

FAITH, WORK, AND ECONOMICS



SOUTHWESTERN
JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

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Editorial

W. Madison Grace II
Managing Editor
Southwestern Journal of Theology

Christianity as a mere religion may have nothing more to it than obligatory rituals—occasional Sunday worship, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, etc.—but Christianity as a way of life calls for something greater than mere religion. However, many Christians find themselves thinking of faith as a weekend endeavor and not something applicable to the whole of life. This is understandable if one thinks of the Christian life as existing only when one is gathered for religious events. The remaining time of the week must be for something else—something other than religion. However, if one considers Christianity as a whole-life faith endeavor, more than Sunday is in mind. Christianity then becomes something that is an everyday occurrence. If this is the case then work—what most people spend their time doing—must be a part of that lived-out faith. This raises the question, does the Bible actually speak to this concept of whole-life Christianity? The answer to that question is a resounding yes and the articles that follow are engaged with the broader question of what does the Bible say about faith, work, and economics.

The completion of this issue of the Journal was a little different than many produced in that a variety of people were involved in the process leading up to the production of the essays that follow. I am thankful for all these who helped complete this issue. As always Joshua Williams has not only been a thoughtful editor for our book reviews he is also a resource for thinking through content whether it be biblical, theological, or aesthetic. Two young scholars, Cole Peck and Marc Hatcher, also have provided needed assistance in running the Journal’s office as well as producing this issue. The Land Center, The Kern Family Foundation, and the Oikoinomia Network all have aided in facilitating the presentation of the original papers. Finally, Eric Mitchell and John Taylor (who introduce the volume more clearly below) have been a tremendous help in gathering these articles and seeing them through to their completion.

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Guest Editorial: Faith, Work, and Economics

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One of the key developments in the Christian landscape in recent years, and one which has the potential to have a lasting impact on the church's mission in the world, has been the rising interest in understanding human work and economic life, from both a biblical and theological perspective. For too many believers there is a disconnect between their church activities, and the work which occupies most of their waking lives, whether paid or unpaid. The so-called "Faith and Work" movement has attempted to bridge that Sunday-Monday gap. There is a need for whole-life discipleship, in which work is important not only for economic well-being, or for the development of godly character, but, according to the creation mandate of Genesis 1 and 2, is also the avenue for human flourishing in a fallen world, the arena for the expansion of the kingdom of God, and the proclamation of the gospel. Although this movement is able to draw upon Luther's understanding of vocation it has otherwise lacked a substantive and freshly formulated theological and biblical underpinning.

In June 2013 two groups of evangelical biblical studies scholars and professors (an Old Testament Group and a New Testament group) met at the Kern Scholar's breakfast at Acton University, in Grand Rapids. Their discussions led them to identify fundamental problems faced in efforts to incorporate the theology of work and economics into the curriculum in seminaries and colleges. Despite the rise in interest of faith and work at a local church level, not enough was being done to ensure that the movement had a strong biblical alignment and foundation. Many draw on the Bible in formulating ethical and theological approaches to work, economics, and vocation, but in this area few resources are being produced by biblical specialists, especially evangelical ones. There are meager resources available to those who wish to integrate these subjects into courses.

Much of the scholarship that is related to economics, work, and vocation, although useful, does not have a strong biblical foundation, and is from a theologically liberal perspective. Overall, the scholarly consensus tends towards a statist or a socially progressive perspective. It is all too common for scholars to find the Jesus that we want to find. While some bias is unavoidable, it is important as far as possible not to impose such bias on the

Scriptures, but to follow where the Bible leads, cognizant of its historical and social context. Despite some prominent exceptions, evangelicals have generally been absent in examining the Bible in areas related to economics and work, despite the clear concerns of the biblical writers in these areas. For example, both Testaments show an interest, and in no particular order, in: money and wealth, government and authority, work, benefaction, giving, taxation, financial ethics, corporate and personal finances, and poverty. The first step was to provoke scholars to start researching and writing. After all, history belongs to those who write.

The discussion at Acton became an ongoing conversation. In September 2014 a colloquium was held on the New Testament and Economics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, under the auspices of the Richard Land Center for Cultural Engagement, with the sponsorship of the Kern Family Foundation and the assistance of the Oikonomia Network. The goal was to bring together scholars to stimulate biblical scholarship, build relationships, and produce publishable material. Evangelical scholars, including leaders in the field, gathered from across the country, representing a wide range of denominations and interests. As well as New Testament professors, there were also scholars in the field of economics, Old Testament, and archaeology.

This first colloquium was well received and in September 2015 a second colloquium was held on the Old Testament and Economics with scholars in Old Testament, economics, and archaeology. We have found the diversity of scholarship and cross-disciplinary interaction to be of great help in viewing the Scriptures through the multi-faceted lens of Faith, Work, and Economics. Several of the papers presented at these colloquia have already been published elsewhere, and selected papers are made available for the first time in this volume. A third, combined colloquium on The Old Testament and the New Testament and Economics will occur in the Summer of 2017. It is our goal to publish the majority of the papers from all three colloquia in an upcoming single monograph.

We are grateful for the contribution of each author. We are also gratified by evidence that these colloquia have stimulated other similar events, involving not only biblical scholars, but theologians and church historians, and the emergence of various related books. To God be the glory.

Are Business People the Bad Guys? Person and Property in the Pentateuch¹

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Introduction

Recently I spoke at a workshop for businessmen and clergy and asked, “When was the last time you felt you had been looked down upon because you were involved in business?” The responses, as you can imagine, were interesting and varied, with many feeling as if they were in the cross-hairs not just in society at large (this was in the height of the Occupy movement) but also within the church. This kind of feeling is not paranoia, since it is not paranoia if someone is in fact after you! This kind of thing is too often the public face of business. For example, in the 24 February 2002 cover story in *Time*, the writer made it a point to state that Kenneth Lay was the son of a Baptist minister, an active member of the First United Methodist Church in Houston, and served on the Board of Trustees at his church—trying to paint both business and Christianity as suspect. Guilt by association.

It seems that lately the face of the villain in popular novel and film has changed. Each generation seems to have its own villain. A growing place now is reserved for business, especially transnational big business often in conjunction with environmental exploitation. This anti-business sentiment is even passed along to our children in ways we might not even be aware of or think about. For example, look at the Academy Award winning animated features between 2001–2012 and the villains we see in them: *Shrek*² (a monopoly capitalist), *Ratatouille*³ (where the owner wants not only to become part of an evil transnational, but, horror of horrors, he wants to serve junk food, which is somewhat ironic since this message is being shown in movie theatres, which are, of course, known for their organic and healthy offerings), *Up*⁴ (a property developer), and worst of all, *Wall-e*⁵ (Walmart). Finally, a film

¹Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture citations are from the New Revised Standard Version.

²DreamWorks Pictures, 2001.

³Pixar/Walt Disney Pictures, 2007.

⁴Pixar/Walt Disney Pictures, 2009.

⁵Pixar/Walt Disney Pictures, 2008.

that came out in 2012 based on a book from 1971 which was a catalyst for this kind of presentation, Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax*.⁶

Has business *per se* become a baddy? Has economics become an enemy? Some biblical scholars have also presented a market economy as an enemy or at least as being unbiblical or not reflecting a biblical model. For an example, see Norman Gottwald's Marxist interpretation of early Israelite history⁷ and the more recent work of Roland Boer.⁸ Boer in particular reflects on charges that a Marxist approach is anachronistic as regards method, since it imposes later categories on earlier texts.⁹ While true, it is important to remember that this is equally true as regards a free-market model, which he terms "neo-classical economics."¹⁰

Biblical texts can also be brought out to show some of these same points concerning economics as enemy: Luke 18:25 (about rich men and needle's eyes), Proverbs 11:4 ("Riches do not profit in the day of wrath"), or Jeremiah 22:17 ("But your eyes and heart are only on your dishonest gain, for shedding innocent blood, and for practicing oppression and violence").

In light of these various suggestions that business, and even private ownership, might be less than ideal, what is the value of economics for biblical interpretation and vice versa, how might the Bible shed light on economic realities?

Economics

First of all, what is "economics?" A useful dictionary definition identifies it as "the science that deals with the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services."¹¹ From its Greek derivation, οἰκονομία (rules [νομος] of the house [οικος]) concerns household administration, or, in basic terms, how we live together as a human community. With this understanding, almost all areas of life have a social or economic aspect. Economics is not concerned only with the business of business but with the business of life.

A key element of economic understanding is the concept of ownership. There is a spectrum of views regarding ownership ranging from personal, private ownership of everything on one end to a public, state ownership of everything on the other. On one side of the spectrum is a free market economy regulated by supply and demand. Here decisions regarding such things as what to produce and the prices to charge for goods or services are determined by the individual producers and owners. "Individuals have economic freedom when (a) property they acquire without the use of force, fraud, or

⁶Illumination Entertainment/Universal Pictures, 2012.

⁷Norman K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel, 1250–1050 B.C.E.* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1979).

⁸Roland Boer, *The Sacred Economy of Ancient Israel*, Library of Ancient Israel (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015) and earlier works.

⁹Ibid., 41.

¹⁰Ibid., 11.

¹¹*Random House Webster's College Dictionary* (New York: Random House, 1991), 423.

theft is protected from physical invasions by others and (b) they are free to use, exchange, or give their property as long as their actions do not violate the identical rights of others . . . an index of economic freedom should measure the extent to which rightly acquired property is protected and individuals are engaged in voluntary transactions.”¹²

The other side of the spectrum is a market where decisions concerning such things as what to produce are controlled by an external power, usually the state or some other collective in a socialistic system. I am not aware of any society operating completely at one end or other of the spectrum, but rather somewhere along its continuum. We need to remember that, in the Pentateuch, the description is of a society which, for most of the time covered in these biblical books, were slaves or refugees, living under conditions which did not allow any regular, free market forces to operate, at least in the spheres over which the Israelites might have any control.

Ownership, Economics, and Business in the Pentateuch

Existence of Ownership

God, as Creator of the universe, could be considered owner of all. Humanity, according to the creation story in Genesis 1:27–28, is afforded a special relationship with God, being made in his image. “And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”

The parameters of what that image means are debated, but co-creative ability, and therefore ownership, is part of that image, so ownership and authority over creation is delegated by God, according to the biblical narrative. Human beings are, in fact, secondary co-creators with God. Biological creation through reproduction is part of this mandate: to “be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth.” Reproduction is not the entirety of this mandate, however, since both artistic, aesthetic production as well as economic production are part of the mandate as well. Humanity, like God, can and should produce things which are “good for food and pleasing to the eye” (Gen 3:6).

Abram is commanded to “Leave your country . . . and go to the land I will show you” (Gen 12:1). Upon arrival there, “The Lord appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your offspring I will give this land’” (12:7). The promise of land given to Abram is repeated on numerous occasions,¹³ and also given to his

¹²James Gwartney, et al, *Economic Freedom of the World, 1975–1995 Report* (Vancouver; Fraser Institute, 1996). In 2013, Hong Kong ranked number 1 by these criteria while the US ranked number 16.

