*, 8–11.

⁶⁸Tepper and Di Segni, *Christian Prayer Hall*, 26, 34–35.

sacra: Θ̄W̄ IȲ X̄W̄, which written in full is Θ̄(E)W̄ Ī(HCO)Ȳ X̄(PICT)W̄. There is a dot after Akeptous and a dot before and after each *nomen sacrum*. It reads: ΠΡΟΧΝΙΚΕΝ ΑΚΕΠΤΟΥΣ Η ΦΙΛΟΘΕΟΣ ΤΗΝ ΤΡΑΠΕΣΑΝ Θ̄W̄ IȲ X̄W̄ MNHMOCYNON,⁶⁹ “The god-loving Akeptous has offered the table to God Jesus Christ as a memorial.”⁷⁰ Tepper and Di Segni believe these three *nomina sacra* are the earliest extant epigraphic occurrences; however, some graffiti *nomina sacra* at Capernaum may be older.⁷¹

The dedication part of this inscription is similar to dedications in pagan temples. There is no parallel to the name Akeptous in this region, but it may be a feminized form of the common western Empire name *Acceptus*.⁷² The use of *nomina sacra* and the verb προσήνικεν (“he has offered”) are common to later, Byzantine mosaics.⁷³ However, several notable elements in this mosaic are different from Byzantine mosaics in this region, which may attest to its early, pre-Constantinian origin (thus, pre-Byzantine). First, μνημόσυνον (“memorial”) does not appear in other mosaic inscriptions (but it is used in Matt 26:14; Mark 14:9; and Acts 10:4). Second, φιλόθεος (“God loving”) is used in early Patristic writings, but it is not used in Byzantine inscriptions in this region.⁷⁴ Rather, φιλόχριστος (“Christ loving”) is the preferred word for these Byzantine mosaics (but not in early Patristic writings). Third, the phrase “God Jesus Christ” is unusual but not without scriptural precedent. Both Titus 2:13 and 2 Peter 1:1 have “God and Savior, Jesus Christ,” and the phrase is used by some Patristic writers.⁷⁵ Also, other Scriptures affirm the divinity of Christ, such as John 1:1, 14; 10:30. Pre-Constantinian Christian mosaics and mosaic inscriptions are rare, but how rare is the use of *nomina sacra* in them? At Megiddo it is 33 percent—of the three mosaic inscriptions found here, one

⁶⁹Typical for mosaic inscriptions, there were no spaces in between words, but this article supplies them in order to make the reading easier. Note: the uppercase zeta in τράπεζαν is written like an English uppercase S, although more angular. In lowercase accented form it reads: Προσήνικεν Ἀκεπτοῦς ἡ φιλόθεος τὴν τράπεζαν Θ(ε)ῶ Ἰ(ησο)ῦ Χ(ριστ)ῶ μνημόσυνον.

⁷⁰Tepper and Di Segni, *Christian Prayer Hall*, 36.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid., 41. The -ους endings are typical of just a small group of female names in Greek, such as Philous and Pallous.

⁷³Ibid., 36.

⁷⁴Hippolytus, *Haer.* 9.12.10.2; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 5.1.8.7.1; 7.1.4.1.1; 7.1.4.2.1; Origen, *Sel. Ps.* 12.1181.24, 28; Athanasius, *Apol. ad Constantium imperatorem* 1.21; 15.24.

⁷⁵Tepper and Di Segni, *Christian Prayer Hall*, 37, 41. Hippolytus, *Haer.* 9.6; Ignatius of Antioch, *The Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians* 7; 15; *The Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp* 8; *The Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans* 3; Tertullian, *Res.* 24; *Praescr.* 44; Ignatius, *Epistulae interpolatae et epistulae suppositiciae* 3.9.4.2; 6.6.6.6; Athanasius, *Apol. ad Constantium imperatorem* 3.25; 28.4; *Historia Arianorum* 53.2.2.

of them contains three of the four category one *nomina sacra*. This evidence affirms the use of *nomina sacra* in Christian mosaics in the early third century.⁷⁶ Will earlier instances be found? Only time will tell.

At the eastern end of the southern mosaic is the Women inscription. It is a 38–86 cm rectangle with a black frame and black letters, which are 7.0–7.5 cm in height. In the first and fourth lines are ligatures of letters. It contains no *nomina sacra* nor any words typically used as *nomina sacra*.⁷⁷

Domus Ecclesia in Dura-Europos

Dura-Europos is “the Pompeii of the Syrian desert.”⁷⁸ Located on the Euphrates River midway between Aleppo and Baghdad, Dura was never a major city—nor was Pompeii. However, since 1921 enough finely-preserved ruins in Dura have been excavated by Yale University that “Dura rivals Pompeii in the beautiful state of preservation of its ruins, and in the quantity, quality, variety, and state of preservation of the objects found in them. . . . Furthermore, Dura, like Pompeii, is a veritable museum of decorative wall-painting.”⁷⁹

There is little debate that the Dura-Europos house church dates to AD 230–40.⁸⁰ It was a typical private house in Dura: its mud brick and rubble walls covered with plaster. A flat roof covered the box-shaped rooms that surrounded the courtyard. The outside of the house looked like other houses in the area. It was the inside of the house that Christians slightly modified to be a *domus ecclesiae*.⁸¹ Inside there are twenty texts (graffiti and dipinti) on the wall plaster. Only one gives a date (corresponding to Oct. 232–Sept. 233). Five of them are partial or complete alphabets: four in Greek and one in Syriac. Five graffiti appear in room six—the baptistery—the most renovated room in the house when it was converted into public use, complete with an upper room built above it.⁸² Four of these baptistery graffiti (#16–19) were applied after the wall decorations on the plaster since they appear within the features of the decoration.⁸³ They date between AD 232–256, although likely in the 240s.

⁷⁶However, subsequent excavations may date this mosaic later, as stated above.

⁷⁷Tepper and Di Segni, *Christian Prayer Hall*, 41.

⁷⁸M. Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Art* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1938), 2.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*

⁸⁰Lawler, 47. Lawler notes this church is the “only undisputed early Christian worship site.” The final report posits the original private house was built ca. 232 and was converted into a Christian building in the mid 240s, thus serving as a *domus ecclesiae* for only ten to fifteen years prior to the Sassanian destruction of the Dura-Europos in 256 (34, 38–39).

⁸¹Kraeling, *The Christian Building*, 3.

⁸²*Ibid.*, 23, 25, 28, 95.

⁸³*Ibid.*, 28.

Two of the baptistery graffiti contain three clear examples of category one *nomina sacra*, with one suspension and two contractions, and all three containing the overbar. Number 17 is “on the south wall between the doorways, at the left of the niche. . . . A deep, coarse, graffito, length, 29 cm., height, 8 cm., letters, 1–2 cm.”⁸⁴ Hopkins says the niche to the right of the inscription would have contained holy oil, used to anoint the baptismal candidate in Syrian baptisms.⁸⁵ The inscription text contains the *nomen sacrum* $\overline{\text{XPIC}}$. It reads TON $\overline{\text{XPIC}}$ MNHCKECTE CICEON TON TAPIINON,⁸⁶ and the suspended *nomen sacrum* in full form is $\overline{\text{XPIC}}(\text{TON})$. One rendering is “Christ (with you). Remember Sisaeus the humble.” The accusative is an acclamation, and the “you” is understood. It was a typical practice of early Christians to refer to themselves as “humble.”⁸⁷ The abbreviation of $\text{X}\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\nu$ with an overbar is not the usual form of a *nomen sacrum* for “Christ.”

Number 18 is a graffito below and to the right of number 17. It sits above the scene of David and Goliath and below the scene of Paradise. The letters fit within a decorative green band that frames the David and Goliath scene.⁸⁸ Its length is about 1.3 m, and the letters are large, coarse, and square: 4–5 cm.⁸⁹ It contains the *nomina sacra*: $\overline{\text{XN}} \overline{\text{IN}}$. It reads TON $\overline{\text{XN}}$ $\overline{\text{IN}}$ YMEIN MN[H]CKEC[ΘE] [ΠΠ]OKΛΟΥ, “to our Christ

⁸⁴Ibid., 95. Avi-Yonah incorrectly said none of these three *nomina sacra* have the overbar, and he called them “individual freaks.” Michael Avi-Yonah, *Abbreviations in Greek Inscriptions*, Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine (Jerusalem: Government of Palestine, 1940), reprinted in Alan N. Oikonomides, *Abbreviations in Greek Inscriptions: Papyri Manuscripts and Early Printed Books* (Chicago: Ares, 1974), 27. However, his information came from a preliminary report. The final report (Kraeling, *The Christian Building*, 95) clearly reflects the overbar in each of the three *nomina sacra* at Dura-Europos. Unfortunately the full volume of the inscriptions at Dura-Europos (V:2) was planned but never printed—a sad but frequent occurrence with archeologists: eager and quick to dig, but slow to publish—sometimes going to their grave with unpublished findings. Also, the Dura-Europos *nomina sacra* are no longer lone “freaks” since the discovery of *nomina sacra* at Capernaum and Megiddo.

⁸⁵Clark Hopkins, *The Discovery of Dura-Europos* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 115–16. The candidate was anointed with oil before and after immersion.

⁸⁶It was common in Hellenistic Greek for a tau to replace a theta when following a sigma ($\mu\eta\iota\sigma\kappa\epsilon\theta\epsilon$), and Dura-Europos contains several other examples of this. Kraeling, *The Christian Building*, 96.

⁸⁷Ibid. See A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 115, where he cites $\tau\alpha\pi\epsilon\iota\nu\acute{o}\varsigma$ as an example of a common koine Greek word that Christians embraced and gave distinctive meaning.

⁸⁸Kraeling, *The Christian Building*, 96, plate XXXIII; Hopkins, *The Discovery*, 115.

⁸⁹Hopkins, *The Discovery*, 115; Kraeling, *The Christian Building*, 96. Only the most upper part of the theta is visible.

Jesus. Remember Proklus.” Proclus may have been the benefactor.⁹⁰ Or, it could be “Remind Christ of Proclus among yourselves,” a call to specific intercessory prayer.⁹¹

Three words from categories one and three *nomina sacra* appear in two of the baptistery graffiti, but they are all written in their full form rather than as *nomina sacra*. Number 15 has letters 1.5 cm and is “on the west jamb of the doorway leading from the Courtyard.”⁹² It reads ΕΙC ΘΕΟC ΕΝ ΟΡΑΝΩ (“to God in heaven”), which is a Christianized version of a typical pagan greeting. It uses θεός (“God”), a word almost always appearing as a *nomen sacrum*, and ὀρανῶ (“heaven”), a word sometimes appearing as one.⁹³ Number 19 has 1 cm, deeply-cut letters, is 5.5 cm wide, and is located between the doorways of the south wall. It is cut on the raised right forearm of David as he is using his sling in the fresco scene. It reads ΔΑΟΥΙΑ (“David,” spelled Δαουίδ, which was a common spelling along with Δαουείδ or Δαβίδ).⁹⁴ This name is from the third category of *nomina sacra*.

Conclusion

The *nomina sacra* count⁹⁵ in this study is as follows: of Robert’s list of 15 *nomina sacra*, three appear only in full words (savior, heaven, and David), one appears only as a *nomen sacrum* (Jesus), and three appear both ways (Christ, Lord, and God).⁹⁶ There are 23 uses of these 7 words: 7 appear in full and 16 appear as *nomina sacra*. The 16 *nomina sacra* include only the category one words: Jesus (5), Christ (7), lord (2), and God (2). Thus, all four category one *nomina sacra* appear, and “Jesus” and “Christ” account for 75 percent of the *nomina sacra*. There are 2 suspension and 14 contraction *nomina sacra*. Thus, the words used seem to reflect an early period of *nomina sacra* use, and the contracted form preference seems to

⁹⁰Hopkins translates it “Christ Jesus is yours: remember Proclus.” He connects the saying with Luke 17:20–21, where Jesus said the kingdom of God is within reach of all who believe in him (117).

⁹¹A.D. Nock and C. Hopkins, “Additional Note,” in *Christian Church at Dura-Europos*, reprinted from *Preliminary Report of Fifth Season of Work October 1931–March 1932* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), 48.

⁹²Kraeling, *The Christian Building*, 95.

⁹³Ibid. The missing upsilon (ὀρανῶ instead of οὐρανῶ) was common in late Greek.

⁹⁴Ibid., 97, plate XLI.

⁹⁵In instances where the reading is unclear, the count includes the most likely possibility as reflected in this study.

⁹⁶The monogram letters are not counted in this study. Thus, the one *nomen sacrum* in #121 and #114 are counted, but the four monograms in #121 and one monogram in #114 are not counted.

reflect a later period when contraction became a fixed form. However, non-scriptural *nomina sacra* may have developed slightly differently than its use in Scripture.

What are common characteristics of this pre-Constantinian Christian mosaic inscription and graffiti, and what do these examples show about the use of *nomina sacra*? First, they help establish the important visual aspect of *nomina sacra*.⁹⁷ Certainly they had greater visual impact and more public accessibility than *nomina sacra* in Scripture texts. Of course, the number of people who saw *nomina sacra* varied according to the medium on which the words appeared. For example, the readership of a typical personal letter was very limited.⁹⁸ Even a Scripture text read aloud in a church would have just one reader and a number of hearers, who likely would not even be aware of each *nomen sacrum* since the reader would no doubt orally substitute the regular word for each *nomen sacrum* in the text. Of the extant uses of *nomina sacra*, mosaic inscriptions and graffiti instantly had the most visibility and readership in a *domus ecclesiae*. Of course, there are no extant first or second-century examples, and there is no reason to think the earliest house churches had Christian mosaic inscriptions for a while. Yet, when they did appear, they had the most visibility. Thus, this study shows *nomina sacra* had more visibility than may be typically understood.

For scholars focusing solely on the biblical texts, it is commonly proposed that scribes learned about *nomina sacra* from scribal schools, such as at Antioch. However, if mosaic inscriptions and/or graffiti were common in house churches in the early *second* century, it could be that the use of *nomina sacra* in this medium is what spread the knowledge and use of *nomina sacra* more than any scribal school. Certainly not every copier of Scripture was a scribe that went to a scribal school.

Second, this study shows *nomina sacra* had more writers than is typically proposed. Each medium bearing *nomina sacra* potentially had different writers: scribes or literate Christians for the biblical texts,

⁹⁷Hurtado rightly mentions the importance of the visual nature of *nomina sacra* in L. Hurtado, "The Earliest Evidence of an Emerging Christian Material and Visual Culture: The Codex, the *Nomina Sacra* and the Staurogram," in *Text and Artifact in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity: Essays in Honour of Peter Richardson*, ed. Stephen G. Wilson and Michel Desjardins (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 277.

⁹⁸Surely studying ancient papyri letters is an indiscreet task since they were originally intended to be private correspondence! Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 2. However, NT personal letters had an original intention of being read aloud to the church (1–2 Tim, Titus, Phlm). Even then, the number of people who actually read the letters may have been limited by literacy or accessibility.

mosaicists⁹⁹—likely belonging to a guild—for the mosaic inscriptions, artists for the frescoes, religious pilgrims for graffiti, such as at Megiddo, and literate Christians for the papyrus letters, ostraca, ossuaries, and general graffiti. Although one can only guess about a detailed description of any group except for the scribes, it is significant that such diverse groups used *nomina sacra*. Of course, there was likely some overlap between the groups, such as a scribe or artisan writing a personal letter.

Third, the use of *nomina sacra* in mosaics and graffiti is an important non-scriptural use. The greatest number of extant examples of *nomina sacra* is in OT and NT texts, but other media deserve study. Mosaics and graffiti were not Scripture, and they rarely quoted Scripture. Along with other non-scriptural uses, such as on lamps, ostraca, ossuaries, and personal letters, these examples show the widespread use of *nomina sacra* outside of writing Scripture. So, it was not a practice limited only to the writing of Scripture—it was pervasive throughout everyday life (see also the next two points as proof).

Fourth, these are original writings, not copies (as opposed to extant biblical manuscripts, which always are all *copies*). Fifth, these were occasional writings (unlike copying Scripture),¹⁰⁰ varying between being carefully planned (mosaic inscriptions and graffiti/dipinti used as picture captions or dedicatory inscriptions) and ad hoc (pilgrim or general graffiti).

Sixth, they often followed convention in form and style, such as word usage, phraseology, color, letter shape, and the use of a border for a dedicatory inscription. Even ad hoc graffiti writers often followed convention, such as using common phrases and monograms. Thus, similar to people who copied Scripture, mosaic and graffiti writers were clearly influenced by other writings on these media.

Seventh, graffiti writers sometimes used *nomina sacra* in monograms and symbols—certainly showing more variety in how *nomina sacra* appear than in Scripture texts. However, since this usage employed no overbar, used letters as pictograms (i.e., a superimposed chi rho so the rho looks

⁹⁹Little is known about ancient mosaicists. Writers—usually of the upper class—virtually ignored them. They were artisans lumped in with all other artisans, and the upper class looked at people who made a living from their hands as inferiors. Regardless of how skilled they were, they were still doing menial labor, according to the upper class. A mosaicist could work out of a small shop consisting of just himself and his son or an apprentice. Or, he could be part of a larger shop with a number of craftsmen. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World*, 269, 275.