¹³13:15, 17; 15:7, 18; 17:8 and 24:7.

son, Isaac,¹⁴ and his grandson, Jacob.¹⁵ Even for those in a nomadic lifestyle, property ownership is important, especially when some sense of geographical permanence is needed. This is the case, for example, when Abraham buys the cave, field, and trees as a burial site for his wife, Sarah, from Ephron the Hittite in Genesis 23.¹⁶ Land is also important in an agricultural society such as that of Israel after settling in the land, where at least enough of a sedentary existence is needed to allow for sowing and reaping crops.¹⁷

Wider ownership of things beyond land is also evident, and often portrayed as part of God's blessing, as when Abraham's servant describes his master's good fortunes to Laban, saying: "The LORD has greatly blessed my master, and he has become wealthy; he has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female slaves, camels and donkeys" (24:35). A 2011 work concerns the importance of possessions in the story of Jacob (Gen 37–50).¹⁸ Possessions do not form the *raison d'être* for the story, but thread their way throughout it. In fact, material possessions of various types are mentioned 310 times in Genesis 12–50.¹⁹ Similarities between the lives of the patriarchs and that of Sinuhe in a Middle Egyptian text, where he receives the benefits of land ownership, with its produce of fruit, grain, cattle, wine and food,²⁰ shows that this concept of the desired "good life" involving ownership and consumption is viewed as a blessing beyond the borders of Israel.

Ownership is recognized and regulated in Israel's legal system. The Ten Commandments, her national foundation and constitution, clearly establish a right to private property in two of its statements, the eighth and tenth ("you shall not steal," Exod 20:15; "you shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor," 20:17). This is not simply a random list of instructions, but constitutes the core of the ancient Israelite house or "household," which in that early period where agriculture was the main lifestyle, "was the fundamental social form, the basic unit of production and consumption."²¹ The items are listed due to their economic significance rather than any other criterion (e.g., sexual attraction toward the wife, since that is covered in the seventh command, mentioned below).²²

¹⁴26:3.

¹⁵28:4, 13.

¹⁶David L. Baker, *Tight Fists or Open Hands? Wealth and Poverty in Old Testament Law* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 15.

¹⁷William G. Dever, "The Rural Landscape of Palestine in the Early Bronze IV Period," in Aren M. Maier, et al., *The Rural Landscape of Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2003), 43–60; Boer, *Sacred Economy*, 77.

¹⁸Paul D. Vrolijk, *Jacob's Wealth: An Examination into the Nature and Role of Material Possessions in the Jacob Cycle (Gen 25:19–35:29)*, VTSup, 146 (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

¹⁹Ibid, 307.

²⁰William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr., eds. *Context of Scripture I: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 79.

²¹Richard A. Horsley, *Covenant Economics: A Biblical Vision of Justice for All* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 27.

²²Baker, *Tight Fists*, 31.

David L. Baker notes the theological importance of these laws when he states that, “property ownership is a divinely given right and responsibility, and therefore members of the covenant community may not deprive someone else of their personal property.”²³

The ninth commandment (“you shall not give false testimony against your neighbor,” 20:16) does not simply concern lying about someone, going against his or her right to good reputation, but is also an economic wrong. It is set in the context of the court, where false testimony can put the entire legal system at risk. This perjury is protected against elsewhere in the Law by requiring more than one witness in a case (Deut 17:6; 19:15), and protection against it was given additional psychological power by requiring witnesses in a capital case to be the ones who began the punishment (17:7). Also, if a false suit was brought, the false witnesses would themselves receive the punishment which the accused would have suffered if they had been found guilty (Deut 19:16–21).

The commandments also protect a right to sexual faithfulness (“you shall not commit adultery,” Exod 20:14). It, and the call to honor one’s parents in the fifth commandment (Exod 20:12), protects the family unit, not only important for the ancient Israelite agricultural society, since it was the unit in which most economic production took place, but of any society. It is evident even today that where the family is threatened and is without all of these protections, the continued existence of a healthy human society would be, and is, in jeopardy.

Rights to, and the rights of slaves are spelled out in Exodus 21:2–11, and the rights to and obligations of other private property are spelled out in Exodus 21:28–22:15.

Ownership is also assumed in Israel’s system of religious practices. The offerings which Cain and Abel brought to the Lord were the products of their own work, and therefore theirs to offer or withhold as they saw fit. We can also assume that the materials brought by the Israelites as regulated in the laws regarding offerings and sacrifices in Leviticus 1–7—whether the offerings were from the herd, the flock, or the field—were in some way owned by the one giving the offering—whether through breeding, cultivation, or capture in the case of birds (Lev 1:14). If it were not their own personal possession, there would have been little sense of sacrifice, no giving up of some other benefit which they might have derived from using the object for their personal good. This, by the way, is one of the principles of economics—the reasoned allocation of scarce resources.²⁴

Purpose of Ownership

This is an appropriate opportunity to ask after the purpose of ownership. While it is primarily to provide for one’s self and one’s family, ownership is

²³Ibid., 310.

²⁴See e.g., Victor V. Claar and Robin J. Klay, *Economics in Christian Perspective: Theory, Policy and Life Choices* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2007), 15.

not simply for personal enjoyment and benefit. That would be like a wealthy collector who has secreted a hoard of Old Masters in his basement gallery solely for private enjoyment, barring access to anyone else. Ownership was for the purpose of aiding further production as called for in Genesis 1:28 (“be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth”); it allowed for the acquisition of working capital. In fact, it is most helpful in the case of ancient Israel to view ownership being of the produce itself rather than of the land from which it was produced. This is evident in the instructions concerning real property for the Year of Jubilee in Leviticus 25:14–16:

When you make a sale to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor, you shall not cheat one another. When you buy from your neighbor, you shall pay only for the number of years since the jubilee; the seller shall charge you only for the remaining crop years. If the years are more, you shall increase the price, and if the years are fewer, you shall diminish the price; for it is a certain number of harvests that are being sold to you.

In some ways, the Year of Jubilee could look like a Marxist redistribution of property by the state.²⁵ Who is the actual owner, however? It is good to remember another verse found in the same chapter of Leviticus, however, for 25:23 reads: “The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants.” This is a reminder that there is a difference between the Owner with a capital “O,” which is God, and a small letter “owner,” his human co-rulers. In some ways, then, Israelites operated with rolling long-term leases, though it is not clear how this might impact their daily lives in any way differently than if they had outright ownership. Going back to Karl Marx, he differentiated between the capitalistic owners, or “bourgeoisie,” on the one hand, and the workers, or “proletariat,” who owned nothing, on the other. Socialism as it subsequently developed under Leon Trotsky then proposed that ownership needed to be in the hands of the collective whole, whether in the form of the state or the commune, so that there would be no owner/employee relationships, which could lead to oppression, no “us” vs. “them” mentality. The Bible takes a different slant on this, however, not advocating a collective ownership and a periodic redistribution of wealth. Rather it protected individual (or perhaps better, family or kinship group) ownership of the means of production rather than the product itself, protecting the right of everyone to be an owner, a producer, one of the “bourgeoisie.” Everyone thus could be an “us” rather than a “them.”

Purpose of the Laws?

Israel’s laws seem to have been established to protect the rights of individuals and families against encroachment by the state. The Old Testament

²⁵For example see, Robert North, *Sociology of the Biblical Jubilee*, *Analecta Biblica*, 4 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1954), especially 175–89.

has examples of two kinds of laws. One comprises the static, fixed laws like the Ten Commandments. These formed a foundation of society, their Constitution, if you like. On the other hand, there were the much more numerous case laws, laws of a type with which we are more familiar. These grow (seemingly without end) and change as situations, or cases, change. The case laws show the development of the concept of ownership when new situations are encountered. A textbook example of this is the daughters of Zelophehad who, in two encounters with Moses, bring about two different sets of property ownership laws. In Numbers 27:1–11, Zelophehad's five daughters present to Moses the problem of their father dying without male descendants, who are the ones who customarily receive the landed family property at the death of their father, the same kind of holdings which Joseph had given to his father and brothers much earlier in Egypt (Gen 47:11).²⁶ This makes the land distribution to 601,730 men as described in Numbers 26:53 irrelevant for them since they are daughters, not sons. Moses, after prayer, extends property rights to women (and other near relatives) in such a case. The pesky sisters later return to Moses for further clarification in Numbers 36:1–13. What happens if they marry outside the clan, taking the inherited clan property with them and so diminishing the clan's ability to provide for itself? Here Moses announces that the daughters have property rights but also are limited through marriage restrictions in order to prevent the property from being alienated from the family tribe. This serves as an example of both the intricacies of personal land ownership and the importance of personal land ownership. These stories are described by Michael Moore as "one of the most remarkable socioeconomic pronouncements in the Bible," partly due to its opening up of land ownership to women.²⁷

Production

We return now to the topic of production, which was briefly mentioned in the discussion of ownership. At a foundational level, the Bible starts off with an example of production when God creates or produces "the heavens and the earth" as already mentioned. One of the Hebrew verbs translated "create, make," קָנָה used for example in Genesis 14:19, where God is described as "maker of heaven and earth," is an economic term, regularly referring, among other things, to the acquisition of property through purchase.²⁸ The first occurrence of creative activity using this verb with humanity as its subject, it is the woman, Eve, who says in Genesis 4:1 in relation to the birth of her son Cain, whose name is a play on this verb 'create', "With the Lord's

²⁶Michael S. Moore, *Wealthwatch: A Study of Socioeconomic Conflict in the Bible* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2011), 147.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 166.

²⁸Francis Brown, et al., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), 888–89. See this usage of the cognate Akkadian word *qanû*, Erica Reiner, ed., *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of The University of Chicago*, vol 13 (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1982), 91.

help, I have *produced* (or “*created*”) a man! (NLT; cf. NRSV). Male and female, man and woman, are both in God’s image and both are co-creators and producers in the world as he created it to be.

One can unpack the creation account in Genesis 1–2 a bit more from the prospect of economics and business. This is an appropriate place to start since that is where God started: in the beginning. It reflects what left his hand and what he considered to be “good,” which occurs seven times in as an evaluation of God’s creation in chapter one.²⁹

When God created heaven and earth (1:1), it is the material world which is in mind. God has an interest, an “investment” if you like, in this stuff with which we have to do every day. This stuff of creation includes water (v. 2), light (v. 3), the air/atmosphere (vv. 6–8), the dry land and the seas (vv. 9–10), vegetation (vv. 11–13), the heavenly bodies (vv. 12–19), and living creatures of the sky, sea, and earth (vv. 20–25). The account mentions things useful for human production including the power production capabilities of water and light, minerals and plant products, which would include fossil fuels, animals for food, power, and transportation, and humans as a management and work-force.

As is well known, there are several ways in which Israel and its view of the created world differed from the views of some of her neighbors.³⁰ In the *Enuma-lish* creation story from Mesopotamia, the home territory of Abram before he moved west, the heavens and the earth were formed from the slain body of a goddess, Tiamat, and humanity was formed as kind of an after-thought from the blood of one of her semi-divine minions, Kingu, mixed with clay. Humans were formed in order to be a labor saving device for the younger gods, who had been up to that point responsible for providing food and drink for their divine peers.³¹ Unlike Israel’s view of humanity, which placed them at the top of the creation hierarchy, right under God and in his image, Mesopotamian humans were at the bottom rung.

Additionally, Israel’s God was not a physical part of his creation, that is, no part of him was used to provide the material of creation, unlike in Mesopotamia with the use of body and blood. Creation itself is in no way divine, not a god, but a separate reality apart from the essence of God. This leads to a different way of approaching the “stuff” of creation. If it were divine, we would need to worship it, not use it, manipulating or re-functioning it in some way. One writer has said that modern science is “the legitimate child of [Judaean-]Christianity” since we can study it objectively as an “it” rather than a “you.”³² The same can be said for the area for human production, which could not be easily done if its raw source material was viewed as divine.

²⁹Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31.

³⁰See, as representative of a vast bibliography, Christopher B. Hays, *Hidden Riches: A Sourcebook for the Comparative Study of the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near East* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 41–73.

³¹Hallo and Younger, *Context I*, 390–402.

³²John MacMurray, *Reason and Emotion*, 2nd ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), 179.

One more comment on the creation account in Genesis 1: it is a clear picture of order, with a place for everything and everything in its place.³³ This is shown not only by the structured layout of the creation in seven days, but also by how much of the account involves separating into different spheres, dark and light, water and dry land. Things are also made “after their own kind,” according to discernible categories. Even the purpose for which the heavenly bodies were made shows ordering: they were made “for signs and for seasons and for days and years” (1:14), thus providing regularity to the seasons, so vital for the planting and reaping of Israel’s agricultural society. The constancy and consistency, the repeatability and reliability of creation is what is necessary not only for agriculture but also for chemistry and physics, for engineering, and so many other areas of human endeavor. Imagine what life, if it were possible, might be like without this kind of regularity. We get messed up twice a year when daylight savings time comes or goes. What if each day was a different length through variations in the movements of the earth? At least our animals naturally seem to have an understanding of these things. We might want to get up an hour later, but they are coming to get milked today the same time they did yesterday before we changed our clocks.

Genesis 2 has an emphasis on community more than the ordering seen in Genesis 1. It provides further insights into the area of human production. God’s Sabbath (vv. 1–3) indicates that we humans, in his image, must not be only about work. Creation mandates a time of rest, a time to “be still and know that I am God” (Ps 46:10), not only for humans, but for the fields and flocks as well (Exod 23:11). In contrast to the picture of human beings as simply the slaves of the Mesopotamian gods, needing to supply the gods’ needs 24–7,³⁴ Israel’s God gives them a day off, relief from the daily grind.³⁵ In the Exodus 20 version of the Sabbath command, it is tied to creation, since “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it.” In the Deuteronomy 5 version of the commandment, the motivation is different, “Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day.” God created the opportunity for all to rest, and he wanted to make sure that this is not only the human’s own selfish privilege, but also that of all the rest of God’s creation.

God provides the garden (2:8), a place of nourishment where humanity may flourish and fulfill the mandate given by God. Here also God does not skimp in his creation. He lavishes good on his creation: plants and fruit trees

³³See John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2009).

³⁴See *Enuma elish*, 6:31–36 (Hallo and Younger, *Context I*, 401); the Igigi myth, part of the Atra-hasis Epic (ibid., 450–51).

³⁵Richard A. Horsley, *Covenant Economics: A Biblical Vision of Justice for All* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 25.

all over for use as food. Humanity has all it needs, but also there is a limitation, one garden resource which was restricted according to humanity's contract with God (2:16–17). The nature of the restriction is not relevant here, but what is important is that just because humanity is able to do something does not mean that it should do something. We might not understand why God made this restriction, but there must have been something potentially harmful from which the Creator of the universe was protecting his creatures for their own good.

Human responsibility for creation is spelled out more clearly in Genesis 2:15: "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it." Tilling, or more accurately, "working" the soil is necessary for its fullest production, but this is not to be done to its hurt, but rather "to keep" or care for it.³⁶ This is not a license to rape nature, but to nurture it. While nature and creation are not divine, they are sacred, things of God's own which he has entrusted to us, his human co-creators and co-sustainers.³⁷ Work is not only for the benefit of the earth, it is also for the benefit of the worker, providing occupation, product/result, but also significance. Martin Luther stated: "But it is appropriate here to point out that man was created not for leisure but for work, even in the state of innocence."³⁸

God brings the animals to the man (vv. 19–20) for him to name, showing human ability, like God's in chapter one, of categorizing and organizing: he engages in information management. When the man does not find someone like himself among the animals, no other in God's image who could serve as a helper, God creates the woman (vv. 21–24), not as man's apprentice or servant but as his equal in fulfilling God's creation mandate, both being co-creators with God. The idea, or at least the possibility, of division of labor has thus been established.

As one writer explains the scene as we have it at the end of Genesis 2:

The foundations for a market economy have been laid—the means of production (the garden itself, and the earth, atmosphere, and sun), labor (to till), management (to tend), and the cooperative impulse to divide (share) the roles and efforts required—as part of God's created temporal order. In this first human relationship, the marketplace is established not as a place necessarily for profit

³⁶Let me digress for a moment to make a theological comment on the Hebrew verb translated 'work, till' here. It has a similar range of meaning as the Greek verb used in Romans 12:1, a familiar passage about offering our bodies either as "your reasonable service" (KJV) or as "your spiritual act of worship" (NIV). The verb is often used in religious contexts, indicating that in the Judeo-Christian view, work/service and worship are aligned rather than separated.

³⁷See John R. Schneider, *The Good of Affluence: Seeking God in a Culture of Wealth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 44–45.

³⁸*Lectures on Genesis 2:15*, cited in Raymond Bakke, et al., *Joy at Work: Bible Study Companion* (Seattle: PVG, 2005), 25.

but as a place of bonded relationship and full of the potential for human practice of an equitable and just society.³⁹

Before moving on, let me make some management observations on this Genesis creation account noted by a student a number of years ago. I cannot even remember her name, but she had some interesting insights. God had a vision, the creation of the universe, something which every business venture, in fact every human venture, including the church, must have. Where are we going, what is our goal, our aim? Filling the pews? Making the budget? Forming disciples? Without knowing where you are going, how will you know if you get there, or even where “there” is? Albert Einstein said, “A perfection of means, and confusion of goals seem, in my opinion, to characterize our age.”⁴⁰ This is what made it difficult for Abram when he received his call in Genesis 12:1, “Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.’” He was to leave what he knew, his familiar surroundings, to go where? As Angus Buchan said, however, “Abraham didn’t know where he was going, but he knew who was leading him,” and he trusted that God, his travel companion, did know the destination.⁴¹

God also had a strategic plan as to how to attain his vision; he had thought things out in advance. This is stated in Proverbs 8, where Wisdom is speaking (8:22–31). Wise planning accompanied God in creation, and it is also necessary for humans, his co-creators (8:32–36).⁴² Joseph, in his job as “Chief Operating Officer” in Egypt,⁴³ also had a plan when presented with Pharaoh’s vision of the seven fat cows and seven skinny cows in Genesis 41:33–36.

Part of the plan of creation was to reach the goal through smaller, incremental steps. In Genesis 1, there were eight of these, and they were assessed when they were finished: “God saw that it was good.” The goal was reached, the vision actualized sequentially and one step at a time.

While God was the creator, he did not do everything directly on his own. He spoke and created light, but Genesis 1:11 and 24 both read, “Then God said, ‘Let the land produce.’” He had other elements take part in the creation. This is a management principle often easier understood than practiced, since, as an entrepreneur who started the business, it is hard to let go and trust the enterprise to someone else, for many reasons. Moses had to learn this from the advice of a seasoned old-timer, his father-in-law Jethro, who observed Moses’ business model and had some comments on it (Exod

³⁹David B. Doty, *Eden’s Bridge: The Marketplace in Creation and Mission* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 15; material for the above presentation is taken from 2–15.

⁴⁰Albert Einstein, *The Theory of Relativity and other Essays* (Secaucus, NJ: Carol, 1996), 67.

⁴¹Angus Buchan, *Now is the Time: A Daily Devotional* (Oxford: Monarch, 2014), 90.

⁴²Richard Rumelt, *Good Strategy, Bad Strategy: The Difference and Why it Matters* (New York: Crown Business, 2011).

⁴³Horsley, *Covenant Economics*, 13.

18:13–26). God also is shown to have consulted in the creation process, “let us make man in our image” (Gen 1:26).

Note finally what happened when creation was finished, the goal was reached, the vision achieved. God stopped and had a party, what is called the “Sabbath.” Marking milestones is a vital part of building morale and helping those involved celebrate their help in reaching a goal.⁴⁴

Production is not only important at the point of creation, but plays an important role throughout the Pentateuch and beyond. To encourage Israel to keep the Sinai covenant, it concludes with numerous blessings. These include, in Deuteronomy 28:3–5, “Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your livestock, both the increase of your cattle and the issue of your flock. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.” God wants his creatures not simply to eke out an existence by living on the poverty-line, he wants them to experience abundance, which is in some ways tied in with *shalom*. “Peace,” its common translation into English, is only an anemic representation of the term. “Peace” is mainly a negative term, indicating the lack of war, no more armed conflict. Hebrew has a much richer, more positive concept behind this word. True, there is no conflict, but all things are right with the world. Not only do I not fight my neighbor, I love my neighbor and want the best not only for me and my family but also for them and their family. Its ultimate goal is rest, not the idea of not working, but in not striving, struggling vigorously against resistance to reach a goal, enjoying and being energized by one’s labors rather than being depleted by them. Abundance is a difficult concept to discuss in situations in which there is much scarcity, but it is nevertheless an important biblical concept.⁴⁵

The Fall

Free Markets?

A question that arises from a study of personal ownership and production is whether any system, inside the Bible or anywhere else, can enjoy a pure, free-market economy. Can humanity, or specifically a human institution such as a market, operate without constraint? Scripture also addresses this issue, though in such a way that the problem is clearly seen not to be economic, not a problem with how markets work, but theological, how the human heart works. The pristine, “very-good” creation as it left the hand

⁴⁴The Bible, which is not a business manual, has many valuable business insights. It is a revelation of God’s workings in his creation, an ‘owner-operator’ manual written by the manufacturer. If so, we should not be surprised to find it relevant not only in issues of religious practice but also how to live in so many other areas of daily life. A number of business gurus have noticed this, and have been presenting insights in the secular world which are derived from Scripture even though their direct source might not be mentioned. These include Peter Drucker, Ken Blanchard, Steven Covey, and Patrick Lencioni, to name just a few.

⁴⁵John R. Schneider, *The Good of Affluence: Seeking God in a Culture of Wealth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

of God in Genesis 1–2 encountered the reality of human disobedience in Genesis 3, and there the destructive potential of fallen self-rule is clearly evident. God had established one prohibition in his good creation, one which restricted access to part of his creation: “And the LORD God commanded the man, ‘You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat’” (2:16–17). The humans subjected this prohibition to their own evaluation, and found it wanting from their perspective: “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate” (Gen 3:6).