¹⁰⁰Certainly the original writing of each letter and book in the Scripture was occasional, but the copying of them was not—it was simply the copying of a writing originally penned for a specific situation. Of course, each copy did have a specific purpose (for a certain church to have that copy).

like Christ on a cross), often merged letters into each other or used stylized letters, they are in a different category than *nomina sacra*.

So, the use of *nomina sacra* in a pre-Constantinian Christian mosaic and graffiti helps to show the use of *nomina sacra* at least by the third century AD may have been common among literate Christians—not just Christian scribes. Trained mosaicists used them, pilgrims etched them as graffiti in the House of St. Peter in Capernaum, and either clergy or members of the congregation etched them on the wall of the Dura-Europos *domus ecclesiae*. Although one cannot prove that common people made these mosaics or carvings, there is no doubt that common people saw them as they worshipped in these *domus ecclesiae*. Even an illiterate person could see the unusual feature of the overbar with the few letters of *nomina sacra*.

The graffiti at the House of St. Peter in Capernaum and the *domus ecclesia* at Dura-Europos give important epigraphic evidence of *nomina sacra* that is contemporary to the proposed AD 230 date for the mosaic at the Megiddo prayer hall. Although they do not use the exact phrase “God Jesus Christ” as at Megiddo, graffito #44 at Capernaum may say “Christ God,” #94 says “Most High Christ Savior,” #89 treats Jesus as God, and all of these graffiti use some *nomina sacra*.

Mosaic inscriptions shed light on some reasons that were clearly *not* possibilities as to the use of *nomina sacra*. First, it was not to save time. Putting a mosaic line (overbar) above the *nomen sacrum* likely took the same amount of time as completing the word. Second, it was not to save space. Granted, there was limited space on a mosaic inscription and even more limited space on lamps, coins, medals, medallions, and ostraca. It was common to abbreviate long words on these mosaics, often signified by an angled sigma after the abbreviated word (like a period is used in modern English abbreviations); however, the examples above show the *nomina sacra* were usually contractions rather than abbreviations, and there were frequently words *not* abbreviated that were longer than the *nomina sacra* words.

To date the evidence shows the use of *nomina sacra* started with the copying of Scripture for several reasons: (1) it has the earliest extant evidence: second-century papyri,¹⁰¹ (2) there is more variety in the extant words used as *nomina sacra* in Scripture texts, although it makes sense that a mosaic text (typically dedicatory) and graffiti (often: “Lord, remember _____”) would focus on a few key words (Jesus, Lord, and God),¹⁰² and (3) it fits with the best theories of the origin of *nomina sacra*. It appears that

¹⁰¹Paap, *Nomina Sacra*, 6–7.

¹⁰²See the statistics at the first of the conclusion above.

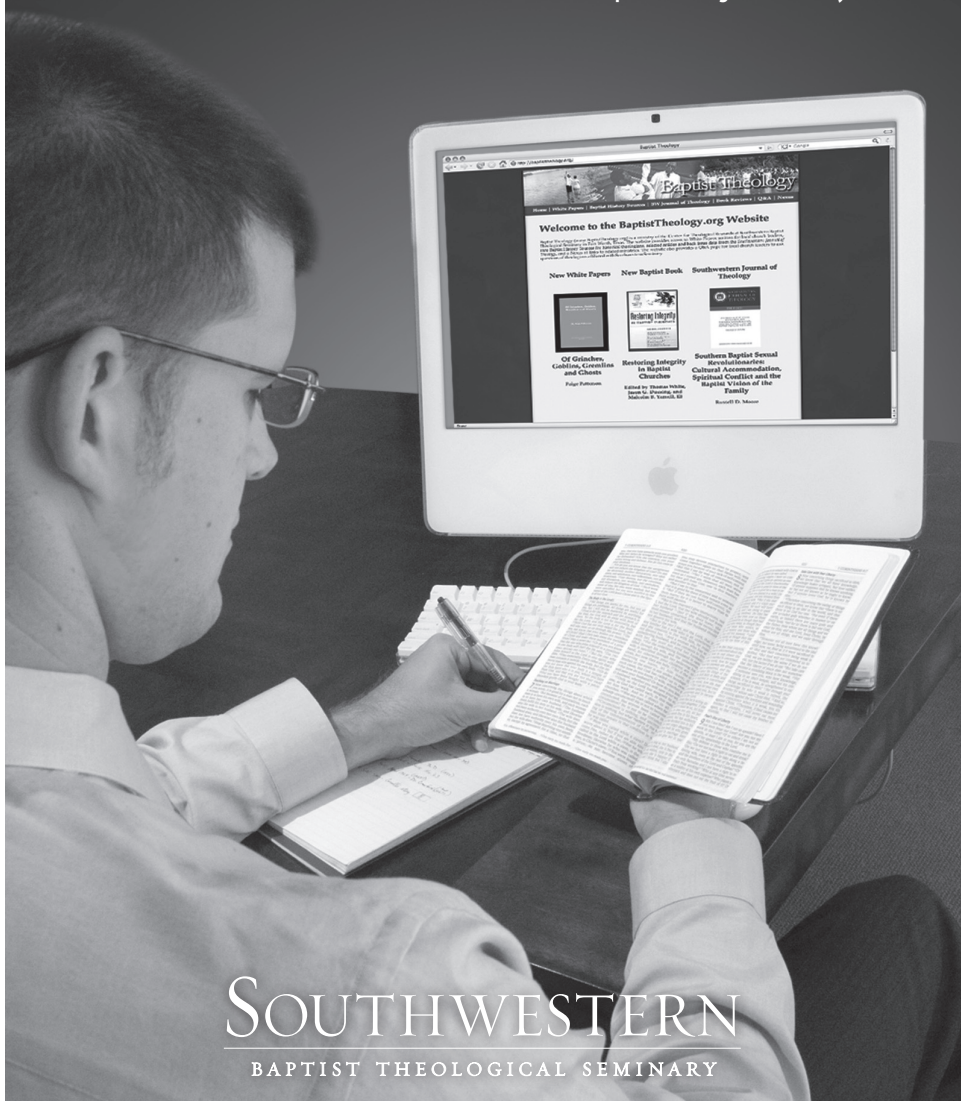
nomina sacra were used to show reverence for words related to salvation—to show reverence for both God and Jesus, through whom salvation is offered. This reverence extended to words relating to Jesus’ office and atonement. The high frequency of Ἰησοῦς and Χριστός as *nomina sacra* on mosaics and graffiti fit the theory that says the practice of *nomina sacra* started with these words and then spread to related words.¹⁰³ They were special forms for sacred words used by a variety of literate Christians.

¹⁰³For reasons positing that ἸΗ (Ἰησοῦς) was the first *nomen sacrum*, see Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 35–48; Hurtado, “The Origin,” 665–73.

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Appraising Recent New Testament Studies¹

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Attention to print media over the past decade, especially the popular, secular variety such as *Newsweek* or *Atlantic*, might lead one to think that the most significant and noteworthy developments in the field of New Testament studies within the past fifty years or so are the famous (or infamous) Jesus Seminar or the writings of Bart Ehrman. Nothing could be further from the truth. Ehrman's work is no more than an assembly line of polemics against orthodoxy. The Jesus Seminar rarely registers on the radar screen of NT interpreters, and never would have if not for media and the aggressive popular level publishing by certain members within the Seminar. Apart from the highly unlikely success of its attempt to change the canon of the NT, it never really had the prospects of changing the way the NT is read; it only carried certain ideas to their logical ends. There are, though, fascinating, frustrating, and defining developments within the field today.

Any discussion about developments within Biblical Studies must begin, I think, by acknowledging that the way we read in general has changed profoundly over the last several decades. NT interpretation has not been immune to those changes. With Bultmann's bold and correct assertion that presuppositionless exegesis is impossible,² and the equally bold but misguided postmodern assertion that all "truth" is communally constructed, we have completed the journey from the early modern assumption that meaning lies with the author, to the later modern assumption that it lies with the text, to the postmodern assumption that it lies with the reader. An adoption of the latter perspective, closely allied with a hermeneutic of suspicion, has led to the development of various manifestations of special

¹This essay was prompted by an invitation from Dick Lord to speak to the Arlington Ministerial Alliance at the First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas, on March 1, 2005. I present the revised material here with much appreciation for the initial invitation and attentive interaction.

²R. Bultmann, "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?" *Encounter* 21 (1960): 194–200.

interest readings of the NT, everything from the original Latin American liberation theology readings, through various feminist and gender sensitive readings, to anti anti-Semitic readings, and all manner of readings in between.

For purposes of this brief overview I wish to call attention to four specific areas of NT interpretation: one which is a present preoccupation, one which has already become a sweeping and transformative influence, one which is, at least to me, a fascinating restatement of an old assumption, and finally one which has the potential to significantly alter the way the NT is read by scholars.

A Present Preoccupation

Historical critical methods, each one once the rage, have yielded somewhat to rhetorical and social scientific methods. The ebb and flow of methodological and interpretive fancies continues unabated. However, the latest interpretive preoccupation is with anti-Imperial readings. Within the past decade, doctoral dissertations, scholarly monographs, and popular works alike have focused sharply on demonstrating the subversive nature of the NT writings. Everywhere one looks within the academy, anti-Imperial interpretations are the current rage.

Perhaps the primary scholarly impetus for this development was given by Richard Horsley with his publication of *Paul and Empire*.³ Horsley has made political readings of the NT almost a cottage industry. Some observers suggest that the approach of political interpretations were given further impetus by various world events, capped off by the imperial actions of the United States. Questions have arisen as to how the NT portrays the Roman Empire and its imperial cult. Everything from the Lord's prayer in Matthew 6 to the confession in 1 Timothy 6 to the mother of all anti-Imperial texts, Revelation, is being read in an effort to answer these questions, and then to analyze the resulting theology. Why was Jesus crucified? A current popular answer is because of his political opposition to Roman rule. Why did Jesus claim to bring the "kingdom of God"? Because, according to John Crossan and Jonathan Reed, by taking over Roman terminology Jesus could more successfully subvert the empire and its oppressive cult.⁴ Crossan and Reed seem completely oblivious to the more prominent Old Testament background of kingdom language and concepts.

³R. Horsley, *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997).

⁴J. Crossan and J. Reed, *In Search of Paul: How Jesus' Apostle Opposed Rome's Empire With God's Kingdom* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2005).

A recent treatment of Philippians 2:5–11 is a good example of anti-Imperial preoccupations. Erik Heen has argued that the expression Ἰσοθεῶν arises in direct response to the imperial cult within Philippi, and thus 2:6–11 is indeed a case of an anti-Imperial confession.⁵ The comparison between two figures in vv. 6–7 is not between Adam and Christ, but between Jesus and the emperor. According to Heen, reading the text in this manner undermines a traditional sense of preexistence.

Tom Wright suggests a significantly more nuanced anti-Imperial reading of this text.⁶ He primarily focuses on Philippians 3, which is based squarely, says Wright, on the Christological confession in 2:5–11. Paul, in a manner consistent with his other epistles, most notably Romans, is juxtaposing the empire of Caesar with that of Jesus, the parody with the reality. Wright, as opposed to Heen, reads the text in an imperially subversive manner without claiming that this undermines the classical interpretation. To the contrary, Wright gives every reason to conclude that the counter-Imperial reading works precisely because of the classical theology. The letter is counter-Imperial because Caesar's empire is subject to Jesus, and that is because Jesus is the truly divine one.

Scholars are leaving few stones unturned in the attempt to identify anti-Imperial readings of the NT. Many of the new political readings of the NT are coming from non-NT scholars.⁷

A New Paradigm from Old Evidence

Then there are those developments that actually represent complete paradigm shifts for reading the NT. Ed Sanders's work on Paul and the Judaism to which he was responding did just that.⁸ Sanders's work, published in 1977, ushered in what has come to be known as the "New Perspec-

⁵E. Heen, "Phil 2:6–11 and Resistance to Local Timocratic Rule: Isa theō and the Cult of the Emperor in the East," in *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order*, ed. R. A. Horsley (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2004), 139–40.

⁶N.T. Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire," in *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation; Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 160–83. Regarding one recent study related to the imperial cult, Wilhelm Pratscher assessed the author's conclusion saying "This sounds sensible, but we must not forget that this is only a theory, as there is no evidence." (Wilhelm Pratscher, review of *Galatians and the Imperial Cult: A Critical Analysis of the First-Century Social Context of Paul's Letter*, by Justin K. Hardin, *Review of Biblical Literature* (April 2009), http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/6651_7209.pdf (accessed 30 June 2009). Oh the beauty of common sense!

⁷For example, J. Rieger, *Christ and Empire: From Paul to Postcolonial Times* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007).

⁸E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

tive on Paul.” There were predecessors to Sanders’s work who were arguing very similar things, at least on one side of the equation, most notably Krister Stendahl’s “The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West,” a 1961 address to the American Psychological Association in which he argued that the Reformation, following Augustine, had misread Paul and wrongly interpreted him to be concerned with personal salvation or conversion.⁹ However, neither Stendahl nor any of the other precursors approached a new reading of Paul from a new reading of Second Temple Judaism. Sanders proposed just exactly that, a new reading of Paul on the basis of a scholarly reassessment of Second Temple Judaism. His work has become enormously influential, setting in motion a complete rethinking of how to read Paul’s letters and thus a complete rethinking of Paul’s theology.

It goes basically something like this. Second Temple Judaism was not a religion of works-based salvation. They were not legalists. Instead, they were the recipients of God’s gracious covenantal salvation on the basis of election; they were born into salvation. The Torah was given to keep them within the framework of the covenant. The moniker “covenantal nomism” was coined as a way to summarize the view. Sanders distinguished between getting in and staying in, and Torah keeping was for the latter. Second Temple Judaism, however, turned the law into boundary markers of exclusion. It became for them their means of keeping people out, rather than keeping themselves in. Paul is not arguing in his letters against legalism, as traditionally understood, but against misguided exclusion. Romans 1–3, for example, is no longer read as Paul’s concern for universal and individual human sinfulness, but as Paul’s concern for Jew-Gentile unity within the church.

Sanders’s rereading of Second Temple Judaism and of Paul has come under severe criticism, especially, though not exclusively, from Reformed interpreters, as one might imagine. There remains much attention being devoted to this and related issues within the field today. It should be stated that certain influential proponents of a New Perspective on Paul are not proponents of the Sanders perspective, but of some variation of it, most notably James Dunn and N.T. Wright. Thus, perhaps we should more properly speak of New Perspectives on Paul.

Restating Old Assumptions

The assumption that each Gospel was written to one localized community is so deeply rooted in the NT guild that it has been largely unques-

⁹Stendahl’s views were later published in his *Paul among Jews and Gentiles, and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976).

tioned throughout the modern period. Modern scholarly focus regarding the Gospels has been devoted largely to reconstructing the character of those four original local audiences, and then reading the Gospel(s) on the basis of that reconstructed local audience. Richard Bauckham has recently argued that it is high time to reexamine this assumption. To be sure, he is not the first to question it. For example, in his work on Luke-Acts, Howard Marshall noted that Luke seemed to be conscious of writing “*sacred history*.”¹⁰ But Marshall did not make this point or its implications central to his assessment of Luke-Acts, especially with respect to Luke’s audience. Bauckham, however, has challenged the assumption of the academy head-on. In a forty page essay Bauckham has argued that the Gospel writers worked with the intent of speaking to the widest possible audience, namely a universal audience and a Gospel intended for general circulation. Bauckham presents six crucial evidences to support his contention,¹¹ and he concludes with a few hermeneutical observations, two of which merit quoting. First,

the chances of being able to deduce from an author’s work what the influences on the author were, if we have only the work to inform us, are minimal. Hence the enterprise of reconstructing an evangelist’s community is, for a series of cogent reasons, doomed to failure. . . . Thus any reader who finds the argument of this chapter convincing should cease using the terms Matthean community, Markan community, Lukan community, and Johannine community. They no longer have a useful meaning.¹²

Second, “the argument does not represent the Gospels as autonomous literary works floating free of any historical context. The Gospels have a historical context, but that context is not the evangelist’s community. It is the early Christian movement in the late first century.”¹³

Bauckham has thrown down the gauntlet for the NT guild. If accepted, his perspective would render a great deal of modern NT work as virtually useless, the equivalent of the sand castle between the waves. This cannot be; and thus, as one would expect, his thesis has been severely challenged on a couple of fronts.¹⁴ I would hope, though I am hardly optimis-

¹⁰I. Howard Marshall, *Acts*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 18 (emphasis original).

¹¹Richard Bauckham, *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), see especially 30–43.

¹²*Ibid.*, 45.

¹³*Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁴See in particular Margaret M. Mitchell, “Patristic Counter-Evidence to the Claim

tic, that Bauckham's realism would replace the fantasies within the guild.¹⁵ It appears, though, that the challenges have satisfied the natives, and they proceed as though there is no need to reconsider their approaches. Bauckham's thesis remains an area of study with possibilities for further development.