A hierarchy of authority had been established at creation, with God at the top, humanity in his image just below, followed by animals and plants. The Creator of the universe established how his creation would best run, but in Genesis 3 his creatures question what he had set in place. In discussing what God meant, rather than acquiescing to his wishes, humans were raising themselves up one level in the hierarchy, claiming equality with God in at least some ways. This had catastrophic results, altering relationships at every level. Male and female, each made in the image of God and without shame in their openness before each other (Gen 1:24), now lost their own sense of dignity, hiding themselves (3:7). This also had the result of separating the man from the woman, and this distance becomes even more apparent when God confronts them. The man responds, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.” (3:12). “It’s her fault, but really it’s your fault, God!” This shows that the good relationship between God and humanity has also been shattered. This relationship break is pictured starkly in Genesis 3:8–9, “They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, ‘Where are you?’” God’s question here is not geographical, but theological. He wants his creatures to be aware of the rift now existing between them as he asks where they now stand in relation to him.

This is not the end of things as regards the results of the fall, for Genesis 9:2–3 says, “The fear and dread of you shall rest on every animal of the earth, and on every bird of the air, on everything that creeps on the ground, and on all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and just as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.” Humanity lost closeness to the rung above in the hierarchical ladder, but also with the rung below: the animals. One more verse is also relevant. Genesis 3:17–19 reads, “And to the man [God] said, ‘Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants

of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken.” The lowest rung on the hierarchy is affected by the fall: the inanimate plants, and even the earth itself, the raw material for human economic production. Now the man has to undertake laborious toil against recalcitrant nature much as that the Igigi-gods were happy to pass on to humanity in the Atra-hasis Epic.⁴⁶ It was this event of the Fall that changed the entire game. God started play, getting everything moving well together in his creation, and then passed the ball to humanity, who fumbled the ball on the very first play. If it was not for Genesis 3, there would be no need for the rest of the Bible. Fallen self-rule led to destruction at many levels, and the rest of the story involves restoration.

Rule of Law

Socioeconomic relationships are not immune to the myriad of problems caused by disobedience. They were an important element included among those things that suffered breakdown. While one assumes that a life without sin inside the Garden of Eden would have not needed such a thing in the same way, a fallen life outside the garden needs the rule of law to protect the rights of God’s creatures, including private property rights. Since the problem was internal to the nature of humanity, not an external one regarding the nature of markets, there needed to be a theological response to the theological problem. Since the human heart had been affected, there needed to be “heart surgery” to establish justice within the community, a topic found especially in the Prophets (e.g. Ezek 11:17–20).

Daily life during the period of settlement in the land, a life that many of the pentateuchal laws anticipate and regulate, is agricultural for the majority of the population. This “subsistence–survival” pattern, as it is called by Boer,⁴⁷ was the lot of the rural population throughout Israel’s history. This increased the importance of land ownership, since a loss of land led to destitution and the inability to care for oneself and one’s family. For this reason, laws had to be established in two areas. First was protecting land ownership from being lost and its restoration if it were lost. This includes the Jubilee laws and the cases brought by the daughters of Zelophehad in Numbers 27 and 36, which we referred to earlier.⁴⁸

Second, Israel also had to establish protection of the marginalized, the landless, those within her society who were unable to protect themselves.⁴⁹ The powerful had less need for this type of law, since they were able to take

⁴⁶Hallo and Younger, *Context I*, 450–51.

⁴⁷Boer, *Sacred Economy*, 31 and *passim*.

⁴⁸See Baker, *Tight Fists*, 15–107. This was the area in which the US fell from its number 2 position in the 2000 *Freedom of the World Report* to 17 in 2013. “It is clear that the increased use of eminent domain to transfer property to powerful political interests, the ramifications of the wars on terrorism and drugs and the violation of the property rights of bondholders in the auto bailout case have weakened the U.S. tradition of rule of law. James Gwartney, et al., *Economic Freedom of the World: 2015 Annual Report* (Vancouver: Fraser Institute, 2015), 16.

⁴⁹Baker, *Tight Fists*, 111–304.

matters into their own hands, looking after their own interests by force if necessary. Many people were not able to do so, and therefore needed protection by fiat, or law. The widow, the orphan, and the stranger/resident alien, not having access to land ownership in most circumstances, and thus having lost access to any means of production, were at a serious disadvantage when it came to providing for their own basic needs. Not having any Social Security, Medicare, or pension system, these folks could easily face starvation.

In a non-Fall world, one in which sin had not entered (if one can even imagine such a thing), it would have been expected that the larger family or tribe would look after the needs of those who found themselves on the margins, protecting those who, like them, are also made in God's image. Since this needy group is likely to be ignored, however, provision for its members needed to be made by such laws as Leviticus 19:9, "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the LORD your God" (see also 23:22). It is significant that this law comes immediately before a repetition of several of the Ten Commandments, the first being "You shall not steal" (v. 11). The latter gives the negative ethic, what not to do, which is countered by the positive ethic, what to do by providing for those who are in need.⁵⁰

Additional support for these poor was also required every seven years, the sabbatical year when fields were to lie fallow.⁵¹ Farmers will note the agricultural value of not depleting a field's nutrients through continual planting, especially in a culture without fertilizers. This is not, however, the reason given for this practice in Exodus 23:10–11, "For six years you are to sow your fields and harvest the crops, but during the seventh year let the land lie unplowed and unused. Then the poor among your people may get food from it, and the wild animals may eat what they leave. Do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove."

This, by the way, relates to one of the positive advantages of personal ownership and production. Most often the landowner, the "entrepreneur" if you like, was able to produce in excess to the needs of the family, and so could supply others, either through sale or barter or, as in the case in point in Exodus 23 and Leviticus 19, though an indirect donation. In these cases what is taking place is not economic redistributionism, taking from those with plenty and giving to those with nothing so that everyone ends up having an equal amount, working toward some socialist ideal. Rather, it is giving to those in need so that their immediate, basic survival needs might be met.

Interest and Profit

An issue that is often a critique of a capitalist or market-driven economy concerns lending at interest. Isn't lending money like this forbidden in

⁵⁰Ibid., 232–39.

⁵¹Ibid., 223–32

the Bible? Yes and no, so the relevant texts, especially in Exodus 22, need, as always, to be read carefully to be sure what the text actually says:

If you lend money to my people, to the poor among you, you shall not deal with them as a creditor; you shall not exact interest from them. If you take your neighbor's cloak in pawn, you shall restore it before the sun goes down; for it may be your neighbor's only clothing to use as cover; in what else shall that person sleep? And if your neighbor cries out to me, I will listen, for I am compassionate.⁵²

In an agricultural society, there is no guarantee of production in any given year. Drought or other natural calamities, like the locust plague mentioned in the book of Joel, can and did cause economic desolation. In such a situation, one would need to turn to a family or community member who was better off for needed help. This is the situation as stated in Leviticus 25:35 (“If any of your kin fall into difficulty and become dependent on you”) and seems also to be in view in the law in Deuteronomy, where “food” is mentioned in relation to the loan (23:19). That is where the law comes in, first positively (Exod. 22:25, “lend to them;” Lev 25:35, “you shall support them”) and then in the form of a negative law, what you are *not* supposed to do: charge interest. The text does speak of loaning “money,” or more accurately, “silver” (Exod 22:25; Lev 25:37; Deut 23:19), which was used as a medium of exchange by weight, since actual coinage, what we would call “money,” did not come on the scene until much later. What is needed by the poor person in this situation is not the medium of exchange, the silver, but what it could buy, the food with which to feed the family (part of the “anything” that is lent in Deut 23:19), or the grain seed needed to plant the crop for the next season. This is more likely what would have been loaned, with its value reckoned in silver.

More positively, what *are* you supposed to do if you have been blessed more than your destitute neighbor? “If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbor. You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be” (Deut 15:7–8). Interestingly enough, even though the poor borrower has nothing, their credit is good because of their “co-signer” as mentioned in Proverbs 19:17, “Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and will be repaid in full.” The possible abuse of the system seems to have been known, and God’s opinion of this is expressed in Psalm 37:21, “The wicked borrow, and do not pay back, but the righteous are generous and keep giving.”

Back to the discussion of interest, is this a blanket ban on loaning with interest? It is a prohibition of expecting interest when the borrower’s life is at

⁵²Heb vv. 24–26; see also Lev 25:35–38 and Deut 23:19–20 [Heb 20–21].

risk, but it does not seem to be so when this is not the case. The law in Deuteronomy (23:20) allows charging interest to the foreigner (the נִכְרִי), those from “distant lands” (29:21), those who would not be dependent on Israel for assistance in immediate, life-endangering situations of need. Existence needs to be supported for free, but economic expansion can be charged interest so as to be able to benefit from the potential increase. Assistance is different from investment. Aid is not incompatible with profit, since they are each directed toward a different clientele and each meets a different need.

Craig Blomberg suggests regarding this law in Deuteronomy that “Commercial loans, however, which are the staple of international trade, seem only to have been granted to foreigners, in which case a reasonable amount of interest was permitted.”⁵³ While such loan transactions are important for international trade (which is clearly present in the Old Testament; e.g., Gen 37:18), they are also vital for domestic commerce and are well-documented in the ancient Near East in both legal and commercial documents.⁵⁴ Many of these documents mention the payment of interest,⁵⁵ which would suggest that similar transactions would be present in Israel as well, though not as clearly documented in the Pentateuch (though see Neh 5:1–6). Using Kenneth Kitchen’s aphorism, “Absence of evidence [of domestic commercial transactions in Israel] is not evidence [of their] absence.”⁵⁶

But what is “profit?” In contemporary society it is usually understood as financial gain, and is usually thought of from the perspective of the seller, the one who gains financially. This is only one-sided, however, since the seller is not going to get any profit from a transaction if the buyer does not receive added value in some way as well, or at least, if they do not get value, the transaction is likely going to take place only the one time: there is little likelihood of repeat business. Self-serving, one-sided gain or profit is the one condemned by the prophets, as when Ezekiel says in 22:27, “Its officials within it are like wolves tearing the prey, shedding blood, destroying lives to

⁵³Craig L. Blomberg, *Christians in an Age of Wealth: A Biblical Theology of Stewardship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 70, referring to Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12*, WBC (Nashville: Nelson, 2002), 555.

⁵⁴From among many examples, see Claus Wilcke, *Early Ancient Near Eastern Law: A History of Its Beginnings: The Early Dynastic and Sargonic Periods*, rev. ed. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 110–14; Code of Hammurabi, laws 49, 100, 111, M.E.J. Richardson, *Hammurabi’s Laws: Text, Translation and Glossary*, Biblical Seminar 73 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 58–59, 72–75, (Old Babylonian period); Nicholas Postgate, *Bronze Age Bureaucracy: Writing and the Practice of Government in Assyria* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), especially 123–126 (Middle Assyrian period); Shalom E. Holtz, *Neo-Babylonian Trial Records* (Writings from the Ancient World 35; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 45–47, 125–128; (Neo-Babylonian period).

⁵⁵E.g., A. Leo Oppenheim, ed., *The Assyrian Dictionary*, vol. 6, H (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1956), 217–18; Erica Reiner, ed., *The Assyrian Dictionary*, vol. 18 T (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 2006), 125; Julius Levy, *Keilschrifttexte aus Kleinasien*, TuM 1 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1932), 23n14 (60% annual interest on silver); Edict of Ammisaduqa, laws 4 and 7, James B. Pritchard, ed. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 526; on barley or silver.

⁵⁶Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (London: IVP, 1966), 31–32.

get dishonest *gain*.” In acceptable transactions the “mutually beneficial” aspect needs to be kept in mind. The Hebrew term **רָצָח** used for “profit/gain” is morally neutral, not a bad or good thing in itself, but it can surely be used, or gained, by either good or evil means.⁵⁷ A search for return on investment should not only be one sided, only selfishly looking after one party in the transaction; value must be added to both sides of the transaction.

One thing getting in the way of thinking in this way is the economic concept of scarcity mentioned briefly earlier. If there are six apples and I give you one of them, that means I have one less. God does not seem to view economics from this zero-sum perspective, a perspective where there needs to be a winner to match each loser. God does not work like the stock market. Instead, he says to the people of Israel in Deuteronomy 8, “This entire commandment that I command you today you must diligently observe, so that you [plural; all of you] may live and increase. . . . You [singular, each person individually] shall eat your fill and bless the LORD your God. . . . But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth.” This wealth seems to be expanding beyond zero-sum, to be limited only by a diminished vision and response to existing needs rather than by saying that there is only so much to go around. Looking back to God’s promises to Abram in Genesis 12:2–3, where are the limits? “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Secured loans were also regulated in ancient Israel. Exodus 22:25–27 (the verses following the prohibition of interest on the poor) reads, “If you take your neighbor’s cloak in pawn, you shall restore it before the sun goes down; for it may be your neighbor’s only clothing to use as cover; in what else shall that person sleep? And if your neighbor cries out to me, I will listen, for I am compassionate.” This impoverished neighbor owned at least something to use as collateral, but again, taking advantage of his unfortunate, and apparently life-threatening, situation was unacceptable. That such protective laws were needed to protect those lacking power is illustrated by the Hebrew ostrakon found at Metsad Hashavyahu. This seventh century B.C. document is a plea by a harvester for his unjustly confiscated cloak.⁵⁸

If an Israelite became completely destitute and totally unable to provide enough for survival through either production or loan, that person could enter into a servant relationship with someone who had more economic resources. An Israelite so enslaved did not become a simple chattel, property for the unbridled exploitation of the owner, as the slave laws in Exodus 21 indicate. This was still not a good situation, being a position of last resort,

⁵⁷The majority of uses of the term are in negative contexts (e.g., Exod 18:21; 1 Sam 8:3; Isa 33:15), though some are also positive (e.g., Mal 3:14). That Hab 2:9 specifically modifies the noun with “evil” (**רָעָה**) indicates that the noun itself does not include this negative connotation.

⁵⁸Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 563.

but in this case, freedom with starvation might appear less attractive than the servitude. However, if this did arise, the owner or master was required to provide food and clothing for slaves (Exod 21:10).

As we close, let us explore with you several examples of biblical case law, one of which is very troubling, but which, if looked at through an economic lens, takes on a different, more palatable shape.

Economic Case Studies

Case 1: An agricultural economy such as that in early Israel places a high importance on family, including women and children, as workers on the land. The labor intensive agricultural basis of most family's economies in the period of the Pentateuch required large families, though even with them there were times of the year when labor demands exceeded supply and help was needed from beyond the immediate family. Even at the best of times, the marginally fertile land in the hill country was extremely demanding. As Carol Meyers states, "The physical work required for subsistence agriculture would have taken up all available daylight hours virtually year-round."⁵⁹ Women as well as men needed to be an active part of this labor force, especially during the seasonal periods of high demand for labor in agriculture such as times of planting and harvesting, both shown in Egyptian scenes which show males and females involved in farm labor. Before her marriage, Rachel tended her father's flocks (Gen 29:7, 9), and we can assume that this would continue after marriage as well, at least until children became old enough to do the job. For the woman, this labor would have only supplemented the time demanded by food production and processing, textile manufacture and clothing production, building and maintaining the physical structure of the house, and many other tasks, some shared by the men and some within their sole purview. The education of at least the smaller children would also fall to them.

For this reason, there was an economic loss to the family at the marriage of a daughter. In compensation for this loss, the prospective husband or his family paid a bride-price,⁶⁰ such as when Shechem offered a blank-check for Dinah in Genesis 34:12 ("Put the *marriage present* and gift as high as you like, and I will give whatever you ask me; only give me the girl to be my wife"). This custom is not the outright purchase of the woman, which is a separate situation. Exodus 21:7–11 indicates that such a purchased slave can be resold, but such is not the case here in a marriage. Apparently the girl's father could use any gain obtained through these funds, but the principal was to remain accessible to her in case of the husband's death or of divorce.⁶¹ This

⁵⁹Carol Meyers, "The Family in Early Israel," in *Families in Ancient Israel*, edited by L.G. Perdue, et al. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 23n61.

⁶⁰E. Lipiński, "מְבָרָה *mbar*," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, edited by G. Johannes Botterweck, et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 8, 142–49.

⁶¹Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1965), I 27.

is probably why Rachel and Leah were so upset at the father Laban, “who used up what was paid for us” (Gen 31:15).

Case 2: The bride-price is also part of a legal case in Exodus 22:16–17 (Heb 15–16): “When a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged to be married, and lies with her, he shall give the bride-price for her and make her his wife. But if her father refuses to give her to him, he shall pay an amount equal to the bride-price for virgins.” Having *de facto* married the woman through having intercourse with her, the man must now “do the right thing by her,” paying the customary bride-price to her father and marrying her legally.

This brings us to yet another, similar legal situation whose problematic nature was an impetus for engaging in this research in the first place. Deuteronomy 22:28–29 reads, “If a man meets a virgin who is not engaged, and seizes her and lies with her, and they are caught in the act, the man who lay with her shall give fifty shekels of silver to the young woman’s father, and she shall become his wife. Because he violated her he shall not be permitted to divorce her as long as he lives.”⁶² The action here is coerced and non-consensual, an actual rape rather than another example of seduction or consensual sexual activity.⁶³ Here one needs to look at differences between the 21st century A.D. and the 15th century B.C. Classroom discussion of this law invariably shows horror, not just at the rape, which is horrific enough, but also at the fact that the sexually abused victim must marry her offender! While the rape is horrific, the law must be seen against some of the economic and legal background which has just been laid in this paper. The situation is different from the law in Exodus, where there seems to have been a level of mutual consent, seduction rather than rape. This money paid here is not designated as a bride price,⁶⁴ but its fixed, high amount (compared, for example, to the penalty for the death of a female slave of 30 shekels in Exod 21:32) indicates that it is rather a penalty. In a Middle Assyrian law from about this same period, the penalty is either a third higher than, or even triple the regular bride-price.⁶⁵ The offender is required to marry his victim, though some commentators assume, based on the law in Exodus 22 and the Middle

⁶²See CH §156 “If a man has chosen a bride for his son, but his son has not got to know her, and he himself copulates with her, he shall pay her half a mana of silver. Furthermore he shall repay her all that she brought from her father’s house and she shall choose the husband she wants” (Richardson, *Hammurabi’s Laws*, 91).

⁶³Hilary Lipka, *Sexual Transgression in the Hebrew Bible*, Hebrew Bible Monographs 7 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), 174–76 and references there to supporters of both positions.

⁶⁴Contra Lipka, *Sexual Transgression*, 176–78 and Eugene Merrill, *Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2008), 605.

⁶⁵Middle Assyrian Laws, number 55, William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr., ed. *Context of Scripture II: Monumental Compositions from the Biblical World* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 359; John A. VanSeters, *A Law Book for the Diaspora: Revision in the Study of the Covenant Code* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 123; Eve Levavi Feinstein, *Sexual Pollution in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 79.

Assyrian law, that the marriage can be declined by the girl or her father.⁶⁶ Be that as it may, whether the marriage is required or optional, the question arises as to what it would do psychologically for a victim to continue to live with her offender as man and wife, especially of forced by law to do so. Is this not compounding the rape?

The father is explicitly visible and economically “central” in the law due to his receipt of 50 shekels. However, two items should be noted in relation to this law, one economic and one legal, both of which could serve to at least raise the rights of the virgin woman. The first is the last clause of the law in verse 29, “he shall not be permitted to divorce her as long as he lives” (a clause which also appears in the Middle Assyrian law).⁶⁷ The obligation is on him to provide for her economically for his entire lifetime. Her victimization, even though no fault of her own, still results in the loss of her virginity, making it much harder for her to find a spouse to provide her home and help. She, for her own economic protection, becomes the rapist’s financial obligation in perpetuity.

On the legal side, the 142nd law in the earlier Law Code of Hammurabi reads, “If a woman has despised her husband and has said, ‘You shall not take me,’ her situation shall be assessed by her community. If she has been looked after and there is no blame, but her husband has erred and greatly disparaged her, that woman has no guilt. She shall take away her marriage gift and go to her father’s house.”⁶⁸ This seems to suggest a situation of a wife withholding herself sexually from her husband. The even earlier “Exaltation of Inanna,” shows how Inanna, goddess of love, punishes a rebellious city, “its woman no longer speaks of love to her husband; in the deep of the night she does not have intercourse with him.”⁶⁹ Both indicate that even within a marriage relationship, a wife could have control over her own body and sexuality. If this understanding also held in Israel, though it is not specifically mentioned there, the rape victim could withhold herself sexually from her offender, who would still be obligated to provide for her. If the provisions of the 142nd Hammurabi law also held, there would be an even more intriguing possibility—the woman could return to her parental home and, since her offending husband could not divorce her, she could still draw upon his financial resources. If these suggestions are valid, an analysis based on economics and law changes this law concerning a raped virgin from being simply a thing of horror to a means of protection and provision for this unfortunate victim.

⁶⁶E.g., J.G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 342.

⁶⁷See note 65.

⁶⁸Richardson, *Hammurabi’s Law*, 87.

⁶⁹S.N. Kramer, “The Woman in Ancient Sumer: Gleanings from Sumerian Literature,” in *La Femme dans le Proche-Orient antique*, edited by J.M. Durand (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les civilisations, 1987), 110. A similar motif is found in Aristophanes’s fifth century B.C. comedy Greek comedy “Lysistrata” where the eponymous heroine seeks to bring the Peloponnesian War to an end by having all women withhold their sexual favors.

Conclusion

Returning to the question asked in the title: Are business people the bad guys? Hopefully it has been shown that production and property are good things in the world as made by the Creator. Unfortunately, the world as it left Creator's hand has been reshaped through the hand of the creature in ways that have left people, production, and property open to evil rather than good. A human goal should be to work for the restoration of relationships at every level which have been marred by the fall.