If NT scholarship were to move in the direction of Bauckham's thesis, we would find far more harmony between our reading of the NT today and the way in which it was read in the early church (in spite of some of the challenges to the contrary). The fathers and their confessional formulations indicate an approach to the Gospels more along the lines Bauckham has argued than the modernist assumptions. Mention of the early church brings us to our fourth development within NT studies today.

Rereading the New Testament: Theological Interpretation

Perhaps the most fascinating and significant development is a renewed interest in and commitment to theological interpretation of the NT. This, of course, is in contrast to the deeply rooted modern commitments to the historical critical method. While the discipline of NT studies has moved beyond a strictly historical critical approach, virtually all other approaches rest squarely on various assumptions of such a method. The assumption of Gospel "communities" as discussed above is an apt example. It should be noted that theological interpretation—at least in the more restrained sense—is very compatible with a nuanced historical approach.

There are several factors contributing to the theological reading of the NT. First, there is a growing interest in formulating biblical theology. Brevard Childs can be credited with providing significant impetus to a renewed interest in biblical theology.¹⁶ He has, in the minds of many, argued persuasively that biblical theology is both possible (at least with respect to identifying common threads and points of unity throughout the canon) and needed (after all, the church professes a particular closed canon of

that "The Gospels Were Written for All Christians," *New Testament Studies* 51 (2005): 36–79.

¹⁵No doubt Bauckham's argument could be further nuanced and clarified at certain points, especially in light of some of the criticisms. His basic thesis, however, is historically and hermeneutically quite solid. For recent and realistic reassessments of the methods of NT scholarship by two very involved participants see Markus Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word: Refocusing New Testament Study* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), and Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The Historical Christ and the Theological Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009). Also, in his later works Bauckham has taken his criticism of the form critical underpinnings of Gospel interpretations to a new level; see especially his *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

¹⁶B.S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).

Scripture, whether one includes the Apocrypha or not). Charles Scobie, Cowan Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies at Mount Allison University in Canada, has published an important 927-page attempt to sketch the history of biblical theology as a discipline and his understanding of how to construct biblical theology.¹⁷ Scobie's work has received some significant attention, but its influence remains to be seen.

One of the most fruitful areas of study over the past fifty years has been the NT use of the OT. This area is intertwined with the possibility and shape of biblical theology. If it can be demonstrated that the NT writers were reading the (OT) Scriptures theologically, then there is every reason to think they expected their followers to read the Scriptures (OT and subsequently the NT) in a similar manner. C.H. Dodd demonstrated the presence of a central *kerygma* within much of the NT.¹⁸ Since Dodd's day the focus and discussion on this area of study has built into a crescendo resulting in the recent one-volume commentary on the NT use of the OT.¹⁹

Joel Green and Max Turner, both NT scholars, are editing a new series of NT commentaries from Eerdmans.²⁰ The Two Horizons series is intended to bridge the alleged gap between biblical studies and systematic theology. Similarly, Brazos Press has commissioned a new commentary series written entirely by non-biblical scholars. They will be penned instead by specialists in other fields, most notably systematic and historical theology.

Related to all of this is a renewed attempt to articulate a NT theology. Recently we have seen a substantial account of NT theology from Howard Marshall, Frank Thielman, Frank Matera, and Thomas Schreiner, and of course we now have the first three volumes of N.T. Wright's proposed multi-volume NT theology. Philip Esler has published his account of prolegomena for NT theology, advocating certain aspects of what is no less theological interpretation. Greg Beale is due to publish his contributions in this area soon. Each of these works approaches the subject matter with a commitment to a unifying theological core within the NT, which illuminates, in one way or another, the entire NT.

All of the above, for the most part, looks behind the NT. Perhaps the most controversial aspect of theological interpretation is its forward movement. In other words, it reads the NT in light of later theological formu-

¹⁷C.H.H. Scobie, *The Ways of Our God: An Approach to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

¹⁸C.H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Substructure of New Testament Theology* (London: Scribner, 1953).

¹⁹G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007).

²⁰C. Bartholomew and J.G. McConville are editing the parallel series on the OT.

lations. Daniel Treier has provided a helpful introduction to the practice and agenda of theological interpretation. He refers to the “new movement” which “seeks to reverse the dominance of historical criticism over churchly reading of the Bible and to redefine the role of hermeneutics in theology.”²¹ Particularly noteworthy here is the reality that canon and creed inevitably play an indispensable role in theological interpretation, for good or ill, conscious or unconscious. The breadth of this “movement” is indicated by the recent dictionary to facilitate it.²²

Markus Bockmuehl has called for a closer and more comprehensive evaluation of the reception history of the NT texts, which inescapably confronts us with theological readings of Scripture.²³ Our reading of the NT ought to consider the judgment of the first couple of generations who received and evaluated the NT writings. Without this our readings are surely impoverished. Going hand in hand with this, a renewed interest in and reading of the church fathers is contributing to theological exegesis. New Testament scholars are listening once again to the voices of the earliest centuries of the church. The confessions and creeds of those early centuries are seen as articulations of both the theological structures and sum of the NT writings. This rediscovery of the fathers and their way of reading the NT brings a renewed commitment to canonical, theological, and ecclesial interpretation(s).

This then brings us full circle. At the beginning of my comments I spoke of the hermeneutical developments which characterized early modernity, later modernity, and postmodernity. The attempt to interpret the NT via theological exegesis completes the journey back to a premodern, theological reading of the Bible informed by the nature of Scripture, a renewed understanding and commitment to the *regula fidei*, and a canonical interpretation, thus giving us a fresh sense of what it means to be the people of God, hearing anew the Word of God.

Conclusion

It generally takes at least a generation, and often longer, for a new development to get enough traction to affect a broad range of interpreters and then begin showing up in subsequent works. The New Perspective on Paul is already deeply entrenched in one form or another and will

²¹D.J. Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008).

²²K.J. Vanhoozer, ed., *Dictionary for the Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005).

²³Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word*. See also M. Bockmuehl and A.J. Torrance, eds., *Scripture's Doctrine and Theology's Bible: How the New Testament Shapes Christian Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008).

likely be a development with significant pedigree. The abandonment of the search for the historical audiences or communities of the Gospels is likely too much to ask of main stream scholarship. Evangelicals and lay readers already approach the Gospels with little concern for such a search, so Bauckham's thesis is not so much of a development as a sophisticated foundation for an approach already widely in place. Unfortunately it will continue to be ignored by most of main-stream scholarship. It is too early to tell if the current trend of anti-Imperial readings of the NT will have much of a legacy. I doubt so, for such readings are under the spell of the current secular political climate, which the readings themselves may not outlast. Theological reading of the NT is gaining significant traction and looks to be a major development with staying power. It, too, is already widely practiced.

I offer here a few parting thoughts about the study of the NT. First, regardless of what we make of the details, forget not that every one of the NT writings is in some way attempting to address the fundamental issues of life. The intentions of the NT authors were not given over to trivial pursuits, but quite to the contrary. They were attempting to speak to the matters which give life purpose, coherence, direction, wisdom, etc. Second, these writings have been embraced with profound gravity and seriousness for two millennia now. The subject matter within these writings and the tradition of reception throughout the ages make it clear that a cavalier and presumptuous attitude toward them must surely be the result of arrogance, foolishness, blindness, deception, or some combination thereof. The nature of the NT writings and the tradition of their reception indicate that they should be considered with soberness and openness. Third, if even only the broad contours of the NT, or the inescapable central points, if you prefer, are correct, then the personal accountability to respond appropriately is a profound reality with which we must all deal. It truly is a matter of life and death, a matter of eternal consequence. Let the reader be warned, the subject at hand has a transforming claim upon your life and destiny from which you can never escape.



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Review Essays

A Review Essay of *A Theology for the Church*. Edited by Daniel L. Akin, with David P. Nelson and Peter R. Schemm, Jr. (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2007). 979 pages. Hardcover, \$49.99.

The contributors to *A Theology for the Church* share a common background, hold a common purpose, and follow a similar structure in their essays. Yet, in spite of the unity of source, purpose, and structure, there is an incredible diversity evident in the text. First, as to background, each of the authors are committed Southern Baptists and highly educated. Amongst them are research doctoral degrees from Cambridge University, Harvard University, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Oxford University, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and the University of Texas at Arlington. Moreover, many of the authors have not only spent considerable time in the academy, but also in leading local churches. Second, as to purpose, the editors set the goal before each writer to construct a theology intended for the church. The writers were enlisted because of their demonstrated passion for contending for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. They each set out to defend theological truth against error, indicating how “doctrine and life” or “faith and practice” are unified within the church (vii). Third, as to structure, the authors were assigned responsibility to consider four major questions. These questions follow a highly significant order, beginning explicitly with Scripture and proceeding through history and system to practice:

1. What does the Bible say?
2. What has the church believed?
3. How does it all fit together?
4. What is the significance of the doctrine for the church today?

In the following review essay, an equally capable and committed group of Southern Baptist theologians, each of whom teaches theology in one of the schools of the Southern Baptist Convention, provide a critique of *A Theology for the Church*, considering each chapter in turn. Our hope in publishing such an extended review essay is to demonstrate the communal nature of theology that exists within the believers’ church tradition of the

Southern Baptist Convention. The reviewers do not always agree with the authors on every particular conclusion, and probably would have written similar chapters with varying degrees of diversity. However, there is still a sense of ecclesial and theological community in what the authors originally brought together by Daniel L. Akin and David Dockery have produced, a sense of community in which the reviewers share and which the reviewers wish to supplement. The following reviews are organized according to the original eight sections and 14 chapters.

Section 1, The Doctrine of Revelation

Chapter 1, “Prolegomena: Introduction to the Task of Theology,” by Gregory Alan Thornbury (Reviewed by Malcolm B. Yarnell III)

Gregory Alan Thornbury is Dean of the School of Christian Studies at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, and a prolific author in the fields of philosophical theology and cultural engagement. The introductory chapter demonstrates the attractive mind and compelling style of this college professor. What strikes the reader immediately, however, is that Thornbury departed from the order submitted to the writers by adding a section. This intrusion, an investigation of the concept of truth, comes first and is developed in such a way as to give the prolegomena a fundamentally Reformed character. Where the other chapters begin with a short introduction followed by an in-depth treatment of relevant Scripture passages, Thornbury begins with a philosophical foundation that treats Scripture secondarily and minimally, although affirmatively. Working through the ancient, modern, and post-modern debates, he defines truth as “that which corresponds to reality; it is the opposite of falsehood,” and “truth comes from God” (5).

In the biblical section, Thornbury discusses various passages under the categories of the existence of God and the human mind, the Bible’s radical claim that God is the source of all truth and knowledge, the nature of the created order making knowledge possible, and the Christian’s intellectual challenge to love God with the whole mind. In the historical section, the author opines, “philosophical systems and ground rules have always been deeply embedded” in theology (21). However, he then relates that in the early church there was a struggle over philosophical theology, with Tertullian arguing against and Origen for incorporation. A separate section is devoted to Augustine and the medieval synthesis of theology and philosophy, but Thomas Aquinas, William of Occam, and the Reformers are tellingly treated together. The Enlightenment and the growth of liberalism are granted separate sections. The section on the Baptists is conflated

with Reformed Evangelicalism, beginning with Herman Bavinck rather than a Baptist, and those Baptists that are treated have been primarily devoted to the Reformed project of philosophical theology. Thornbury laments the “phenomenon of philosophical followership” among Southern Baptists (50), yet could be accused of having followed the same pattern.

In the systematic section, Thornbury describes divine revelation as “*the fundamental epistemological axiom of Christianity*” (his italics, 53). Theology itself is described as “the study of God organized in an orderly manner that seeks to portray accurately the divine reality in the light of revelation” (54). Demonstrating a typical Reformed rationalism, he then excludes the Holy Spirit from the list of doctrines in spite of pneumatology’s own separate section in this book. He describes his structure as the “traditional Protestant ordering” (54–55), but the ordering is actually rooted in the Middle Ages. After treating the concept of worldview, he concludes the systematic section by citing Erickson’s paradigm for theological construction, a paradigm that should be used to evaluate both Erickson and Thornbury (63–64). The application section mentions the need to keep the church in mind while writing theology, but Thornbury demonstrates greater interest in post-modern philosophy and cultural exegesis (64–70).

Chapter 2, “Natural Revelation,” by Russell D. Moore (Reviewed by Malcolm B. Yarnell III)

Russell Dwayne Moore is Senior Vice President for Academic Administration and Dean of the School of Theology at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Moore’s chapter, though not the primary focus of his doctoral research, is an exemplar of careful theological construction. Moore consistently exegetes and applies Scripture from an ecclesial perspective even as he fully engages the world’s culture and its various philosophies and movements. Shaping his theological approach is a tension that Moore discovered in Scripture: “nature is the revelation of God, and this revelation is always subverted by fallen humanity” (71). He defines general revelation as “the self-disclosure of God to all rational beings, a revelation that comes through the natural creation and through the makeup of the human creature.” He defines natural theology as “the attempt to build a theological structure on the basis of general revelation apart from God’s witness in the Scriptures and in Jesus Christ” (71).

In the biblical section, Moore treats both the requisite Old Testament and New Testament passages at length. For instance, he notes that the creation narrative of Genesis 1–3 not only reveals the universe’s origin, “but explains something of the creative purpose behind such natural

phenomena” (73). Again, the Psalmist and the Prophets reveal that the “stability and predictability of the natural order is illustrative of the covenant faithfulness and unchangeable purposes of God” (76). Discussing the *Logos* concept, Moore contends that John breaks with the Hellenistic construction of the *Logos* by stressing “the creative ‘Word’ and ‘Wisdom’ motifs of the Old Testament” (80). As for the much [mis]used text of Acts 17:16–34, Moore demonstrates how Paul’s citing of a pagan poet was “not a note of optimism but an indictment of Athenian paganism” (83). Finally, turning to Romans 1–3, he argues that general revelation has “a specific content, namely that God exists, He is Creator, He is powerful, He is righteous, and He is to be worshipped as God” (85). “Even in the face of universal revelation, all human beings ‘suppress the truth in unrighteousness’” (87).

In the historical section, Moore says that the best Greek fathers received only certain aspects of Greek speculation regarding general revelation. Luther is noted for condemning “speculative theology,” because it fails “to understand that the same texts that teach such a general revelation also teach the failure of depraved humanity to acknowledge God” (95). Moore treats Baptists and modern non-Baptist theologians separately, drawing out some of the unique concerns of Baptists, especially with regard to the mission of the church. In his systematic section, Moore affirms the reality of general revelation within nature and humanity, periodically issuing relevant reminders regarding the relationship between general revelation and theology: First, “[g]eneral revelation is not to be abstracted from Christology” (109). Second, “humanity’s perception of general revelation is clouded by human depravity” (110). Third, the limits of general revelation necessitate “the special revelation of Christ and the prophetic-apostolic Scripture” (111).

Moore completes this first of his two theological essays in *A Theology for the Church* by addressing various attempts to use general revelation in the church today. He decries the attempt to use the Qur’an to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ: “It is, at best, the forgery of a false prophet, and, at worst, the dictation of a demon” (112). Scripture is a necessary instrument in the evangelization of the lost, including those in other religions: “This likewise means that our apologetic appeals must value above any other authority the claims of Scripture, the ‘spectacles’ through which we view general revelation” (113). His analysis of integrationist Christian psychology is not complimentary: “The theology of general revelation at the heart of the integrationist experiment, however, claims far more for general revelation and does so often at a strikingly simplistic level” (115). Yet his criticisms of the misapplications of general revelation are not intended to be taken as universal. Rather, he concludes by arguing “churches should

equip those gifted in all areas to pursue excellence, order, symmetry, and beauty—even when these disciples are not explicitly ecclesial or ‘Christian’” (116). Moore’s theology of general revelation works from a deep scriptural exegesis toward a fully engaged but chaste encounter with fallen human culture. He should receive applause for the method and the result.

Chapter 3, “Special Revelation,” by David S. Dockery and David P. Nelson (Reviewed by Jason K. Lee)

Chapter three in *A Theology for the Church* focuses on special revelation. The chapter is a collaborative effort by David S. Dockery (Union University) and David P. Nelson (Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary). Admittedly, this response is written from a position of clear sympathy for the project of producing an assessable theology that might prove useful for local churches. Additionally, I have a professional respect for and personal affinity for both the editorial team and the authors of this chapter. With those notable admissions, I will attempt a critique of the chapter that is cognizant of the book’s purpose and audience.

Strengths. Like the other chapters in the work, this chapter utilizes four questions to provide the framework for discussion. In so doing, the chapter provides a useful summary of the biblical witness concerning special revelation as well as past and current discussions of the topic. Though systematic issues drive the discussion, the attention to historical and biblical material is appreciated.

The issues covered in the essay are typical ones for the subject: a working definition of special revelation, the connection between revelation and scripture, Jesus’ relationship to the Bible and then issues related to the doctrine of scripture. In regards to Scripture, attention is given to divine-human authorship and inspiration. The most extensive discussion of the chapter pertains to inspiration. As a result of inspiration, the Bible is also inerrant, truthful, authoritative, sufficient and clear. The authors discuss various theories for inspiration and then advocate the verbal, plenary position. The chapter ends with a laudable appeal for the authority of Scripture to be applied to the everyday life of Christians and the church.

Three main points seem to pervade the chapter. First, Scripture serves as the primary means of special revelation. Second, the concursive aspect of the inspired biblical text is the best descriptor of the divine and human qualities of Scripture. Third, an affirmation of the inspired quality of the biblical text instigates other successive commitments.

Weaknesses. The confessional quality of the chapter serves the admirable purpose of providing the church with a clear expression of sound doctrine. However, this confessional aspect may explain the tendency at

times for the authors to make assertions as matters of fact or to conclude a discussion, instead of a means of introducing a sustained argument. A typical line of argument goes as follows. One position is described that has weaknesses, primarily through being too extreme in a certain detail. The opposing position extends too far in the opposite direction. The position held by the authors is then put forward as the synthesis that takes into account the issues raised by the first two positions, but without the tendencies toward the extremes. However, in the concluding position, requisite details of how it exactly answers all the concerns or a sustained defense of the concluding position against its detractors are too often missing or far too brief. The authors may be right in this approach in their catechetical aim, but it sacrifices some of the scholarly dialogue that some readers might anticipate. It must be noted that this style of argument may not be a weakness of the authors as much as a limitation due to the intention of the book.

The section on the authority of Scripture has its own shortcomings as well. Though authority is described by the authors as “the ultimate concern,” it receives only two paragraphs of explanation. The second of these paragraphs seems only tangentially connected to the argument for authority (or at least is a non-sequitur) and perhaps at best serves as an application of the concept of authority rather than an argument pertaining to it. Seemingly, the style, purpose and content of the second paragraph contrast with the previous paragraph. (See pp.162–163 to note the seemingly different subject matters of the two paragraphs.)

Questions Raised. The comments on special revelation create some avenues for further discussion. Several questions aid in pressing the issues for continued exploration. First, if the canonical Scripture is so significant for the doctrine of special revelation, what view on the relationship between the testaments should be taken? Several quotations from this chapter touch on this issue, but are unable to provide the clarity needed. At one point the authors say that moving from the Old Testament to the New Testament is moving “from a lesser to a fuller revelation” (119). In what regard is the Old Testament’s revelation lesser? The Hebrews 1 reference used by the authors seems to be comparing the status of the messenger (the prophets versus Christ) not the quality of the message. Consider that the writer of Hebrews uses those texts delivered by the “prophets” to explicate the status of the Son. Perhaps “less detailed” would be a better term. (In a later section [p.124] the authors explain that the New Testament “interprets and amplifies the Old Testament.” This language is preferable to “lesser.”)

Also concerning the relationship of the testaments, in discussing the scope of inspiration, the authors assert:

This means that the Sermon on the Mount or the epistle to the Romans may be more readily recognized as inspired Scripture than the books of Esther or Chronicles. They are of equal inspiration but not of equal importance. Yet this is due in part to the subject matter. The inspiration in such historical passages assures the general characteristics of reliability that is brought to these records (143).

This quotation spurs a few questions. Is the contrast intentionally one of New Testament books with Old Testament books? What does it mean that these Old Testament books are “not of equal importance?”

Do the authors mean importance for church doctrine? For Christian living? For the canonical witness to Christ? Additionally, as the “subject matter” is mentioned, what is the subject matter of these Old Testament books? Are they simply “historical passages” that provide the quality of reliable records to the historical occurrences affecting Old Testament Israel? Or does their importance exceed their historical referents by contributing in their canonical context to the messianic expectation so vital to the Old Testament?

There may be an underlying contrast with the sections of “Jesus Christ as the Promised Messiah,” “Jesus Christ and the Old Testament,” and “Jesus Christ and the New Testament” and the other statements noted in the chapter. In these sections, there is a strong consideration of the textual Christ instead of the historical acts of Jesus. The unity of the Old Testament and the New Testament is accentuated in phrases like “The New Testament, which is rooted in the Old Testament, interprets and amplifies the Old Testament” (124). Even the life and work of Jesus is described as being “grounded in the Old Testament” as the Word of God. Also, it is noted that the “New Testament writers . . . interpreted the Old Testament as a whole and in its parts as a witness to Christ” (124–25). Those “parts” are surely not simply “historical passages” and clearly Christ is the “subject matter” to those Old Testament texts.

The second major question produced by various statements in the chapter is the relationship between special revelation and Scripture. Several statements throughout the chapter demonstrate the close connection between Scripture and special revelation. For example, the authors state about special revelation, “This revelation is available now only by consultation of sacred Scripture” (119). In a slightly different emphasis, the Bible is referred to as the “written source of God’s revelation” along with redemptive history and the work of the Holy Spirit. Finally, the authors claim, “For believers today the Bible is the source of God’s revelation” (119). While these statements point to a close connection between Scripture and special

revelation, they do not define the relationship. (See 134–37 for a historical survey in this regard. The first three sections of the historical survey center mostly on establishing a connection of inspiration and the Scripture, but do not provide much discussion on the connection of Scripture and revelation or more narrowly on historical perspectives on special revelation specifically.)

In the second example mentioned above, the discussion affirms special revelation in “three stages.” The three stages include “God’s redemptive work in history,” the Bible as “the written source,” and the “work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of individuals and in the corporate life of the church” (120). The next statement says that the Spirit “applies God’s revelation to the minds and hearts.” Applying the revelation is distinct from a genuine contribution to new special revelation as implied in the “three stages” language. The “three stages” wording can create questions as to whether the three stages all produce the same quality of special revelation. One might also ask if stages must build on each other logically or is there simply a chronological development. If the development is chronological, is the contemporary church still in the third stage? Can any person arrive at any definitive revelation from any “stage” other than the Bible? If not, how are the other two revelatory in a specific (“special”) sense?

Other statements in the chapter create similar questions. For instance, the authors state, “Special revelation includes not only those acts in history but also the prophetic-apostolic interpretation of those events, meaning that revelation occurs in deeds and words” (120). In the progression implied in this statement, special revelation begins fundamentally in the acts and then only subsequently in the interpretation of those events. The affirmation of “special” revelation in the events of history raises the question of how these events are revelatory in a specific sense. Are these specific, revelatory events accessible through general tools such as science, history, archeology or sociological studies? Would further information about these “revelatory” events gleaned through these “general” (i.e. non-religious) tools provide more “special” revelation? If not, how are these events themselves genuinely revelatory? If so, what differentiates the special revelation discerned through general tools from that revelation exclusive to the Scripture? Also, if “special” revelation is available outside the biblical texts, can there be any requisite connection between revelation and inspiration? Furthermore, the authors assert, “The Bible is our primary source of information about Jesus.” (123. In several statements throughout the chapter the authors use “primary” or “primarily” to either soften or hedge their remarks. Cf. 120, 121, 123 [twice], 156, 159, 160 [twice] and 172.) Is the extra-canonical information about Jesus simply “information” or is it revelatory in a special sense?

The following paragraph is perhaps the most pertinent in regards to the questions raised regarding the relationship of Scripture to special revelation. The authors surmise:

While we can identify Scripture as a mode of special revelation, along with God's words and acts, it must be acknowledged that Scripture and revelation are not identical. There was special revelation that was not preserved for us in the Bible (John 21:25). On the other hand, not all of what is in the Bible is necessarily special revelation in a direct sense. Some portions of the material found in the Bible were simple matters of public knowledge, such as the list of genealogies. These most likely were matters of public domain, which could have been recorded by the biblical writers without God's having to reveal them specially. (122. The John 21:25 reference points to the authorial purpose of the book of John and his process of selectivity in composition but does not affirm extra-canonical special revelation.)

At least two major questions come from this quotation. First, what constitutes acts of God not "preserved" in Scripture as special revelation? Through His providence, God is constantly "acting" (or interacting) in regard to His creation. Are all of these acts of God ("saving" or otherwise) revelatory in a specific sense? Specifically, in regards to Jesus, do John's comments mean that all of Jesus' other activities are specially revelatory but just not recorded or an affirmation that John's writing was not intended to be a comprehensive biography. Also, would there be any access to these revelatory but non-recorded events?

Second, does the inclusion of "matters of public domain" with the canonical text give them a new dimension of special revelation not inherent in their pre-canonical source. If inspiration is a feature of the final compositional form of the canonical text, is it necessary to distinguish the qualities of the source material? Also, in the specific case of genealogical material, it could be argued that in their canonical context these genealogical "lists" have a significant revelatory effect. Matthew 1 reveals much about the promissory aspect of Jesus' work and sets the context for the idea of fulfillment so important in Matthew's gospel. The genealogies of Genesis serve an important revelatory function of showing the preservation of the seed of Eve through Noah to Abram. The Chronicler uses his genealogical lists as a means of reviewing biblical history up to the time of David, at which point the story slows to depict further detail. This genealogical

device then serves as means of showing a culmination of God's promises in the line of David.

The source of the canonical material does not determine its revelatory qualities. Luke 1 notes that this presentation of the gospel story is different than previous attempts of gospel accounts though the others may have had similar (or the same) sources, written or oral. Therefore, the quality and process of inspiration deal directly with the compositional strategy and form of the canonical text.

Finally, the latter half of the chapter focuses on the concept of inspiration and its implications. One result of the inspiration of Scripture is its truthfulness. In this discussion, the authors comment on several notions of truthfulness. The authors noted that Scripture is normative partly due to the universal condition of humanity. However, in the four reasons that follow, the third reason states that the Scriptures are "historically proximate to the saving acts of God." This reason may be helpful in defending scriptural accuracy but seems to do little in the way of establishing its normative quality.

Conclusion. Overall, this chapter provides some helpful talking points for Christian theology. The authors accomplish their purpose of providing helpful answers to the questions of members of a local congregation of believers. The emphasis on the central place that Scripture should take in the church's thinking about God and His purposes is timely and hopefully will be productive.

Section 2, The Doctrine of God

Chapter 4, "The Nature of God: Being, Attributes, and Acts," by Timothy George (Reviewed by Benjamin B. Phillips)

Timothy George, Dean of Beeson Divinity School, has provided a useful chapter on theology (proper) for *A Theology for the Church*. The essay follows the structure established throughout the book by beginning with a discussion of the Scriptural basis for the topic, describing the development of the doctrine's expression in the tradition, addressing systematic issues, and concluding with reflection on practical application derived from the doctrine.

The great strength of the chapter is that it weaves practical reflection throughout its discussion of biblical, historical, and systematic issues. For George, the doctrine of God clearly has significant impact on Christian life and ministry—it is not a matter of mere academic speculation. The essay also handles Scripture well by identifying a theme of biblical theology for each major section of the canon (though the general epistles are

skipped altogether). This strategy prevents the biblical basis section from degenerating into a mere list of texts which bear on the doctrine. In a welcome return to the pattern of some older theologies, George includes a discussion of the names of God, and uses them as a point of entry into the nature of God.

With respect to Trinity, the author affirms that the doctrine is foreshadowed in the Old Testament. His doctrine of the Trinity is western, emphasizing the Spirit as the bond of love between Father and Son (no mention is made of *filioque*, however). Furthermore, the chapter elevates the doctrine of Trinity to the front of the essay with the intent of emphasizing that everything said about the nature of God is predicated of the Triune God, not a generic theistic deity. Although there is no separate chapter on Trinity, George clearly intends that the doctrine of God's being, attributes, and acts be understood in a thoroughly Trinitarian way.

Unfortunately, the chapter fails to deliver a consistent and thoroughgoing Trinitarian doctrine of God. George does not carry the Trinitarian theme through his discussion of each major division of Scripture (giving a relatively weak defense of Trinity in the Old Testament). Though the chapter explicitly unpacks the attributes of holiness and love in terms of the Trinity, there is no mention of Trinity in the sections on eternity, omniscience, and omnipresence. Only the Father and Son are discussed with respect to omnipotence.

The historical theology section would benefit from a revision of the description of Calvin's Trinitarianism to include his major contribution to the doctrine—the idea that each of the divine Persons is *autotheos* (God of Himself). There also needs to be some mention of Baptist contribution to the doctrine. Though Baptists have historically made little unique contribution to the doctrine of Trinity, Baptists like Ware, Schemm, and Grudem are in the forefront of current developments in evangelical Trinitarian thought. These and others are doing important work exploring the functional submission of the Son to the Father in eternity, and the implications of the doctrine of Trinity for gender relations in the family and church.

The most troubling aspect of the systematic section is the essay's discussion of the divine attribute of love. George correctly notes that God's nature as love is fully satisfied in the inner Trinitarian relations of Father, Son and Spirit. He then discusses God's love for the church. The subject of God's love for unbelieving humanity, both those who have not yet believed and especially those who die in unbelief, goes completely unaddressed. This silence can leave the (wrong!) impression that God simply does not love those who die in unbelief. In what sense God can be said to love those who die in unbelief is an important and problematic question for any orthodox Christian, and deserves discussion here.

Chapter 5, “The Work of God: Creation and Providence,” by David P. Nelson (Reviewed by Benjamin B. Phillips)

In the fifth chapter of Akin’s *A Theology for the Church*, David P. Nelson (Senior Vice President for Academic Administration and Dean of the Faculty at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary) presents a very mixed offering on the work of God in creation and providence. The chapter repeats the book’s standard structure (Scripture, historical development, systematic issues, and practical reflection) for the doctrine of creation first, then the doctrine of providence. This review will consider the second section (providence) and then the first section (creation).

The second section, on providence, is the strong suit of this chapter. Nelson’s discussion of the way Scripture presents providence focuses on key texts and themes in a way that is easy to follow. One valuable aspect of this presentation is the clear juxtaposition of texts which affirm active divine intentionality (even predestination) and free human willing in precisely the same events. The essay then traces the historical development of the doctrine, culminating in the modern perspectives of process and open theism. Given the author’s emphasis on the relationship between divine sovereignty and human freedom in the systematic issues portion of the chapter, it is surprising that there is no mention here of Luther’s work *On the Bondage of the Will*, the Jesuit-Dominican controversies over Molinism, or of Edwards’ *Freedom of the Will*.

The discussion of systematic issues emphasizes the issue of divine sovereignty and human freedom, but does so in an even-handed fashion. Nelson carefully affirms both meticulous divine sovereignty and meaningful human freedom. He also reminds the reader that one’s conclusions about divine sovereignty and human freedom generally are somewhat distinct from one’s conclusions about soteriological issues, such as effectual calling. The section concludes with practical reflection, including a brief but encouraging note on the relationship between providence and prayer.

The first section of the chapter is on the doctrine of creation, and does not compare favorably to the writing of the section on providence. The ordering of the discussion of Scripture is idiosyncratic and does not follow any readily discernable pattern. The discussion of John 1, the New Testament’s counterpart to Genesis 1 and 2, receives only two sentences. The core of the Christian doctrine of creation is *creatio ex nihilo*, yet the section does nothing to ground the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* in the Biblical text. The author passes up the opportunity to relate Romans 4:17 and Hebrews 11:3 to *creatio ex nihilo* until he brings up the Creator-creation distinction in the systematic issues segment.

The presentation of the historical development of the doctrine of creation would benefit greatly by consideration of the contribution of the significant works on the doctrine in the last thirty years, including Moltmann's *God in Creation* (1985) and Copan and Craig's *Creation out of Nothing* (2004). This segment also needs to eliminate or revise the historically interesting (but irrelevant to the topic) observations on Schleiermacher's view of the Trinity and Southern Baptist controversies over higher-critical methods and conclusions about the Mosaic authorship of Genesis.

The consideration of systematic issues and the practical reflection are the strongest segments of this section. In particular, the practical reflection offers a well-structured discussion of the impact of the doctrine in culture and in the church. One issue which would be a helpful addition here is the significance of Sabbath as the creation-memorial observance for Israel and its relation to the Lord's Day for the church.

Chapter 6, "The Agents of God: Angels," by Peter R. Schemm Jr. (Reviewed by Rustin Umstatt)

Peter R. Schemm, Jr, is an associate professor of Theology at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and the Dean of the College at Southeastern. Schemm was tasked with writing the chapter on the agents of God, or in more general terms, "angels." Schemm begins his presentation by highlighting the biblical material regarding both good and evil angels. Within this section he highlights both the Hebrew word *malak* and the Greek word *angelos*, which are translated as angel. While briefly stating that both words literally mean "messenger," he proceeds to treat many passages in which it is unclear if a human or heavenly being is under consideration, as if it were a heavenly being. The English word "angel" is fraught with baggage and it might not be the most helpful term to use in many places. When most people read the word angel, whether consciously or subconsciously, images of winged and robed creatures come to mind. Most of these images are not biblical, but they are so ingrained in culture that it is extremely difficult to undo them. One example is Schemm's use of 1 Timothy 5:21 to assert that there are "chosen angels," and hence they cannot fall away from God. There is nothing in the context of the passage that calls for *angelos* to be translated as angel instead of messenger, but all the major English translations opt for angel. The complaint is not so much against Schemm, for he is merely following the lead of the translators, but it would be helpful to have a discussion at the beginning of the section on biblical terminology about the ambiguity within both the Hebrew and the Greek.