The Year of Jubilee and the Ancient Israelite Economy

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The Israelite institution of the Year of Jubilee has attracted and fascinated believers, intellectuals, and especially social reformers throughout the history of Western civilization. The fact that words from the Jubilee legislation of Leviticus 25 are inscribed on the iconic “Liberty Bell,” that symbol of American independence and abolitionism, demonstrates the influence exercised by this text over the popular imagination. The Jubilee vision of a society that, at least once in each average lifetime, erased all debt and all forced servitude, and restored all ancestral property to the appropriate families, has inspired the impoverished, oppressed, enslaved, and otherwise disadvantaged to dream of a more perfect social order.

For all the interest and inspiration the Jubilee has inspired over the years, no nation or society has attempted to implement its exact provisions. Most public leaders, even those committed to social reform, have rightly sensed that literal application of the Jubilee laws in modern economies would result more in disruption and confusion than in peace and justice. So then, is the Jubilee legislation simply a dead letter today, an inspiring but hopelessly impractical text without contemporary application? Many would be content to say it is, but such an answer cannot satisfy either Jews or Christians who believe the Scriptures to be the word of God, and as such to retain a permanent relevance to the people of God. In the following, I will argue that the Jubilee legislation was clearly directed toward, and designed for, a tribal agrarian subsistence economy that characterized the people of Israel prior to the rise of the monarchy, and for a long time into the monarchic period as well. While the specific adaptations of the legislation for such a simple economy are unworkable in a modern society, it is possible to identify the social *goods* (in the classic philosophical sense) that the Jubilee sought to promote and preserve, and then search for appropriate ways to achieve those goods in the contemporary context. Therefore in what follows, based primarily on the research for my monograph *The Jubilee from Leviticus to Qumran*,¹

¹John S. Bergsma, *The Jubilee from Leviticus to Qumran: A History of Interpretation*, VTSup 115 (Leiden: Brill, 2007). Extensive discussion, citation, and documentation for most of the issues discussed in this paper may be found in this volume.

I will seek to answer the following questions: (1) what kind of economy is presumed by, and reflected in, the Jubilee legislation of Leviticus 25, (2) whether the economy presented in the text reflects a reality, or a rhetorical ruse masking ulterior motives on the part of the redactors of the text, and (3) given the nature of the economy presented, what are the social goods the Jubilee legislation intended to promote and preserve?

The Economy Presumed By and Reflected in the Jubilee Legislation

The Jubilee legislation in Leviticus 25 reflects and presumes a tribal, agrarian, subsistence economy, as can be seen by the following features of the text:²

(1) *The addressees of the text are presumed to be intimately and personally engaged in agricultural activity.* This is evident throughout. We need not belabor the point with an exhaustive list of examples, but a few will suffice:

“Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in its fruits . . .” (v. 3).

“A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be for you; in it you shall neither sow, nor reap what grows of itself, nor gather the grapes from the undressed vines . . .” (v. 11).

“What shall we eat in the seventh year, if we may not sow or gather our crop?” (v. 20).

Elsewhere I have shown that the “you (pl)” of the Holiness Code refers to the landed Israelite male heads of families. This is evident from what the “you” is assumed to have: wife, children, servants, land, livestock, even a beard.³

(2) The agricultural activity appears to be subsistence, with a direct connection between what is grown and what is eaten within the same year. This is evident several times in the text.

(3) During the fallow seventh year, the natural growth of the uncultivated fields will provide food for the whole community, “The sabbath of the land shall provide food for you, for you yourself and your male and female slaves etc.” (v. 6).

(4) Likewise in the Jubilee Year, the addressees of the legislation are envisioned as foraging directly from the fallow fields: “you shall eat what it yields out of the field.”

(5) The legislation anticipates the fears of the addressees that they will starve if they do not plant and reap for one agricultural cycle: “What shall we eat in the seventh year, if we may not sow or gather in our crop?” (v. 20). This

²For more detailed discussion of the economy presumed by the Jubilee, see Bergsma, *Jubilee*, 65–75.

³See discussion on the addressees of the Holiness Code in Bergsma, *Jubilee*, 100–01.

is not the complaint of wealthy consumers for whom food is a purchased commodity, nor for whom the practicalities of the production of food are a distant reality. It is the complaint of persons who are accustomed to growing all their own food and consuming the same within a single agricultural cycle.

(6) Surplus food sufficient for several agricultural cycles is regarded as a miraculous act of divine providence. The text promises a divine blessing on the produce of the sixth year, sufficient for three years of food (v. 21), enabling the addressees to consume old produce until the harvest of the new crop after the successive fallow Sabbath and Jubilee Years (vv. 21–23). Eating stored food for such a duration is regarded as unusual and requiring divine intervention; therefore, the addressees of the legislation appear accustomed to a reality in which each harvest provided only enough sustenance to sustain them to the next.

(7) The only commodities mentioned are agricultural land and agricultural labor. Procedures for buying and selling land are described in vv. 13–17, but it is presumed that the addressee is purchasing land near—probably adjacent to—his own, since he is buying from his “neighbor” (עִמּוּת), and it is not the land itself but the *produce* that is being sold, “it is the number of crops that he is selling you.” So obviously this is arable, agricultural land that is being exchanged.

Likewise, self-sale of Israelites as agricultural laborers is envisaged in various passages from vv. 25–55. If one Israelite kinsman purchases another, the purchased man is to be treated like a hired man (*shakir*) who will “serve with you” (יַעֲבֹד עִמָּךָ) or “work with you,” a phrase envisioning a situation in which landowner, servant, and hired man all worked together in agricultural labor. This social environment is reflected also in other biblical texts set in the pre-monarchic period, in which characters like Boaz, Saul, and David, though landowners or heirs, nonetheless engage in agricultural labor alongside the hired men and servants of their estate.

(8) Urban life appears as exceptional in the text and is excused from the operation of the jubilee. In verses 29–34, the Jubilee legislation addresses the issue of property owned within major urban centers (walled cities), and essentially excuses them from the operation of the Jubilee. They may be redeemed within a year, but otherwise may be sold in perpetuity. Urban property does not have the sacral character and the close association with familial identity possessed by agricultural land in the countryside. Because the unit verses 29–34 seems to interrupt what is otherwise a logical progression of units dealing with the successively deepening impoverishment of an Israelite man (see vv. 25–28; 35–38; 39–46; 47–55), some have suggested that it is an interpolation by a later hand. Whether it is secondary or not, however, we can recognize it as a digression dealing with kinds of property with which the Jubilee is not essentially concerned. It serves to demonstrate that urban property—indeed, urban life generally—is not the concern of the legislator. The legislator envisions a society of Israelites spread throughout the land, living on and working their ancestral agricultural plots. This structure of

society is normative and needs to be preserved; city life is exceptional and need not follow the sacred regulations.

(9) The tribe- or clan-structure of society is assumed to be present and operational, and is given primary responsibility for the alleviation of crisis poverty. Much of the legislation found in Leviticus 25 concerns not the functioning of the Jubilee Year, but the *go'el* or kinsman-redeemer system. The *go'el* has the first responsibility to redeem alienated property (v. 25). The “you” to whom the legislation is addressed is also a male Israelite who participates in the *go'el* system and thus has responsibility to support his impoverished kinsman (see vv. 35–46). In verses 48–49 the chain of *go'el* responsibility for redemption of the impoverished kinsman is articulated: first a brother (v. 48), then the oldest paternal uncle (the *dôd*, the head of the extended family, v. 49), then any paternal uncle (v. 49), then any male relative of his clan (*misbapachab*, v. 49).⁴ The Jubilee Year is only a last resort in the unlikely event that an impoverished male Israelite lacks any male relatives with the means to redeem him. The clan is given primary responsibility in the fight against progressive impoverishment.

(10) The addressees of the text are envisioned as living on or near the land that they own and work. This is presupposed in verses 5–7 and 12, where the addressees are able to walk through their fallow fields to consume the spontaneous produce directly from the field. Since reaping and gathering the spontaneous produce of the fallow was forbidden, one could only eat directly from the field, thus presuming sufficient proximity.

Also, the repeated refrain of “he shall return to his property” (וּשָׁב לְאֶחָזְתּוֹ, vv. 10, 13, 27, 28, 41) implies that impoverishment and the associated servitude separated persons from proximity to their ancestral land, but redemption—whether by the *go'el* or the Jubilee—allowed physical return to the land. Verse 10, in which “he shall return to his land” is in poetic parallelism to “he shall return to his clan” (וּשָׁב אֶל־מִשְׁפַּחָתוֹ) implies that return to land and clan were simultaneous, because the clan lived on the land or in close proximity to it.

To summarize this section: the text of Leviticus 25 clearly presumes and reflects a tribal, agrarian, subsistence economy in which Israelite extended families lived in close proximity to one another and to their ancestral land, which they personally worked—along with family members, servants, and hired men—in order to raise food for their own consumption. This is also the kind of society and economy presented by other texts of the Bible that set their narratives in the pre-monarchic period. Even the wealthy and the leadership classes of Israel in this time period were involved personally in agricultural labor. So Gideon, future judge and leader of the nation, is first discovered while threshing out grain in a wine press. Boaz is regarded as a

⁴Notably absent is the man’s father. Perhaps it is assumed that, for the majority of landed Israelite heads of families, their own fathers are deceased or else themselves dependents. Or, perhaps it is taken for granted that any father would immediately redeem his own son, and so this need not be legislated.

very wealthy *go'el*, yet personally supervises and socializes with his workers in the field during harvest. Saul, future king, is discovered while looking for a herd of donkeys in the company of a family slave. David, likewise, must be called in from shepherding sheep in order to be anointed king. These texts present the picture of a society with relatively little social stratification, economic diversification, or vocational specialization.

The Jubilee Economy: Reality or Ruse?

But the question needs to be addressed: is the economic picture presented by the Jubilee legislation a reflection of reality at some point in Israel's early history, or is it a utopian projection that masks other, perhaps less-than-noble agendas harbored by the author(s) or redactor(s) of the text?

Several scholars who have written on the Jubilee legislation in the past fifty years have insisted on approaching it with a hermeneutic of suspicion. Perhaps the most common proposal among these scholars is that the Jubilee laws are a ploy by the post-exilic Jerusalem priesthood to create a legal basis for their attempts to regain their land after the return from Babylonian exile.⁵ It has been argued that the 50-year duration of the jubilee cycle was taken from the 50-year duration of the Babylonian exile, calculated from 587–537 B.C. Thus, the returning Jerusalem priesthood created a fraudulent legal text establishing the principle of the return of land to its original owners every fifty years, in order to substantiate their efforts to reclaim ancestral property after fifty years of exile.

There is no direct evidence for this view of the origin and purpose of the Jubilee legislation, and in fact, several considerations make the view highly unlikely. First, the largest number of priests, and the priests of the highest ranks, were taken into Babylonian captivity in 597 B.C. Thus, the persons most likely to be responsible for an exilic redaction of the Pentateuch experienced an exile of at least sixty years, not fifty. Second, it is not necessary to appeal to the length of the Babylonian exile to explain the length of the Jubilee cycle. The forty-nine or fifty years of the Jubilee is the result of multiplying the sacred number seven by itself, creating a time period of “seven sevens” and thus of unique significance to the Israelite mind. The Jubilee is a “Sabbath of Sabbath-years,” the ultimate expression of the Sabbatical principle that shaped the rhythm of the Israelite liturgical calendar.