Schemm does a commendable job of highlighting the origin, nature, number, organization, ministry, and destiny of both the good and evil angels. He clearly shows that angels are created beings, and that while they are glorious, they are not omnipotent, omniscience, or omnipresent. While the good angels minister to both God and man by giving the Law, caring for believers, announcing, and assisting Christ, the evil angels' ministry is a self-serving one that seeks the harm of both God and His creation, especially humans. The destiny of both groups of angels are fixed so that those who have fallen are not offered redemption and those who did not fall are no longer able to rebel against God.

Schemm presents a solid biblical foundation for his angelology, with two minor exceptions. The first is that he too hastily lumps the various heavenly beings that the Bible presents under the catch-all term of angel. "Cherub," "holy ones," "heavenly host," "watchers," "sons of God," and "seraphim" are all titles for angelic beings according to Schemm. It would be more helpful to let each description stand on its own, since there is no biblical support for collapsing the diversity into a unified group called angels. It might be more clarifying to create a group called "heavenly beings" and then list each of the groups under that heading. Secondly, Schemm equates both Isaiah 14:12 and Ezekiel 28:14 with Satan. While it must be acknowledged that these verses have been debated in the history of exegesis, there does not seem to be a compelling exegetical reason to equate these passages with Satan, beyond the declaration that they seem to be too lofty to be about a mere man. The passages, however, declare that they are about a man, and it would be helpful if Schemm would have given more of a basis for his conclusion beyond referring the reader to James Leo Garrett's contrary conclusion in his systematic work and stating that "the language of both texts transcends the earthly rulers being described and points to an evil spiritual power working in and through these rulers" (303).

Having established a biblical foundation for his discussion of God's agents, Schemm moves into the area of church history. He treats the thought of the church under the typical headings of Apologists, Patristics, Medieval, Reformation, and Modern. His historical treatment touches briefly on Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Origen, Augustine, Dionysius the Areopagite, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Rudolf Bultmann, and Karl Barth. He takes a detached approach to each person, presenting each individual's ideas regarding angels with limited interaction with the thoughts presented. It would have been helpful in this section to have taken a more critical approach to each person, especially given the fact that many of them have understood angels in a way that is not in line with the biblical account. At the end of the historical section a chart of Baptist theologians is presented that lists each

theologian's view regarding angels, as well as the works in which those views can be found. The list is presented in alphabetical order, but it might have been more helpful in chronological order. Additionally, it would have been nice to have seen some of these major Baptist theologians discussed in the main body of the historical section, and not relegated to a chart.

Having completed the historical section, Schemm proceeds to demonstrate how all the information on angels fits together. He does this under four headings: 1) Paradise, 2) Paradise Lost, 3) Paradise Regained, and 4) Paradise Forever. The presence and involvement of angels at each major turn in the biblical narrative is solidly attested. This connection of the doctrine of angels with the unfolding story of God's interaction with His creation is most helpful in that it allows the reader access back into the whole sweep of the Bible as narrative, and not merely as disconnected information regarding angels. Angels are an integral part of God's plan of redemption and this is shown from creation to consummation.

The final section of the chapter addresses how the doctrine of angels impacts the church today. Schemm does a magnificent job of highlighting the current fascination with angels and spiritual warfare. He also stands firmly anchored in the biblical text, refusing to be taken in by the flights of speculation that abound in the world today. He rejects much that is passed off as spiritual warfare, such as territorial spirits and guardian angels, as so much speculation that is not grounded in the Bible. He also rejects the modern practice of prayer-walking in its more strident form that states that being on site is a requirement for more effective prayer. He closes the section by listing the criteria that the Bible presents for waging spiritual warfare. The believer is to be vigilant in his walk. He is also to give no place to the devil, while at the same time resisting him. Finally, the believer is to stand firm having put on the armor of God. The believer's spiritual battle is not one in which he is to go chasing after a spiritual fight with the forces of evil, but one in which he is to draw close to God, be aware of the enemies tactics, and to focus his attention on the author and perfecter of his faith.

Section 3, The Doctrine of Humanity

Chapter 7, "Human Nature," by John S. Hammett (Reviewed by Dongsun Cho)

John S. Hammett, professor of systematic theology at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, has written a Christian anthropology with excellent biblical analysis and thoughtful pastoral implications. Although Hammett presents his arguments in a biblical, historical, and theological

format, key issues are repeatedly mentioned in each section, and his presentation is thematically organized.

Based on the interchangeability of the terms “spirit” and “soul” in the Bible, Hammett supports dichotomy as a biblical view of the constituents of human nature. Interestingly, however, he stands with trichotomists in arguing that a certain distinction between spirit and soul needs to be preserved. Spirit and soul would indicate the different human functions, if not necessarily different parts, of human nature that relate to God and creation respectively. Hammett rejects a monistic anthropology incompatible with the biblical descriptions of the conscious existence of the soul apart from the body. Since the Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and evangelical annihilationists refute the concept of the immortal soul as hellenistic and, therefore, unbiblical, Hammett as a biblical dichotomist could have helped the church and her ministers by providing sound biblical, historical, and theological responses to these anthropological monists’ objections to the immortality of soul.

Hammett’s point that God can relate Himself to anyone with any kind of disabilities in a mysterious way could be a strong Christian critique of secular medical ethics, which tends to jeopardize human dignity and the God-given right to exist. Some local church pastors and lay people might also want to know how Hammett would answer Mormons’ presentation of human physicality as part of the image of God.

As a complementarian, Hammett advocates male headship in the family and male eldership in the church in light of the order of creation, the analogy of the church as family, and the functional subordination of the Son and the Spirit within the Trinitarian nature of God who created human beings in His image. A critical exegesis of mutual submission in Ephesians 5:21, a favorite text for egalitarians, could have strengthened the complementarian argument for ontological equality and functional subordination. Some conservative Baptists might be disappointed by Hammett’s indication of possible support for female deaconship on the grounds that there is no sufficient evidence against it and that it has nothing to do with the exercise of authority over the male congregation. In contrast, however, John Piper and Mark Dever would appreciate Hammett’s openness to female deaconship. Hammett’s introspective critiques of his fellow complementarians are worthy of special attention. A husband should try to obey the Lord’s commandment to love his wife, instead of claiming his wife’s submission as a right to be enjoyed. On the other hand, pastors should “honor” the ministries of women rather than ignoring or minimizing the value of women in the church (404).

One can hardly find as extensive a discussion of the role of work and rest in the context of human nature as Hammett provides in this chapter.

Although God originally gave Adam work as a divine blessing, after the fall, human beings began to be in bondage to work. Rest, however, liberates a person from the bondage of work and helps one to worship God. Regarding “the Lord’s Day” as a form of Christian rest, Hammett’s Reformed theology leads him to prefer the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message, which defines Sunday for Christians as a sort of Sabbath to be observed, over the 2000 revision, which permits more freedom to do things on Sunday. Those who take the new perspective of the Christian Sabbath in the 2000 version as a compromise of Christian faith would join Hammett’s appeal for a more disciplined observance of the Lord’s Day.

Hammett’s emphasis on the communal aspect of human nature created in the image of God, whose life is also communal in the Trinity, could also serve as an effective antidote to the ideas of soul competency and individualism that some Southern Baptists have used to refuse any arguments for the legitimacy of creedal faith and doctrinal accountability.

Despite a few suggestions by this reviewer, Hammett’s work will greatly benefit master’s level students who need to see both sides of a debate. Hammett not only fairly defends his own view by critically evaluating other views but also provides some constructive critiques of the conservative evangelical camp to which he himself belongs.

Chapter 8, “Human Sinfulness,” by R. Stanton Norman (Reviewed by Dongsun Cho)

R. Stanton Norman is Vice President for University Development at Southwest Baptist University. In his introductory section on human sinfulness, Norman strongly opposes a naïve romantic approach to human nature as basically “good and pure” (409). Human nature is completely depraved in that sin permeates every aspect of human nature, and no one can meet the absolute moral and spiritual standard of God. Without a proper appreciation of the gravity of sin, one cannot appreciate the grace of God.

Unlike Hammett, who argues no theological significance for talk of the origin of a human soul, Norman presents traducianism as the best model to explain the transmission of original sin and guilt from Adam to all of his descendents. Another reason Norman opts for traducianism rather than creationism is that there is no substantial evidence for the “covenant of works” between God and Adam.

Interestingly, Norman’s agreement with Augustine about traducianism does not mean that the Baptist theologian supports the ancient bishop’s argument for the simultaneous imputation of original sin and guilt to infants. Following Erickson’s observation of a parallelism between Christ and Adam, Norman contends that all humans are born with original sin

but not with the guilt of original sin. If there is no “unconscious faith,” there must be no “unconscious sin” either (464). Here, Norman uncritically assumes that Erickson follows the natural headship theory in developing the conditional imputation of guilt. As James Leo Garrett, Jr. demonstrates, however, Erickson actually develops the Placean imputation theory of guilt, not the Augustinian idea of natural headship. Both the natural headship view and the federal headship view necessitate the immediate imputation of original sin and guilt as well. In opposition to the immediate imputation theory, the Placean theory teaches that guilt will be inevitably imputed to all humans but only through the mediation of the depraved nature inherited from Adam. Like Erickson, Norman concludes that all dead infants, who cannot exercise their will to do either good or evil, are not vulnerable to punishment but enjoying the presence of God. It might be their Baptist ecclesiastical emphasis on the necessity of personal confession and voluntary commitment in the matter of salvation that leads Erickson and Norman to modify the Augustinian or Calvinistic view of the unconditional imputation of original sin and guilt.

Overall, Norman’s understandings of idolatry as the essential nature of sin, the conditional imputation of guilt from Adam to the individual, and the salvation of infants bear considerable resemblance to Erickson’s views. Norman’s contribution would be his section on the historical development of hamartiology from the church fathers to major Baptist theologians. However, there is one thing to be revisited in Norman’s historical presentation of Augustine’s understanding of original sin. As many theologians do, Norman also ascribes Augustine’s reading of original sin in Romans 5:12 to the bishop’s mistranslated Old Latin version of the Greek New Testament and his own ignorance of Greek. To read the Greek phrase “*eph hō*” as the Latin phrase “*in quo*” (in whom) was traditional among the Latin church fathers such as Ambrose and Ambrosiaster. They read the “*eph hō*” of Romans 5:12 as “in whom” not because of their ignorance of the basic Greek words but because of theological conclusion in the immediate context of the verse.

Section 4, The Doctrine of Christ

Chapter 9, “The Person of Christ,” by Daniel L. Akin (Reviewed by Gerardo A. Alfaro)

Daniel Akin, President of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, begins his article on the person of Christ, by identifying two major methodological procedures. Christology from above and from below should not be played out one against the other. We should not have to opt

for either one. Our Christology should nourish from both methodologies. He proposes a “Christology from behind,” which begins with its messianic story line in the Old Testament.

Fourteen Old Testament passages are examined in canonical order. Major attention is paid to the book of Psalms and Isaiah. According to Akin, there is no question that the Old Testament picture of the Messiah is mysterious and complex (491). At least for some key Old Testament passages, the cross and resurrection of Jesus functioned as an interpretative key that opened the eyes of the early church to the identity of the Messiah (489).

The New Testament Christological discussion is developed in two sections. The first one focuses on five major Christological passages covering the Incarnation (John 1), the Humiliation (Phil 2), Creation (Col 1), and Revelation (Heb 1). The second section is an examination of major theological events in the Gospels, what Akin calls “a Christology from below.” The virgin birth is important for various reasons and especially because it was the way God chose to preserve His Son from sinfulness. On the temptation of Jesus, what needs to be remembered is that Jesus did not sin, even if genuinely tempted. Scriptures do not answer the “could He have sinned” question. Jesus miracles are signs or witnesses of His deity (518). Other events shortly evaluated are Jesus’ transfiguration and ascension.

In the second section, Akin outlines the history of the Christological Councils (Nicea 325, Constantinople 381, Ephesus 431, Chalcedon 451) and a short history of the “modern attacks on the Christ of the Bible”. The latter section focused exclusively on the history of the so-called three quests of the historical Jesus. At the end, Akin offers ten responses to the perceived shortcomings of these quests.

Let me express my gratitude to Dr. Akin for this solid article on the person of Jesus. Trying to include everything about the One who is “everything for us”—to use an expression of the apostle Paul in Colossians—is a gigantic task. For this very reason, I am going to concentrate my evaluation on just three particular issues. Moreover, I am going to present my evaluation in terms of questions, as I find myself also wrestling with the right answers.

The first question is methodological. What is the real starting point of Christology? After all the terminological discussions during the 20th century, Can we still talk about a Christology “from below” or “from above”, or as in Akin “from behind”? Are these options complementary? Or, do they exclude one another? Akin seems to choose the former option. Personally, I have abandoned this way of talking, for at the end all Christologies are done from some kind of philosophical, theological, or practical “above”

or “behind.” Our task is to make sure that our “Christological above or behind” is determined and controlled by a solid interpretation of the New Testament revelation on Jesus’ story, person, and work.

My second question is related to the Christological content of the Old Testament. Is it enough for Christological reasons to trace the messianic story line in the Old Testament? I have the impression that based on what we have in the New Testament, there is much more to say about the Christological person of the Creator, Savior, Sustainer, Revealer that is present in the Old Testament and that should be brought to light when doing systematic theology. What about the Angel of the Lord, Wisdom, Word, etc.?

The third question is on the relation of the virgin birth and Jesus’ sinless nature. Is it true that connecting Jesus’ virgin birth with His sinlessness helps us to understand how Christ can stand outside the guilt of Adam? (538) Does it? Is there any other better theological explanation for the virgin birth? I agree with Akin in the fact that we need to make a distinction between Scripture affirmations and theological deductions (538). The Gospels never affirm that Jesus’ holy nature depends on His virgin birth. What they do affirm is that Jesus’ holy nature is due to Him being conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:20) and being the Son of the Most High (Luke 1:32). Would it be better to deduce from this data that the theological importance of Jesus’ virgin birth is that it testifies to the fact that the Only Son of God has only One Father too?

Chapter 10, “The Work of Christ,” by Paige Patterson (Reviewed by Gerardo A. Alfaro)

After a short discussion on the classical three offices of Jesus, Paige Patterson’s article concentrates on the doctrine of the atonement. In the Old Testament there is no overt claim to the atonement but “generations of believers” have found in it didactic insights into God’s redemptive plan (551). Six major passages are exegeted in connection with the New Testament (Gen 3:21; 22; Ruth; Exod 25–30; Ps 22; Isa 52). Long before the rise of modern criticism that denies the centrality of forensic images in the doctrine of the atonement, Old Testament passages deploy them openly, helping us understand a concept that will be fully developed in the New Testament.

Patterson provides evidence of how the New Testament is saturated with affirmations concerning the vicarious and substitutionary nature of the atonement. Romans and Hebrews, the book of the atonement, have a special place in his argument, as both writings emphasize the absolute need of Christ’s atonement. They show how a correct understanding of

Christ's propitiation is completely in accordance with God's indignation with human sin. God cannot just announce forgiveness to sinful humans. That would leave the issue of justice unaddressed—God's identity as holy and merciful would also be destroyed, we would add. The rest of New Testament also resonates with the same sound. At the end of this section, eight points summarize the scriptural teaching.

In the second section of the article, the author gives us a summary of the different theories of the atonement (8 objective and 3 subjective). Irenaeus, Cyprian, Augustine, Anselm, Abelard, Socinus, Calvin, and Luther, among others, are briefly studied. In the following section, the author puts together some systematic thoughts on the atonement, on the theological importance of Jesus' intercessory work and His resurrection. Jesus' resurrection is presented mainly in an apologetic style. Ancient and modern theories are numbered and confronted with a defense of Jesus' bodily resurrection. Finally, a short exposition of 1 Corinthians 15 is offered.

As with the previous article, I want to express my gratitude to Dr. Patterson for writing this substantial text. I specially appreciate its clarity and cohesiveness. I have always believed that Christology is the center of Christian faith and that the work of Christ is the center of Christology. This is not to say that other theological themes are unimportant, but that every other aspect of our faith is immensely, and sometimes irreparably, affected by the way theologians deal with this one in particular.

Let me articulate only three questions that the article leaves for me. Since the chapter concentrates almost exclusively on the atonement, would it better to change its title to "the atonement of Christ"? Apart from a few pages at the beginning and some others at the end devoted to the ascension and resurrection, everything else is circumscribed to the atonement of Christ. I think this is positive if the importance of the doctrine is underlined. On the other hand, as a systematic theologian I cannot help but think of the many other areas the New Testament talks about the work of Christ. For example, Akin mentioned in his article basic New Testament passages that describe Jesus as Creator, Sustainer, Guide, and Judge. I would include the work of Christ as the *Logos*. Those passages should be closely examined as to their meaning concerning the work of Christ.

Another question is not just related to Patterson's article but also to Akin's, as both articles should be organically connected in this regard. What is the historical connection between Jesus' earthly life and his death? What role does Jesus' earthly life, as narrated by the Gospels, play for understanding His person, or His death? I believe that the famous Trinitarian axiom: "the ontological Trinity is the economical Trinity" applies specifically to Christology. The earthly concatenated picture that the Gospels give us about Jesus should help us to produce an ontology of Christ, which

is even more intimately related to His revelation in Scripture. A closer attention to these connections would cast more light onto our understanding of our Savior's person and on the oft-hidden nature of our sinfulness.

Last question. Do our Anabaptist ancestors have anything important to add to any of these two areas of systematic theology? I wonder if at least something specific about them should be mentioned in so critical chapters on Christology. How did they see the person of our Lord? For example, did the Son of Man as martyr play a significant role in their Christologies? Did they interpret Jesus' suffering and death as a crucial part of Christian discipleship and theological epistemology?

Section 5, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

Chapter 11, "The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit," by Malcolm B. Yarnell III (Reviewed by Robert W. Caldwell III)

It may be said that while the Holy Spirit is the most "popular" member of the Trinity in today's highly mystical evangelical climate, pneumatology by contrast, or the careful biblical theological analysis of the Spirit, is virtually non-existent. Some may say that this is the way it is supposed to be: We cannot place the Spirit in our own theological boxes, but must allow Him free reign over our lives and ministries. We need not look far, however, to see the spiritual devastation such an approach engenders: Theological confusion reigns in many Christian circles leading many into spiritual bondage. If only we remembered that the Lord who calls us to love Him with all our hearts has also called us to love him with all our minds, then we might know the joy Jesus mentions of a heart set free by truth (John 8:31). The pursuit of a biblically faithful pneumatology can only have a positive outcome in the lives of Christians, and Malcolm Yarnell's chapter on "The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit" is an excellent place to begin that pursuit.

Like all the chapters in *A Theology for the Church*, Yarnell's is sectioned into four parts which to this reviewer represents the best way to "do theology:" starting first with an extensive review of the biblical data, moving on to the ways the church has understood those texts over the centuries, followed by a systematic statement on that topic, and then relating that theology to the life of the church. It is no coincidence that the pastor-theologians who popularized this method, the seventeenth century Dutch Reformed, saw revival flourish under their ministries.

Yarnell's canvassing of the biblical data helpfully summarizes the prominent pneumatological themes in the Old and New Testaments. Along the way he introduces the reader to important exegetical and theological

questions raised by the text: To what degree did the Old Testament saints discern the Holy Spirit in personal terms (606)? Is the Wisdom personified in Proverbs 8 a reference to God the Son, God the Spirit or neither (611)? What is the meaning of New Testament phrases like the “blasphemy against the Holy Spirit,” the “baptism with the Holy Spirit,” and “the Spirit of Christ?” (613–15, 622) While each of these questions merits an entire article, Yarnell resists the temptation to be exhaustive by giving succinct answers and pointing more inquisitive readers to helpful footnotes where more extended discussions may be found. The result is not an intensive examination of any one topic, but an excellent overview of the whole.

Yarnell’s skill as a historical theologian shines bright in the section “What Has the Church Believed?” the largest section in the chapter. Here the reader is taken on a historical *tour de force* of pneumatology where key controversies and theologians are introduced: Montanism, the Cappadocian Fathers, Augustine, the *Filioque* controversy, the relationship of the Spirit and the Word in the Reformers, the Spirit and Wesley’s doctrine of perfection, and the Pentecostal separation of regeneration from the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Along the way one might quibble with Yarnell’s mild critique of the West’s doctrine of the double procession of the Holy Spirit, especially in the light of the fact that he affirms Rahner’s *Grundaxiom* (“the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity,” 659), which appears to counter Eastern Orthodoxy’s strong distinction drawn between the economic sending of the Spirit and His essential procession (639). One might also question the placement of Scholastic Orthodoxy under “The Modern Era” section, especially when we consider that the Protestant scholastics adopted the biblical theological methodology which was forged not in the rationality of early modern period but in the “pre-modern” climate of the High Middle Ages (649). Yet in spite of these minor issues this section fulfills its purpose admirably by encouraging North American Christians, who have a penchant for historical amnesia, to see that we are part of a conversation that has stretched across the centuries.

Systematic formulation is the subject of the third section, and Yarnell canvasses the major issues apropos to a complete treatment of pneumatology: the Spirit’s deity and personhood, His work as Creator, Revealer, and Companion to Christ and the church. Notable discussions here include Yarnell’s call for more theological reflection on the person of the Holy Spirit (rather than merely His work, 659), the differences between the Spirit’s work in old and new covenant saints (669), and a basically cessationist approach to the miraculous gifts of the Spirit today (674). Noteworthy in Yarnell’s treatment is his extensive interaction with

Baptist theologians both old (Gill, Dagg, Boyce, Carroll) and new (Connor, Hobbs, Criswell, Ellis, Vaughn, Garrett, Hemphill, and Patterson).

Rounding out the chapter is a short section suggesting ways that pneumatology “impacts” the church today (681–84). Mention of prayer in the Spirit, proclamation in the Spirit, and worship of the third person of the Trinity is made. Other pneumatological topics which many Christians today wrestle with daily—such as discerning the Spirit’s hand in one’s religious experiences, the nature of assurance, divine guidance, and the call to ministry—would have strengthened an already strong chapter.

Overall, Yarnell’s chapter is a competent example of a faithful, biblically grounded, historically sensitive review of a theological topic from a Baptist perspective. I definitely plan to return to its pages in the years to come.

Section 6, The Doctrine of Salvation

Chapter 12, “The Work of God: Salvation,” by Kenneth Keathley (Reviewed by John D. Laing)

The chapter on soteriology by Ken Keathley follows the prescribed divisions of the book, lending it strengths and weaknesses. The immediate emphasis on biblical teaching has much to commend it, while the historical section is frustratingly brief such that confusion can result and major items are omitted (e.g., fundamentalism and neo-orthodoxy are not mentioned). However, Keathley does an admirable job, given the constraints of the text.

One of the strengths of this chapter is its biblical and Christocentric focus. At the outset, Keathley emphasizes the primacy of Christ in salvation by referencing the concept of union with Christ and noting its flexibility as both a central truth and an all-encompassing image for salvation. He examines the Eastern and Roman views of union as *theosis* and sacrament respectively, but finds both wanting, arguing that union encompasses both experiential and positional components. Even though the notion is admittedly vague, Keathley does not shy away from it, explaining scriptural analogies as well as specific scriptural references. This allows both the objective and subjective components of salvation to remain in the fore, with particular emphasis upon Christ as Savior.

Keathley’s discussion of repentance and faith is particularly strong. He rightly notes that the two coincide and are inseparable in conversion. Repentance includes both mental and active components with neither taking precedence—it is neither mere belief nor an act whereby the believer obtains the right to receive grace through penance. Instead, it is a “rejection

of the sins themselves” (730). Keathley skillfully avoids the question of whether faith is a gift or a work, and instead emphasizes the dual components of divine activity and human response. The human response requires a measure of knowledge of who Jesus was and why he came, as well as of his death, burial, and resurrection. Thus, Keathley carefully avoids a controversial theological question while maintaining the theological connection between soteriology, Christology, ecclesiology, and eschatology (736–37).

This purposeful avoidance evinces a third strength of the work: Keathley’s desire to break with traditional categories and controversies within soteriology. In fact, Keathley consistently strives to offer a third alternative to the extremes of Calvinism and Arminianism. For example, in his discussion of election, Keathley offers “congruism” as an alternative to the Calvinist notion of unconditional election (which detracts from human responsibility for rejection of Christ) and the Arminian idea of conditional election (seen as dangerous because it is human-centered and makes God passive in salvation). Likewise, in his discussion of the call to salvation and the gracious work of the Holy Spirit, Keathley proffers *overcoming grace* as an alternative to irresistible grace of Calvinism and prevenient grace of Arminianism. It is superior to irresistible grace because it preserves human responsibility for rejecting the gospel call while maintaining God’s integrity and universal love; and to prevenient grace because it preserves the concept of total depravity which prevenient grace makes superfluous. Keathley’s desire for even-handedness is also clear when he notes that Arminianism and Thomism are just as dependent as Calvinism is upon speculative philosophical thought (713n68).

Sometimes, though, what stands as a strength in one respect can also serve as a weakness in another respect. While much of Keathley’s work seems to reflect his own desire to break with traditional categories and discussions of soteriology, he seems ultimately unable to make such a break seemingly due to two factors: the difficulty in escaping cultural conditioning and the lack of a true middle ground. First, Keathley seems unable to avoid the issues that have dominated theological thought in the West. For example, he criticizes overly individualistic views of Christianity and correctly notes that there has not been enough focus on either corporate election or individual election to service. He even claims that the Bible’s primary focus is upon these aspects of election and notes that they should be “our primary emphases too” (709), yet he then spends the majority of his effort on individual election to salvation and the attendant debates over efficacious grace. This inability is also seen in some of the criticisms he levels against the Calvinist view of election. First, he presents the problem of God as cause of unbelief, even in an “ultimate sense” as though it is unique to the Calvinist approach (709); second, he claims that God’s decree of

damnation for the non-elect, whether understood as active or passive, undermines the love of God for all persons and His desire that all be saved (709); third, he argues that Calvinist belief in the inability of persons to respond to the gospel undermines human responsibility (presumably for rejecting Christ). In each case, Arminian theology struggles with the same problems, albeit they are less severe. Thus, while Keathley is surely correct that the primary issue of concern is “whether the Calvinist teaching does justice to God’s character,” his oversimplification of the problems detracts from his normally fair evaluation of the positions (709).

Second, his inability may be due to the fact that a true middle way does not exist (with respect to particular positions in the debated areas). That is, there simply is no third alternative to libertarian and compatibilist freedom, to unconditional and conditional election, to irresistible and prevenient grace, because in each case, the options presented in the classical debates are opposites. While there is variance in defining the terms, there are only two alternatives. The only middle option between Arminianism and Calvinism is an acceptance of points from each of the two systems, but such a position is a hybrid, not a separate option.

Thus, what Keathley offers as a third alternative is really just a variation on one of the traditional views, most often the Arminian view. The presentation of congruism as a separate alternative to Calvinism and Arminianism is one such example, for Amyraudism seems to be a Calvinist form of congruism while traditional Arminianism (Arminius, Wesley, etc.) has always affirmed human decision and divine election. Keathley also presents Molinism as a separate option, but it is widely recognized as the traditional Arminian view of divine knowledge; Arminius himself held to belief in middle knowledge, and it is really middle knowledge to which Arminians refer when they claim that predestination is based on foreknowledge. Similarly, the overcoming grace position, as Keathley presents it, postulates a gracious work of the Holy Spirit which enables hearers of the gospel to respond, while preserving their ability to resist, but this is simply the traditional Arminian views of prevenient grace. Most Arminians claim that prevenient grace is given by God only to those who hear the gospel, and even those few who believe that it is given to all persons deny that it is given in equal measure to all persons.

Despite its few and minor shortcomings, Keathley’s effort is a noble one. The emphasis on biblical exposition, biblical theology, and then a systematization of the doctrines alone make it worth reading. This, coupled with its application to the body of Christ, which can be found throughout the chapter (not just the practical applications section), makes the work commendable to the saints.

Section 7, The Doctrine of the Church

Chapter 13, “The Church,” by Mark E. Dever (Reviewed by Thomas White)

Arguably the most vocal Southern Baptist for meaningful church membership and the marks of a healthy church, Mark Dever, wrote the thirteenth chapter on the doctrine of the church. Dever currently serves as the senior pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, DC and president of 9Marks ministries. Dever’s role as a pastor adds a valuable practical slant to this theological dialogue. His church has also bought into his passion by offering “weekenders” where pastors and students from all over the nation catch a glimpse of a healthy church in action. From the informal discussions in his more public than private home office to his written contributions and public sermons, Dever has established himself as a leading voice in the Southern Baptist recovery of biblical ecclesiology. The editors of this volume did well in acquiring Dever as the author of a chapter that is a must read for every churchman and theologian.

Dever states that he will follow the assigned order in his chapter of biblical, historical, systematic, and practical sections. Those who have taught ecclesiology understand that the topic makes this very difficult as theological formulation almost weaves its way into any scriptural discussion of ecclesiology. This tension can be seen in Dever’s work as he introduces the “Attributes of the Church: One, Holy, Universal, Apostolic” after approximately 8 pages of scriptural foundation (775); however, the reader eventually learns that this seemingly historical discussion falls within and evens provides a framework for additional consideration of Scripture. The categories used in theological formulation such as polity, officers, ordinances, and membership also provide a framework for further scriptural consideration. It is not until page 816, forty-one pages after the first mention of historical marks, that Dever officially moves to historical consideration with the heading, “What Has the Church Believed?” This should not be seen as a criticism of Dever. There is a reason the best ecclesiology books of the past have not adopted this theological methodology. The doctrine of the church does not easily lend itself to the given format.

Overall, this chapter has more to praise than the current author has space to write. Dever thoroughly investigates the original languages providing a breakdown of the 114 occurrences of *ekklesia* (771) and the 75 uses of *presbeut* (800). He makes a great contribution in the discussion of plurality of elders and of special interest is his scriptural discussion of the office of senior pastor (805). His sections on meaningful membership and

church discipline are simply brilliant, and his command of Scripture is impressive and rejuvenating.

The purpose of a review, however, is not to rewrite what was written well but to evaluate and make suggestions. With that said, I believe the chapter would be better had Dever been as strong on the mode of baptism as he was on the subject of baptism. The reader first notices that *baptizo* does not receive a much discussion while other Greek words do. Dever also weakly states the Baptist position on immersion by writing, “While it is difficult to maintain that *baptizo* could only mean ‘immerse’ in the New Testament era, immersion does seem both to be the most straightforward meaning of the word itself” (785–86). In the same paragraph he quotes Erickson stating, “While [immersion] may not be the only valid form.” Additionally, only two pages discuss the mode of baptism in a 90-page chapter. Throughout the remainder of the chapter Dever consistently associates believers with baptism but not immersion. This may not normally be bothersome because the meaning of baptize is immerse, but with anemic support of immersion as the proper mode, the absence grows continually more noticeable. Then again, perhaps the current reviewer has been too immersed in traditional Baptist presentations which were not so friendly to those who sprinkle and is overly concerned with weakening positions on baptism in many “Baptist” churches.

The weakness on immersion carries over into the discussion of participants in the Lord’s Supper (789–91). Dever implies that baptism should occur before participation in the Lord’s Supper, but nowhere states that baptism by immersion is required for participation. Additionally, he does not discuss the Bunyan/Kiffin controversy in the historical section providing a theological sidestep of one of the most controversial aspects of Baptist ecclesiology.

For such a practically helpful chapter, two prominent omissions stand out. The chapter could have benefited from a discussion on divorce and its relationship to the office of pastor and deacon given the rampant number of divorces inside evangelical churches (801–02). Another needed discussion is women’s roles in the local church. While another chapter gives approximately one page to the discussion of women’s roles in the church, the climate of our culture demands deeper consideration (358–59) and particular mention of women teaching men in the local church. With that stated, these two glossed over areas likely came from space limitations and although they would have been helpful, it does not detract too heavily from a first-rate contribution.

Any weaknesses in the chapter are overcome by other areas of strength. Dever should be commended for his strong and repeated emphasis of believer’s baptism. For a man who consistently hosts those of other

denominations and works together for the gospel with those men, he has not forsaken the controversial doctrine of believer's baptism. He impressively balances the high wire of staying firm to biblical principles without becoming hostile to other denominations. Moreover, his continued emphasis on meaningful membership and church discipline speak prophetically to the current generation.

Dever demonstrates keen writing ability when discussing the issue of women deacons and the age of baptism. Baptists have long disagreed on the subject of women deacons. While Dever has them at Capitol Hill and the current reviewer argues against them, this issue never detracts the reader one way or the other. Dever wisely makes comment and passes on to more important matters (798). He also shrewdly handles his mention of the age of baptism. He is right that we have consistently lowered the age of baptism so that we practice toddler baptism, but he does not set a minimum age. Dever skillfully places a large content footnote indicating the age of many important Baptist figures (788, 848), which communicates clearly to the careful reader. Baptist should heed his intent and make sure the subjects of baptism understand it and can make a legitimate profession of personal faith.

Another unique and helpful section is titled, "A Baptist Church: Should We Have Baptist Churches Today?" (844). With many choosing to leave Baptist out of the name of the church and others questioning denominationalism altogether, Dever's discussion brings a new perspective to the issue. He hits the nail squarely on the head by stating, "If we understand that Christ commands the church to baptize only those who repent and believe, then it seems clear that a biblically faithful church is a Baptist church" (845). By focusing on obedience to Christ, Dever brings clarity to this discussion.

I not only commend the chapter, but in my classes, I plan to require it. Dever's thorough practice and support of meaningful ecclesiology has raised the topic to newfound heights in Baptist life. For that, I am thrilled to know and work together with him for the sake of the Gospel and to the glory of God.