Third, the text is clearly unconcerned either with priestly lands or the reality of exile. Rather, the major concern of the text is the prevention of permanent impoverishment of an Israelite landholder, as can be seen in verses 25–55. Neither priests nor exile are ever mentioned. If the Jerusalem priesthood returning from Babylon *had* wished to create a legal basis for the return of their land after the exile, all that was necessary would have been to

⁵For a refutation of the is view, see Bergsma, “The Jubilee: A Post-Exilic Priestly Attempt to Reclaim Lands?” *Biblica* 84 (2003): 225–46; and Bergsma, *Jubilee*, 53–79, esp. 75–77.

attribute to Moses a short line as follows, “If a man is taken by the enemies of the LORD into a foreign land, but the LORD grants him favor in the eyes of his captors, and he returns to his home and to his clan, you shall restore to him his ancestral inheritance.” Such would suffice; one does not need all the cumbersome stipulations of the Jubilee legislation in order to accomplish such a simple task. In fact, brief laws establishing the right of returned exiles to be restored to their property can be found in the Code of Hammurabi §27 and the Laws of Eshnuna §29:

If a chieftain or a man be caught in the ‘misfortune of the king’ [i.e. captured in battle], and if his fields and garden be given to another and he take possession, if he return and reaches his place, his field and garden shall be returned to him, and he shall take it over again. (CH §27)

If a man has been [made prisoner] during a raid or an invasion, or has been carried off forcibly, (and) [dwelt] in another land for a l[ong] time, another indeed took his wife and she bore a son: whenever he returns, his wife he may [take back]. (LE §29)

The Jubilee legislation is an extremely clumsy and indirect means of establishing a right to the return of property after exile—and in point of fact, the Jubilee legislation nowhere establishes such a right. The approach that views the Jubilee laws as a post-exilic priestly ploy to regain lost land—as well as other views that attempt to situate the Jubilee in some exilic or post-exilic social context—require one to ignore the manifest concerns of the author of the legislation (alleviation of the impoverishment of the landed Israelite male and the preservation of the trustee family on its ancestral property) and substitute instead anachronistic concerns that are nowhere clearly reflected in the text.

It is my judgement, for a variety of reasons enumerated elsewhere,⁶ that the Jubilee is an earnest text, reflecting the reality of a tribal agrarian subsistence society that existed in Israel prior to the rise of the monarchy, and in rural areas well into the monarchic period. The archeological work by Finkelstein⁷ and others on the growth of early Israelite highland settlements in the early Iron Age has been interpreted by Karel van der Toorn⁸ (and others) to support the view of pre-monarchic Israel as a relatively simple society with little social stratification, dependent on subsistence agriculture: the very society presupposed in the Jubilee laws.⁹

⁶Bergsma, *Jubilee*, 53–79.

⁷E.g. Israel Finkelstein, “The Emergence of the Monarchy in Israel: The Environmental and Socio-Economic Aspects,” JSOTSup 155 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993).

⁸Karel van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

⁹See Bergsma, *Jubilee*, 78n100.

What Social Goods Did the Jubilee Aim to Preserve and Promote?

Although a literal implementation of the Jubilee laws in a modern, radically different economy and society—even if it were possible—would likely do more harm than good, it is possible to consider the social goods of the Jubilee and ponder appropriate ways to work for those same social goods in the contemporary context.

Arguably, all the social goods of the Jubilee ultimately coalesce to one: the preservation of the *identity* and *integrity* of the Israelite extended family or clan—in Hebrew, the *mishpachah*.

Obviously, the Jubilee is concerned that liberty be restored to all the people of Israel on a periodic cycle, “proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants” (v. 10). But the purpose of this liberation is that the people may return to their property—yet even the return to the property is not an end in itself, but rather is the necessary condition for returning to the extended family (*mishpachah*): “each of you shall return to his property, and each of you shall return to his *mishpachah*” (v. 10). Therefore, while servitude for the Israelites is undesirable, the primary evil of servitude is the destructive effect it has on the clan, resulting in the dissolution of the clan.

Likewise, in verses 25–28 and 35–55, the primary concern is to stop the vicious cycle of impoverishment of the landed Israelite *paterfamilias* at the earliest point possible. This body of laws follows the progression of impoverishment: sale of property (vv. 25–28), arrival at a state of indigence (vv. 35–38), self-sale to a fellow Israelite (vv. 39–46), and self-sale to a foreigner (vv. 47–55). In each of these situations, it is significant that the kinship-group—in this case, the extended network of male relatives who are potential *go’elim*, “redeemers”—have the first responsibility to come to the aid of their kinsman, by redeeming his property, maintaining him on his property, employing him as a hired worker, or redeeming him from slavery respectively. Society-wide intervention by means of the Jubilee institution is only the last resort to restore the basic equality that is presumed to have existed when the land was settled and apportioned. The Jubilee ensures that there is an absolute limit to any of the forms of impoverishment listed above, and that at least once in the average lifetime each Israelite will go free, “he and his children with him, and go back to his own *mishpachah*, and return to the possession of his fathers” (v. 41).

The Jubilee is concerned that the land stay united to its family, probably because of the role that real property plays in memory and identity. The graves of the familial ancestors lie on the family land. The family land also forms an environment that has been experienced and shared by the members of the family transgenerationally. The land forms a tangible connection between family members of past and future generations. Without the land, it becomes easy to lose family memories, and the loss of memory causes the loss of identity. Thus, the person with severe amnesia quite literally forgets who he is. The Israelite permanently alienated from his ancestral land faces

the real possibility of familial amnesia and thus the trauma of loss of identity. The Jubilee serves to foster the familial identity of the Israelite community, that throughout all generations they will not forget who they are, their family history, and especially what God has done for them: “they are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt” (25:55). The Jubilee is thus one of many ways that biblical religion fosters the perpetuation of sacred memory and thus the identity of the people of God. Other means include the great sacred festivals like Passover, and in the New Testament, the Lord’s Supper or Eucharist, “Do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19).

Besides the concern for the maintenance of the integrity and identity of each Israelite clan or extended family, the Jubilee also shows a liturgical-ecological concern for the land and a humanitarian concern for the working conditions of each Israelite landholder.

The point of observing a fallow year for the land every seventh year, and then again on the fiftieth or Jubilee year, is to allow the land “to keep a sabbath to the Lord,” a year of “solemn rest for the land.” The Israelite Sabbath concept appears to consist in showing honor to God by ceasing from labor in order to rest in communion with him, that is, to experience rest with him according to the cycles of divine rest. In the Jubilee legislation, the land—that is to say, the very environment—also has this obligation to observe the sacred rest in communion with God. So one may speak of a concept that all nature is ultimately oriented to the glorification of God: the cosmos is a temple for the divine worship. Thus, the environment itself should not be overworked and abused, but rather periodically given the opportunity to glorify God by returning to a state of restful communion.

There is also genuine humanitarian concern for the individual Israelite landholding male, lest his working conditions become intolerably severe. Three times in the legislation (vv. 43, 46, 53) it is prohibited to “rule over” an Israelite kinsman “with harshness” (לֹא־תִרְדֶּה בוֹ בְּכֹפָרָיִם). “With harshness” (בְּכֹפָרָיִם) is an extremely rare Hebrew phrase (6 times in MT) associated with enslavement in Egypt (Exod 1:13–14). Since God has liberated his people from the harshness of slavery, it is unacceptable that they should be reduced to such a state again, especially at the hands of their fellow Israelites (vv. 42–43, 46, 55).

To summarize, then, there are at least three social goods the Jubilee seeks to preserve and promote: (1) the integrity and identity of the Israelite extended family, (2) the incorporation of the land into sacred cycles of rest and worship, (3) the protection of each Israelite from oppressive and demeaning labor.

The Continuing Relevance of the Jubilee

While the exact provisions of the Jubilee are not appropriate to a modern economy and society no longer based on subsistence agriculture,

Christians can engage in creative thinking about social and economic policies which would promote the goods sought by the Jubilee.

Ancient Israel was a sacral community with no distinction between Church and state. The vision for Israel presented in the Pentateuch does not conceive of a mixed society including those who worship the LORD God of Israel as well as those who reject and oppose him. Accordingly, within Christian thought, the contemporary analogue for ancient Israel would be the Church itself, the community of Christian believers, and not secular society as a whole. Nonetheless, the Jubilee points to goods which are necessary for human flourishing by virtue of their rootedness in natural law, that is, in the nature of the human person and in the natural environment. Therefore, it is appropriate for Christians to advocate for these goods even within secular society, out of concern for the common good.

Arguably, two of the identified goods of the Jubilee enjoy widespread contemporary support and recognition, while the third does not.

The human right to be free from oppressive and demeaning working conditions is widely recognized internationally today, even if human trafficking continues to be a reality, and conditions of employment in the developing world often remain harsh. Nonetheless, most governments and NGOs recognize this principle, and efforts to improve working conditions and employment freedom can count on public and international support.

Likewise, concern for the environment enjoys widespread international support, even if the liturgical *telos* of creation is not recognized. A uniquely Judeo-Christian contribution to the environmental movement may be made by re-asserting the nature of the cosmos as temple, that the natural environment itself is finally intended for the glorification of the Creator. "Green" social and economic policies need not be based on atheist materialist philosophies, nor on neo-pagan forms of pantheism, all of which tend toward an exultation of the natural environment *in preference to* policies that foster human flourishing and human exceptionalism. It is possible to develop a very rich ecological theology out of the Bible itself, and in fact I would argue one is already implicitly present in the Pentateuch. Moreover, a Biblical ecological theology would not be opposed to human flourishing and exceptionalism, but would presuppose them.

So, while humanitarian concern for workers and ecological concern for the environment are already internationally recognized goods, concern for the integrity and identity of the extended family is sorely neglected in national (U.S.) and international policy. The Jubilee stresses the role of the extended family as the first line of defense against processes of progressive and debilitating impoverishment, and it also established institutions (the Jubilee year, the *go'el*) to foster the maintenance of the extended family as a unit, and its connection to ancestral land.

Social policies in the U.S. and other developed nations since World War II have tended to expect very little of the extended family, and in fact have worked to discourage family formation through marriage, as well as

property ownership. The results have been disastrous, as impoverished classes in the U.S. and elsewhere, especially among certain minority groups, have become self-perpetuating and characterized by an extreme collapse of familial bonds, with a resultant loss of a sense of personal identity and familial identity. The loss of social capital has been incalculable. Christians should advocate for social policies that promote mutual responsibility within the extended family, the maintenance of the integrity of the extended family, and property ownership as a means to foster trans-generational memory and identity.