Section 8, The Doctrine of Last Things

Chapter 14, "Personal and Cosmic Eschatology," by Russell D. Moore (Reviewed by Craig Blaising)

Many of today's students of theology are ambivalent about eschatology. The topic is placed at the end of the loci of theological topics in both published volumes, such as the one under consideration, and in the order

of themes in the typical survey course on systematic theology. In the latter, it is sometimes barely treated at all since there is so much to cover in such surveys. Furthermore, the tendency is to focus on controversial issues in eschatology, often for the purpose of downplaying them, leaving the student with the impression that eschatology deals with matters that are only of secondary importance, a collection of issues that can be ignored in the primary task of building up the body of Christ.

Russell Moore's essay, "Personal and Cosmic Eschatology," in *A Theology for the Church*, indicates why this ambivalence must cease. Aside from the very practical matter that funerals are inevitable in the ministry and that death confronts us in our familial, social, and personal experiences, making "personal eschatology" immediately relevant, the fact is the topics of "personal eschatology" are themselves part of a greater revelation of the plan of God in which all of the loci of theology are integrated. Eschatology is the study of this plan of God seen in terms of its fulfillment. Moore's essay, although understandably brief, demonstrates this fact as he masterfully highlights the interconnection of personal hope in Christ with the divine plan for the recreation of all things.

Like (most) other chapters in the volume, Moore follows a given structure, answering four questions: What does the Bible say? What has the church believed? How does it all fit together? and, How does the doctrine impact the church today? His essay is well written, demonstrating familiarity with the breadth of relevant topics and issues, presented in a clear, cogent, and engaging style. He begins with a funeral service and ends in a graveyard. In between, his answers to the four questions place the particularity of individual death with its threat of emptiness, meaninglessness, and forgetfulness into the overall plan of God in which the particular is redeemed.

The section on the Bible is divided logically between Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament sets the basic parameters of the divine plan as cosmic in scope, covenantal in form, and kingdom in terms of its actual order and structure. From the very beginning, Moore develops the Bible's "new creation" eschatology, which stands in contrast to spiritualist interpretations that are common in the history of Christian thought and that degrade the substance of Christian hope. The kingdom of God is the integrating order in which the cosmic renewal will be manifest and in which the covenant promises will be fulfilled. New Testament eschatology is presented in terms of kingdom fulfillment—both as present, or "already," in the ministry of Jesus prior to his coming in glory, and as future, or "not yet," which will be ushered in through that coming. The "already/not yet" structure is key to New Testament theology and forms a logical division for

the section. Throughout, the biblical foundation is laid for one of Moore's primary points: eschatology is inherently Christological.

The section on what the church has believed offers a historical grid in which to place a number of eschatological topics, such as millennialism, the nature of the intermediate and eternal states, the eternity of the judgment, and the Roman Catholic doctrines of purgatory and limbo. Moore also provides some historical background to the question of Israel's identity and future in the divine plan. The historical survey begins with four writers from the patristic period: Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Origen, and Augustine. Aquinas and Dante are briefly noted from the medieval era. The Reformation survey primarily focuses on Calvin's dispute with Anabaptists and moves quickly to note the rise of Covenant theology and postmillennialism in the post-Reformation period. Moore notes the rise of liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, and revisionist/liberationist theologies in the modern era and then moves to modern evangelicalism highlighting the rise of dispensationalism, the neo-evangelical emphasis on social ministry, and the erosion of eschatological orthodoxy in left-wing evangelicalism. This is followed by a helpful excursus tracing the history of eschatological thought among Baptists, primarily Southern Baptists.

A theologian faces a challenge in the systematic arrangement of theological topics. In the section on how it all fits together, Moore chooses his thematic structure from Revelation 11:15: The kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of Christ. Under the heading, "kingdom of the world," Moore arranges the topics of tribulation, Antichrist, and hell. Under "kingdom of Christ," he treats the matters of heaven, the second coming, the restoration of Israel, the millennium, and the new earth. The length of this review does not allow for a point by point examination of these doctrinal topics. Some are treated more extensively than others. While Moore's essay style does not always yield clear doctrinal definitions, the survey does serve as a helpful introduction to the topics covered. A student of theology should be motivated by the reading to pursue further study on the topics, adding to the reading a good theological dictionary and then pursuing the issues by comparative readings in other systematics and in theological monographs.

There are, however, a couple of issues which this reviewer will note. Moore's own eschatological position is a variant of what he terms "historic premillennialism," which, as he notes, is a non-dispensational form of premillennialism. He sees the rapture as posttribulational, but he believes one should not be dogmatic on that point. He does note that imminency in 1 Thessalonians 5 is a strong argument for pretribulationism. His weakness, in the opinion of this reviewer, is that he does not consider the tribulation as an extended cohesive pattern in biblical theology, seen in the themes of

the day of the Lord and Daniel's seventieth week. The tendency of many posttribulationists, including Moore, is to divide the tribulational pattern historically, assigning part to the history of the church and part, usually only the last part, to the future coming of Christ. The contention of most pretribulationists is that the tribulational pattern functions typologically in the history of the church while the pattern as a cohesive whole unfolds as the context for the future coming of Christ. The imminency of the rapture with respect to the day of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 4-5 would then more clearly favor pretribulationism. G. E. Ladd understood this and consequently attempted to redefine imminency as "nearness." Although many posttribulationists like Moore identify with Ladd's "historical premillennialism," they are not futurists like Ladd—that is, they do not expect the future fulfillment of the entire tribulational pattern. Consequently, they do not appreciate the full import of the imminency argument.

Another concern for this reviewer has to do with Moore's view of Israel. Moore repeatedly draws attention to the typology of Israel applied to Christ in the Gospels. However, he interprets this typology along with Paul's statements concerning the seed of Abraham and inheritance "in Christ" in a radical way. In Moore's view, Christ himself has replaced corporate Israel in the plan of God. He alone is Israel—a remnant consisting of one Jewish man—and consequently, the promises of Israel are fulfilled to him alone. However, Christ in turn grants the status and privileges of Israel in a derivative sense to Jews and Gentiles who by faith are "in him." In this derivative sense, the entire body of the redeemed—both Jews and Gentiles—fulfill the corporate meaning of the term Israel. Since the body of the redeemed is the church, this is simply another way of saying that the church, albeit in a derivative sense only, has replaced Israel, understood in its ethnic and national sense. The crucial point is that there is, for Moore, no other sense, subsequent to the appearing of Christ, in which a corporate Israel exists.

The application of Israel typology to Christ is an important feature of New Testament theology. Moore is correct to note that the New Testament sees the fulfillment of the biblical covenants taking place in and through Christ. However, it is not necessary to conclude from this that the Christ, considered as a single individual, is the sole fulfillment of the national and political promises to ethnic Israel. The consistent pattern of kingdom prediction in Old Testament prophecy is a ruler from the house of David who rules Israel (considered corporately and nationally) and also Gentile nations. Even when the ruler is designated with the name "Israel," as in the servant song of Isaiah 49, that "Israel" will bring Israel (not himself, but the corporate Israel) back to God. He will then also gather in the Gentiles. The picture is the same: the King, then Israel (not another name

for the king, but the corporate body, the nation, over which the king rules), then Gentile nations. Within the structure of the covenants, the Davidic covenant functions as the means to the fulfillment of the other covenant promises to corporate Israel and as the means of extending covenant blessing to the Gentiles.

Moore's restrictive view of Israel creates problems in a number of New Testament texts. The corporate meaning of the term, Israel, cannot be eliminated from the Gospels without creating textual incoherence. Moore's reading of Romans 11 ignores the use of "Israel" in that chapter which is not the olive tree, but a [covenantally] "beloved" enemy whose restoration is illustrated in the regrafting of natural olive branches, bringing riches to the world. When the disciples asked Jesus in Acts 1, prior to His ascending, whether He at that time would restore the kingdom to Israel, they were not asking, after 40 days of instruction on the kingdom, whether He would restore Himself, but whether He—considered singularly as the king—would restore the kingdom to Israel—considered corporately, consistently with the pattern of biblical prophecy. Jesus's answer, that the time has been fixed by the Father, is elaborated on by Peter in Acts 3, when He speaks of "the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago." Without doubt, the restoration of Israel corporately, nationally, and politically, is a key feature among "the things about which God spoke by the mouth of the holy prophets." And, it is consistent with this that Peter in Acts 2 calls upon all the house of Israel (undoubtedly corporate) to know Jesus as Lord and Christ.

Finally, one should note the irony that Moore's view of future Israel creates for his new creation eschatology. Certainly, Moore expects and explicitly asserts that the redeemed in the millennium and in the everlasting order of the new earth will be sub-grouped and gathered as nations. This of course fulfills the corporate dimension of anthropology as it is taken up into redemption. Moore also notes that the redeemed will include both Jews and Gentiles. However, he is quite clear that there will be no national Israel among those nations receiving as an inheritance the covenantally promised land. The inescapable conclusion, and ironic in light of the whole thrust of restoration prophecy, is that the Jewish redeemed are permanently dispersed among the Gentile nations. Leaving aside the whole question of who exactly occupies the promised land in this realistic millennial or new earth scenario, do we really think that a redefinition of "Israel" to mean either Christ alone or, in a derivative sense, this whole dispersed condition satisfies the prophetic hope?

We come now to the last section of Moore's essay in which he addresses the relevance of eschatology for the life and practice of the church today. This is especially important since so many consider eschatology irrelevant

to present-day concerns. Moore's extrapolation of new creation hope to the matters of grief, burial, and aging is excellent. The topics listed under "personal ethics" include some surprises. One might not think of "parenting" as an obvious inclusion. However, Moore makes the connection clear and the application compelling. Following biblical emphases, one could add to the topics of eschatological ethics a number of other qualities, such as steadfastness and endurance in Christian faith and character. Once again, the reader is reminded of the limitations of space even in a volume of this size.

Moore has written elsewhere on the implications of eschatology for social ethics, and his choice of topics here addresses a number of major concerns—social welfare, care for creation, anti-semitism, respect for life, and a warning against modern utopianisms that drive social and political discourse. His comments here are very helpful. In the final section, "Eschatology and Corporate Witness," Moore touches briefly on the theme of the church as itself a society set within the broader society/societies of the world. This is a theme that is particularly tied to the "already" aspect of New Testament teaching on the kingdom, and one that is rarely addressed in evangelicalism today.

I am grateful to Russell Moore for this fine essay expounding new creation eschatology. Not all will agree with every aspect of his presentation, but the new creation orientation is a major advance over a number of other theologies and affords a better framework in which to pursue the differences that yet remain. The reader will appreciate the clear, inviting literary style that offers up a rich feast of biblical, theological, and cultural considerations. This is characteristic of the writings of Russell Moore, to which, it is hoped, there will be many more additions in the years to come.

Conclusion

"The Pastor as Theologian," by R. Albert Mohler Jr. (Reviewed by David Allen)

With another stroke of his ever-weighty pen, Al Mohler defines and describes for us the quintessential pastor/theologian. His essay fittingly concludes this volume and serves as a reminder that all theology is ever practical theology and should be studied not for its sake alone, but for its contribution to the church. Mohler develops his key theme: Every pastor is called to be a theologian, and demonstrates the necessity of such for healthy churches.

Under the heading “The Pastor’s Calling,” Mohler laments the transmutation of theology into a purely academic discipline and its concomitant disconnection from the church. By grounding the theological nature of pastoral ministry in Scripture and specifically in the Pastoral Epistles, Mohler proves the inherently theological nature of every pastor’s calling. The faithful pastor who is himself grounded in sound doctrine will immerse himself in the evangelistic, educational, apologetical, and polemical facets of ministry. Only such a theological understanding and commitment on the part of the pastor will liberate him and his ministry from the Scylla of the managerial revolution fostered by the Church Growth movement and the Charybdis of the therapeutic culture. Loosed from the moorings of theology, today’s pastors may become known as great communicators, counselors or managers, but they will not be known as great pastors and preachers.

“The Pastor’s Concentration” according to Mohler is the incumbent necessity on every pastor to assist the church in learning how to think theologically so that authentic discipleship may occur. Such focus develops within the pastor the ability to practice a process which Mohler describes as “theological triage.” Here the pastor learns to distinguish the differing levels of theological importance. Such a practice inoculates the church from the danger of making any and every theological difference of opinion a matter of conflict as well as the opposing danger of failure to defend the faith once for all delivered to the saints. While one can agree with Mohler’s theological triage in principle, in practice the matter proves to be a bit more elusive. One man’s first order doctrine might be another man’s second order doctrine, and vice versa. The decision as to where to draw the line may itself become a first order doctrine of some! Nevertheless, Mohler’s point is well taken.

Since one would be hard pressed to list any ministry activity as being any more inherently theological than preaching, Mohler rightly discusses expository preaching as “The Pastor’s Conviction.” Highlighting Paul’s admonition to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:1–2 to “preach the word,” and noting Paul’s own grounding of this exhortation in the God-breathed nature of Scripture as stated in 2 Timothy 3:16, Mohler affirms the necessity of pastoral conviction in this area as the foundation for the transfer of Biblical knowledge into the minds and hearts of the church. Only through such expository preaching and teaching can the church know what God expects of them regarding the Christian faith and the Christian life.

Finally, Mohler makes his last point under the heading “The Pastor’s Confession,” where the pastor’s own theological convictions are lived out as well as preached in an experiential fashion. Here personal testimony is

intertwined with one's own theology to create authority and authenticity in pastoral ministry.

This short but substantive final chapter is an apt conclusion to a volume entitled *A Theology for the Church*, for here Mohler sums up exactly why, when it comes to theology and church, what God has joined together, let no man put asunder. This conclusion is well summarized in its potent and pithy opening and closing sentences: "Every pastor is called to be a theologian. . . . The pastor who is no theologian is no pastor." I could not agree more!

A Review Essay of *The Messiah in Early Judaism and Christianity*. Edited by Magnus Zetterholm. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007. 188 pages. Softcover, \$18.00.

The Messiah in Early Judaism and Christianity is a collection of lectures initially presented at a conference hosted by the Centre for Theology and Religious Studies at Lund University in May 2006. Invited scholars Adela and John Collins from Yale University shared the platform with three Fellows from Lund University: Magnus Zetterholm, Jan-Eric Steppa, and Karin Hedner-Zetterholm. They "presented an overview of aspects of the development of messianism from the period of ancient Israelite religion to the patristic period and also covered several social-historical contexts—early Judaism, the early Jesus movement, rabbinic Judaism, and emerging Christianity" (ix). Subsequently, five very succinct essays, along with an editor's introduction, are joined together to form *The Messiah in Early Judaism and Christianity*. Furthermore, the book provides a timeline of significant events, a map, and a glossary of terms designed with the student in mind as well as a bibliography and a couple of indexes.

In his introduction, Magnus Zetterholm, Research Fellow in New Testament Studies at Lund University, briefly orients the reader to various transformations about Messiah over the centuries. Beginning with ancient Israel's concept of "the anointed one" as a human fallible figure, unlike other Near Eastern royal ideology, Zetterholm points out that the concept of "Messiah" was transformed due to "the trauma caused by the fall of Jerusalem in 587/586 BCE, and the subsequent deportation of the population" (xxi). This dismantling of David's dynasty and his kingdom, "called for a hermeneutical reinterpretation of the whole idea of a Davidic kingdom" (xxi) that eventually "caused the messianic idea to develop along new lines" (xxii). Thus *The Messiah in Early Judaism and Christianity* "provides," according to Zetterholm, "a *comprehensive diachronic introduction* to the emergence and early development of some of the vital aspects of

messianism in Judaism and Christianity in several sociohistorical contexts” (emphasis is mine; xxvi).

Zetterholm’s comprehensive diachronic introduction about the Messiah begins with an overview of “Pre-Christian Jewish Messianism” (1–20) evident in the Old Testament and second temple literature. In chapter one, John Collins, professor of Old Testament Criticism and Interpretation at Yale, begins with a presentation of the origin of Jewish messianism via a simple definition of the term “messiah,” a simple explanation of ancient Near Eastern royal ideology, and a simple description of God’s promise to David (2 Sam 7). Ultimately Collins argues that scant traces of Ancient Near East royal ideology evident in Psalms 2, 45, and 110 may suggest something more than hyperbole. Yet 2 Samuel clearly “acknowledges the humanity of the king” (3).

Collins then moves to the less than uniform development of messianism presented in the prophets, the LXX, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, and Josephus. First, messianic expectations in Isaiah 7:14, 11:1–9; Jeremiah 23:6, 33:14–16; and Zechariah 3:8, 6:12 are presented ever so briefly. Second, developments in the LXX advanced little except perhaps in the translations of Amos 4:13 and Psalm 2. Yet the third group of literature, the Dead Sea Scrolls, was another matter. Collins discusses the branch of David (4Q285, 4Q252, 4Q174), the concept of two messiahs (in 1QS, 1QSa, CD), and several controversial texts (4Q246, 4Q521, 4Q541). Ultimately, the clearest picture presented of the Davidic messiah is that He is a mighty warrior who drives out the Gentiles. In fact, Josephus identifies several messianic pretenders that mirror the portrait of a mighty warrior. Yet there is an overwhelming expectation of two Messiahs at Qumran: a priestly messiah and a regal messiah. Finally, while discussing Messiah and Son of Man, Collin reveals the Son of Man to be a sort of preexistent heavenly figure (angelic like) who is called Messiah (*1 Enoch*; cf. 11Q13). In conclusion, “The hope for the restoration of Davidic kingship was standard,” says Collins, “but it is impossible to say how active or important it was at any given time” (20).

Zetterholm’s comprehensive diachronic introduction about Messiah continues in chapters two and three with an examination of Messiah in the synoptic Gospels and then Paul. In chapter two, “The Messiah as Son of God in the Synoptic Gospels” (21–55), Adela Collins, Professor of New Testament Criticism and Interpretation at Yale, focuses attention on the epithet “Son of God.” After a seemingly lengthy discussion of Mark, in comparison to the discussions in Matthew and Luke, she concludes that the portrayal of Jesus as Son of God is ambiguous. Yet within her discussions of Mark’s presentation of Messiah, she muses, “In the account of the baptism of Jesus (Mark 1:9–11), his messiahship and divine sonship are strongly

implied,” and latter that “a shared assumption that ‘the Messiah’ and ‘the Son of Man’ are equivalent” (23, 24–26; Mark 14:53–65). Matthew and Luke portray Jesus as Son of God in a stronger sense: He has no father and, He is miraculously conceived (Matt 1:18–25; Luke 1:31–33). Thus she concludes, “Jesus is ‘Son of God’ in a stronger sense than in Mark. The narratives in Matthew and Luke do not imply preexistence, but the notion of virginal conception was easily combined with ideas about preexistence and incarnation later on” (31). “Among the Gospels,” avers Collins, “it is only in John that the idea of incarnation is explicitly expressed” (32).

In chapter three, “Paul and the Missing Messiah” (33–55), Magnus Zetterholm, argues that in Pauline material, “any tendency to stress the messiahship of Jesus has vanished into thin air” and that “the word *christos*, ‘Christ,’ (about two hundred times), . . . has become a proper name and that it has lost its messianic overtones almost entirely” (37). Unlike in the Gospels, the “fundamental confession was not, as Peter’s was, ‘Jesus is the Messiah,’ but ‘Jesus is Lord’” (37–39; 1 Cor 6:14, 2 Cor 4:14, Rom 4:24, Phil 2:5–11). The reason for this, according to Zetterholm, was because of Paul’s mission to non-Jewish believers. “Instead of emphasizing the role that Jesus had in a Jewish context—as the Messiah of Israel—Paul stressed an aspect of Jesus; messiahship that would help non-Jewish believers in Jesus to focus on their own ethnic identity and social situation” (48–52; Rom 3:28; Gal 2:1–10, 16; 1 Cor 7:17–18). Paul does not deny Jesus’ messiahship, he merely de-emphasizes it so that he might provide non-Jewish believers “with a role model that would make it possible for them to accept the prevalent situation as well as their ethnic identity” (55).

Zetterholm’s comprehensive diachronic introduction to Messiah concludes in chapters four and five with the exploration of Messiah in Rabbinic literature and in the post-apostolic church. In chapter four, “Elijah and the Messiah as Spokesmen of Rabbinic Ideology” (57–78), Karin Hedner–Zetterholm, Research Fellow in Jewish Studies at Lund University, explores the similarities between Messiah and Elijah the Prophet in Rabbinic literature (57). After providing a brief survey of messianism in Rabbinic literature (58–62), she explores the concept of Messiah and Elijah in the Mishnah and concludes that there is “a general lack of interest and a relatively insignificant role assigned to them” (67). She then explores the Messiah and Elijah in the Babylonian Talmud and concludes that “both Elijah and the Messiah prove useful in promoting the rabbinic worldview; the Messiah by making his own arrival dependant on observance of the Torah, and Elijah by providing divine affirmation of rabbinic ideology” (78).

In chapter five, “The Reception of Messianism and the Worship of Christ in the Post-Apostolic Church,” Jan-Eric Steppa, Researcher in

Church History at Lund University, shows special attention was given to demonstrate Christianity's legitimacy within the Roman world. The early church experienced opposition from Pliny the Younger, Tacitus, and Suetonius. Early church fathers like Tertullian and Justin Martyr, then later, Celsus and Origen were instrumental in demonstrating how Christianity was dependent on Hebrew Scriptures and even "rested on the fulfillment of the ancient Jewish prophecies in Jesus Christ." In conclusion, "messianism," according to Steppa, "was the fundament for the justification and credibility of Christianity among the Romans as a religion worthy of acknowledgment and respect" (114).

Furthermore, Steppa discusses the concept of a future messianic kingdom. The future coming and reign of messiah for a thousand years advocated by Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian (cf. Rev 20:1–6, 4; Ezra 7:26–28, 12:32–34; 2 Baruch 29:5–8) was "increasingly denied legitimacy within the orthodox framework" by those like Jerome (94). As Steppa understands it, "if Christ really was the Messiah, all prophecies would have been fulfilled, and the hope for an earthly Jerusalem could not be considered as anything but completely vain. Thus," according to Steppa, "a spiritual interpretation of the promises of the Holy Land was necessary if the Christian belief in Jesus as the Messiah was to be maintained" (114).

The Messiah in Early Judaism and Christianity is to be praised for its succinct presentation of current thoughts about Messiah. Yet its succinctness presents shortcomings. First, it falls short of its comprehensive diachronic introduction because it fails to address the royal-priesthood of Messiah in Hebrews and the confession of Jesus as Messiah in the Johannine epistles (just to cite two examples). Second, the succinct discussions sometimes lead to less than fair conclusions. Such as, Steppa's statements that "if Christ really was the Messiah, all prophecies would have been fulfilled," and later that the evidence renders "the hopes for a future earthly messianic kingdom fatally obsolete" (116). Steppa ignores recent discussions that argue differently. Readers need to be aware that overly simplistic conclusions exist in the book. Finally, Adela and John Collin's presentations are presented far more extensively in their most recent work *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature* (Eerdmans 2008). Nevertheless, *The Messiah in Early Judaism and Christianity* is to be commended for the variety of pictures, however briefly they were presented, about how the concept of Messiah has developed over the centuries.

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A Review Essay of *Marpeck: A Life of Dissent and Conformity*. By Walter Klaassen and William Klassen. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2008. 423 pages. Hardcover, \$32.99.

The sixteenth-century Anabaptist leader, Pilgram Marpeck, has garnered much deserved attention through recent scholarship. In 2007, Martin Rothkegel served as final editor of a monumental work begun by Heinold Fast: a critical edition of the *Kunstbuch*, forty-two tracts produced by Marpeck and his circle, which is one of the most important additions to Anabaptist research in the last thirty years. (John Rempel will publish an English translation of the *Kunstbuch* in the spring of 2009). Also in 2007, Malcolm Yarnell produced *The Formation of Christian Doctrine*, in which he relied on Marpeck's thought in developing a believer's church theology. That same year Neal Blough provided a study of Marpeck's Christology, *Christ in Our Midst*. In the fall of 2008, Walter Klaassen and William Klassen published what has now become the preeminent biography on the life of this important shaper of Anabaptism.

As an engineer and public servant, Pilgram Marpeck, a native of the Austrian Tirol, earned the respect of those in power. Archduke Ferdinand appointed him "Superintendent of Mines" at the age of 30. It was Marpeck's struggle in carrying out Ferdinand's orders to find and arrest Anabaptists in late 1527 and early 1528 that presaged what would become his life's mission. It is probable that Marpeck witnessed the trial of Anabaptist Leonhard Schiemer (12 January 1528) and his execution two days later. Merely days after Schiemer's death, Marpeck resigned his position as mining superintendent and began his life as an Anabaptist (102–03).

Marpeck fled Rattenburg in early 1528, heading for Krumau, a small silver-mining village in what is now modern-day southwest Czech Republic, because he learned a growing number of Anabaptists had settled in Moravia and Bohemia (107). It is likely that Marpeck was baptized in Krumau and there met his second wife, Anna, a fellow Tirolean refugee (Marpeck's first wife died in late 1527; 109–11). Marpeck eventually settled in Strasbourg, a city in which about one percent of the citizens espoused Anabaptism (119). He became a citizen in late 1528 and in 1530 Strasbourg hired him as *Holzmeister*, the city's manager of timber resources (149). Klaassen and Klassen do exceptional work in providing the reader with the details of Marpeck's various engineering exploits, including mining development, water transportation services and the design of a fulling mill for the finishing of linen cloth.

In Strasbourg, Marpeck came into contact with many of the leaders of Reform, including Bucer, Capito, and Sturm. He also interacted with prominent dissenters such as Entfelder, Bunderlin, Schwenckfeld, and

Hoffman. Marpeck disagreed with each of them on various matters and debated the issues of baptism, the Lord's Supper, bearing arms, and the role of government in matters of faith (122–23). In 1531 he published three important works: *A Clear Refutation* (a response to Bänderlin's claim that baptism and the Lord's Supper were to be avoided because the antichrist had ruined them and polluted their use); *A Clear and Useful Instruction* (a response to Entfelder's claim that a literal interpretation of Scripture led to divisions among the Church); and *Exposé of the Babylonian Whore* (his attack against those who had favored a union of church and state) (137–58). Marpeck debated Bucer toward the end of 1531, submitting his *Confession of Faith* to the city council that December. In his *Confession*, Marpeck stated that "if rulers use the power of the sword to defend the gospel, they are perverting and exceeding their mandate. They are never permitted to coerce anyone in matters of faith" (176). Marpeck was expelled from the city in January 1532 (176–77).

Marpeck spent the remainder of his life encouraging, guiding, and nurturing Anabaptist communities throughout Switzerland, Moravia, and southern Germany. He resided primarily in Augsburg, where he served as the director of public works for the city, and was responsible for the maintenance of water towers and their wooden pumping units (325). He also remained an active participant in the reform debate through his writings, including a long theological debate with Caspar Schwenckfeld. Marpeck's death in 1556 was a significant setback for the Augsburg Anabaptist community and for the churches he guided throughout Switzerland and Moravia. Six years after his death, a fellow Anabaptist under interrogation by authorities declared, "those of his faith were all such because of Pilgram of blessed memory" (339).

The novice student of Anabaptism knows the names of Grebel, Sattler, Hubmaier, Denck, Simons, and even Marpeck. However, Klaassen and Klassen do a superb job in introducing the reader to lesser-known, yet vitally significant Anabaptists from the Marpeck circle, such as Leupold Scharnschlager, Jörg Maler, and Helena von Freyberg. It may be advantageous to introduce those figures here.

Leupold Scharnschlager became a close associate of Marpeck while both men were in Strasbourg. He, like Marpeck, was well-educated and economically successful. Coming to Anabaptist faith around 1530, he was an active baptizer, teacher, and leader in Strasbourg prior to his expulsion in 1534. Before the Strasbourg council he defended the position that there were two legitimate swords: one was secular and was to be used by the government to punish evil and protect good; the other was the sword of the Spirit and was to be wielded by the Christian community for internal correction only. The secular, or killing, sword of the magistrates was

legitimate, but it had no place in the community of faith. Scharnschlager reminded the council that he was asking of them exactly what they were asking of the emperor and pope for themselves (195–96). Scharnschlager cooperated with Marpeck on a number of writings, including a revision of a volume by Bernard Rothmann, the *Admonition* (201–03). Scharnschlager died in 1563, like Marpeck before him, escaping a martyr's death. An effective leader of Anabaptists from 1530, Scharnschlager can best be described as Marpeck's "right-hand man."

Jörg Maler, an Augsburg native and painter by trade, was imprisoned for assaulting a young maiden in a drunken stupor. Subsequently, he was drawn to Anabaptism and rebaptized in the home of George Nessler in March 1532 (261–62). Maler, like most Anabaptists, spent the majority of his life on the run from ruling authorities. On several occasions he was interrogated, tortured, imprisoned, and eventually expelled for his faith. He learned the weaving trade and spent six years in St. Gall and eight in Appenzell. He probably met Marpeck in the summer of 1534 and, after some early disagreements, later developed a positive working relationship with him (264–65). Maler authored *An Account of Faith* in 1547 in which he detailed his thoughts on the virtue of patience, the Christian life as discipleship, and the meaning of suffering for Christ (266). Before his death in 1562, he compiled the *Kunstbuch*, which enabled the reader to see Marpeck in a clearer light "as a pastor, theologian, and passionate advocate of change" (272).

Helena von Freyberg, a Tirolean noblewoman, became a leader in the Anabaptist movement and a lifelong friend of Marpeck (248). By 1527 Helena was welcoming Anabaptists to her castle and soon accepted their faith. She supported the Anabaptists by assisting its leaders and providing financial aid. In 1529 an order was issued for her arrest, so she fled to a home she owned in Constance. Because of her wealth and position she was afforded a full pardon upon recantation. After recanting in 1534, she moved to Augsburg in 1535, where she became an active member of an Anabaptist fellowship (249–50). On 13 April 1535 she was imprisoned and expelled from Augsburg. Later allowed to return to the city, she lived out her life there until her death in 1545. She was close to Marpeck and his wife and may have influenced them to settle in Augsburg. Helena's leadership position among the Augsburg Anabaptists reveals the level of equality that existed among the male and female believers in that community. She authored a "confession of guilt" that was included by Maler in the *Kunstbuch*, in which she repented of her recantation (251–58).

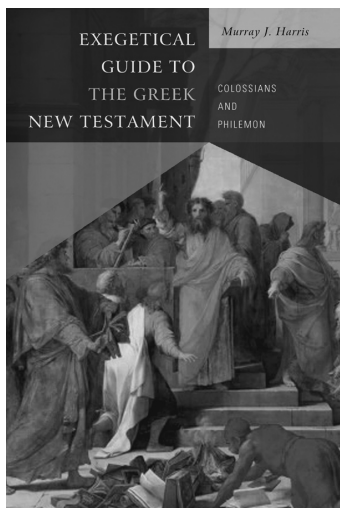
This biography consists of twenty-one chapters plus an epilogue on the life of Pilgram Marpeck, alongside short introductions to his circle. Two appendices include excerpts from Marpeck's *Response* (directed to

Schwenckfeld) and the *Kunstbuch*. The writing is clear and concise. The presentation of the sixteenth-century political, religious, and economic climate in which Marpeck lived is as fascinating as it is apparently impeccable. Marpeck is the modern-day bi-vocational minister's hero. He was an accomplished engineer as well as a gifted pastor and theologian. The title of chapter eighteen encompasses the essence of Marpeck: "Engineer by Day, Theologian by Night" (301). He balanced both the secular and the spiritual and did it effectively. His societal position probably kept him from the martyr's pyre and he was able to use his financial stability to enable him to spread the Anabaptist message.

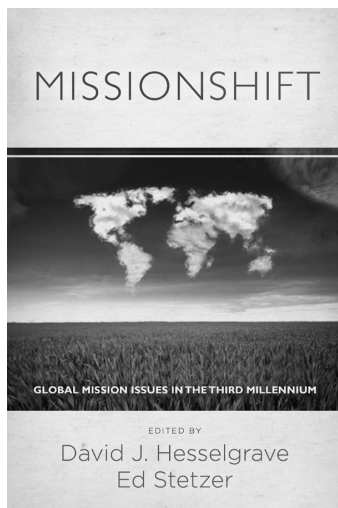
This work should not be confused as a treatise on the theology of Pilgram Marpeck, for that was not the authors' goal. However, the authors do an effective job in highlighting Marpeck's main emphases, including the notion that "the humanity of Christ [was] the theological axiom on which everything else in his theology depended (331)." (For a more in-depth examination of Marpeck's theological tenets one should see Yarnell's and Blough's works mentioned earlier in this review). Instead, this work is the model of biography. Klaassen and Klassen have provided a readable text which details not only the life of Pilgram Marpeck but provides the contextual setting, the economic and social environment, in which he lived out his faith. This biography will be an essential part of any Anabaptist library as it provides the student of Anabaptist history with the most comprehensive work on the life of Pilgram Marpeck to date.

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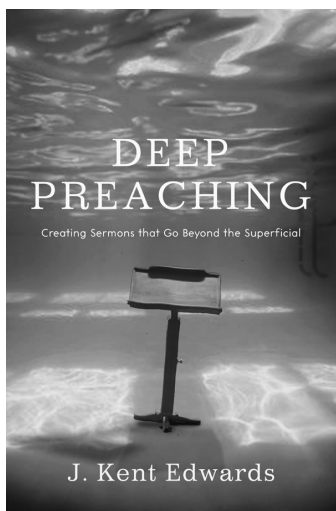
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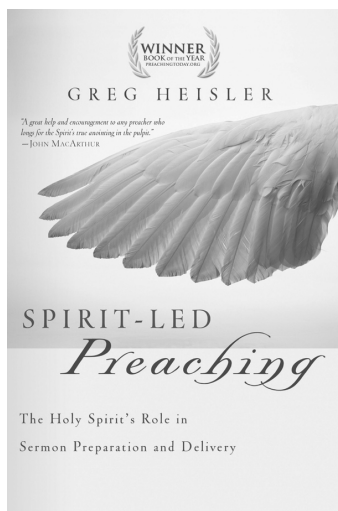
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