Limited Government and Taxation in the Old Testament

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The subject of this paper is the biblical basis for a God-ordained limited form of government (with limited taxation upon Israel) which changed drastically when Israel rejected God's immediate rule and demanded an intermediary military deliverer/king in the events of 1 Samuel 8 (8–12). The original biblical standard of governance for Israel required an Israelite king to self-limit both his power and taxation (Deut 17). However, when Israel rejected God's rule over them for the type of feudal kingship found in ancient Near Eastern city-states, God gave Israel over to be oppressed by the eventual expansion of kingly power and taxation at the hands of their kings. While this new pragmatic standard of kingship was, in reality, God's judgment upon Israel concerning kingship (1 Sam 8:11–23), God's standard for righteous kingship in Deut 17 remained the ideal.

We know what it is for men to live without government—and living without government, to live without rights . . . we see it in many savage nations, or rather races of mankind . . . no habit of obedience, and thence no government—no government, and thence no laws—no laws, and thence no such things as rights—no security—no property—liberty, as against regular controul, the controul of laws and government—perfect; but as against all irregular controul, the mandates of stronger individuals, none.¹

The Kingship of God and Taxes

Governments make laws to affirm, establish, and regulate rights; and they establish taxes and penalties to regulate behaviors and gain revenue to both protect and provide services.² Governmental authorities often claim to

¹Jeremy Bentham, *Anarchical Fallacies: being an examination of the Declaration of Rights issued during the French Revolution*, in *Nonsense upon Stilts: Bentham, Burke, and Marx on the Rights of Man*, edited by Jeremy Waldron (London: Methuen, 1987), 46–69.

²According to the U.S. department of Treasury website, the government levies taxes upon individuals and business in order “to protect individual freedoms and to promote the well-being of society as whole.” <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/faqs/Taxes/Pages/economics.aspx> (Accessed 22 May 2017).

a moral impetus for their tax laws.³ When reviewing the laws with which God regulates the economic actions and/or requirements upon the Israelites, the moral impetus is easy to see. The Old Testament does not present a systematic review of all Israelite taxes nor a comprehensive review of whether and/or how they were collected, yet there is still much data with which to work. The performance of these taxes is presented in selected narrative texts (gleaning in Ruth; Head Tax census in 2 Sam, 2 Chr 31, Neh 10:32ff, etc.). Menachem Elon's definition of taxation is a good place to begin, a "tax is a compulsory payment, in currency or in specie, exacted by a public authority, for the purpose of satisfying the latter's own needs or those of the public, or part of the public."⁴ Any laws imposed on Israel by God, whether social or religious in nature, which demanded the services, time, or goods of an Israelite are viewed here as taxes.

The kingship of God is expressed in many places within the Old Testament through His creation, judgment (flood), deliverance (plagues/red sea crossing), the covenants (Noahic, Abrahamic, Sinaitic, and Deuteronomic) and in many places by His worshippers. In the beginning, He delegated governance of the earth to mankind in the garden. God had man order/name the creatures and gave him a mate to co-rule with him. In the beginning all belonged to man, so collecting, gathering, keeping, and distributing goods was not necessary. Before the fall, there were very limited rules of governance imposed upon man (be fruitful, multiply, fill, rule, tend the garden, do not eat from the one tree, etc). In the garden no tithes, taxes, or sacrificial offerings to God are mentioned. Mankind's sin resulted in a loss of governance, a loss of the garden (land), a cursed creation (ground), and a changed order of relationship (co-rule to direct rule—husband over wife). Mankind went from a righteous servant co-rule to an unrighteous self-centered self-rule (a simple and insipient form of the later feudal kingship exhibited across ancient Near Eastern history). After the fall they had to work for what they ate; for what they gained. As man multiplied, one man's liberty could harm another as in Cain killing Abel. The violence and disorder, to which mankind descended, brought God's judgment. So He revealed His judgment upon mankind and His salvation through his deliverance of Noah.

Ancient Near Eastern Kingship

After the flood kingship arose in the city-states of Mesopotamia and in Egypt. The ancient Near Eastern kings were at first military leaders chosen by elders and tribal leaders to deliver them from crises of invasion

³Ronald M. Green, "Ethical Issues in Taxation," in *The Future of Tax Policy in New Hampshire* (Durham: University of New Hampshire Center for Educational Field Services, 1983), 12 [12–25].

⁴Menachem Elon, ed. "Taxation," in *The Principles of Jewish Law* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1975), 663; Robert A. Oden Jr., "Taxation in Biblical Israel," <http://www.michaelsheiser.com/TheNakedBible/Taxation%20in%20biblical%20Israel.pdf>, 163 (Accessed 22 May 2017)..

etc.⁵ Sometimes they chose one from outside their immediate circles (i.e. not from their people). Later, kingship became hereditary. These city-state kings were feudal in their approach. They gained lands and servants through oppressing the people through loans, usury, taxes, corvee labor requirements, and confiscation of lands. They raised men to the noble rank of charioteer (*mariannu*),⁶ just as in the knights of feudal Europe. In the end, the people were no more than serfs working for the king. The Israelites had direct contact and first-hand knowledge of the city-state kingship model both in the land of Canaan and in the surrounding nations.⁷ This type of kingship tended toward absolute monarchy. However there were some texts which indicate that some desired to limit the powers of kingship. One such text, called “Advice to a Prince,” promotes the good/limited governance presented in Deuteronomy 17. Likely written to protect the rights of the people, the prince is admonished to not: take the people’s silver, accept bribes, improperly convict, improperly show leniency to foreigners, fine the people, take their grain to give his horses/servants, confiscate their livestock, seize their sheep, or to impose corvee labor upon them.⁸ This shows the types of actions of which ancient city-state kings were actually involved.

Israelite Governance and Taxes

God had promised both Abraham and Sarah that kings would be among their descendants. Later, Jacob blessed his son Judah with rulership over his brothers (Gen 49:8–12), so future Israelite kingship was ordained by God to belong to Judah. It was within the Law of Moses that God’s view of how His people should be governed was revealed. As Israel fled Egypt they left a system of sovereign oppression and slavery where they had no rights. As they camped at Sinai, God presented to Moses their new order of government, under His rule as sovereign. As king of Israel, God imposed upon Israel a suzerainty covenant in the book of Deuteronomy which was

⁵Jephthah’s appointment as Judge by the elders of Gilead is one example of this procedure (Judg 11) and the elders request for a king in 1 Sam 8 is another (see also the elders and Rehoboam, 1 Kgs 12:6).

⁶This was done at Alalakh (no. 15) and Ugarit (no. 16.132, 16.239), where the *mariannu* “chariot owner” supported the king through military service. D.J. Wiseman, *The Alalakh Tablets* (London: The British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 1953), 2; Isaac Mendelsohn, “Samuel’s Denunciation of Kingship in the Light of the Accadian Documents from Ugarit,” *BASOR* 143 (1956): 17–18; Jean Nougayrol, *PRU*, tome 3, Mission de Ras Shamra, no. 5 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1955), xiii; Jean Nougayrol, *PRU*, tome 4, Mission de Ras Shamra, no. 9 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1956); Charles Virolleaud, *PRU*, tome 2, Mission de Ras Shamra, no. 7 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1957); Charles Virolleaud, *PRU*, tome 5, Mission de Ras Shamra, no. 11 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1965); John Huehnergard, *The Akkadian of Ugarit* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1989), 286–301.

⁷Adoni-bezek of Jerusalem, Judg 1:5; Edom, Gen 36:31; Og of Bashan, Num 21:33.

⁸This text is dated to 1000–700 B.C. W.G. Lambert, “Advice to a Prince,” in *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, edited and translated W. G. Lambert (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 110–15.

their national constitutional covenant with Him.⁹ The Law presented to Israel God's expectations of their rights and duties as His people. The Law revealed the boundaries of individual and corporate liberty and action.¹⁰ Some laws were likely codified cultural norms. Many were new to Israel. These laws established their rights and obligations while in many places limited their freedom.¹¹ So Israel's government was a voluntary theocracy with God as its Sovereign (Exod 24). It follows that the tithes/taxes which God imposed were related to the promised land since He is represented as owning the land with the Israelites only as sojourners there (Lev 25:23). Prior to entry into the land of Canaan Israel had no land, so their tax burden was low. Tithes of agricultural products were not yet in play. However, the festivals, Sabbath, sacrificial, and other economic tax laws were set in motion. Once they entered the land the agricultural taxes began.

Israel's corporate and individual obligations, duties, and rights spelled out within the Law of Moses are here defined from the perspective of the Israelite landowner/taxpayer. What the law obligates an Israelite landowner to do for the poor man, from the perspective of the poor man could be regarded as a right.¹² However, *obligations* are here defined as arising from laws requiring the Israelite to act in a prescribed manner toward others. Duties are defined as arising from laws requiring the Israelite to act in a prescribed manner toward God. *Rights* are defined here as being made up of two kinds: positive and negative rights. Many laws regard negative rights which protect the individual, or community, from the harm caused by the actions or interference of others (i.e. the right to live [i.e. not be killed], Exod 20:13, cf. 14–17). Some laws regard positive rights which oblige an individual (or the community) to take action on behalf of, or give something to, another person (Exod: 20:12, "honor your father and mother;" the offerings as the inheritance of the priests/Levites, Num 18:21; care for the poor, Deut 15:7ff; circumcision, Gen 17:10ff). In the main, these are to be performed voluntarily by individuals, not imposed by the community or state. However, for an individual not to participate in these obligations, duties, or rights would bring, at times, severe penalties imposed by God or the community (not honoring parents=not living long in the land; not making offerings=rejection from the Israelite community; not supporting the poor=sin/not being blessed by God; uncircumcised males will be cut off from the Israelite community; not keeping the Sabbath=capital punishment, Num 15:32ff).

⁹The book of Deuteronomy is in the form of a suzerainty covenant, meaning an overlord/king imposes his covenant upon a vassal king. Deuteronomy established God as king over Israel. Meredith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963).

¹⁰As Paul stated, "The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" Rom 5:20.

¹¹As Jeremy Bentham states, "from real laws come real rights," but "all rights are made at the expense of liberty." Bentham, *Anarchical Fallacies*, 7, 14.

¹²While the poor may have rights, it is the Landowner/man of means who has the obligation.

The laws which relate to economic requirements and/or taxes are each considered as an obligation (to others), duty (to God), or positive right for the special class of the Levites and priesthood. The sacrifices and tithes, while duties to the Israelite, were presented by God in Numbers 18 as the inheritance (or positive rights) for the Aaronic priesthood and the Levites. Some sacrifices can be considered as duties to the Israelite since they were optional (i.e. sin offerings dependent upon the wrong action of the individual). Since these were only potential, they should not be considered a categorical positive right to the Priests/Levites. None of these tax laws promote negative rights.

Sin taxes in today's usage are excise taxes on selected commodities. Sin offerings/taxes in Israel were taxes upon prohibited behaviors. In either case, the long term effect of these taxes is a reduction in the thing taxed.¹³ So through these types of offerings God is essentially taxing sin in order to: (1) raise awareness of the act as sinful, and (2) reduce its prevalence amongst the Israelites. The sustained cost of a sin habit would also expose individual behavior within the Israelite community. With Israelite guilt and repentance as well as communal membership requirements as motivating factors, the economic weight of sin laws/taxes should have worked toward reducing sinful behavior over time.

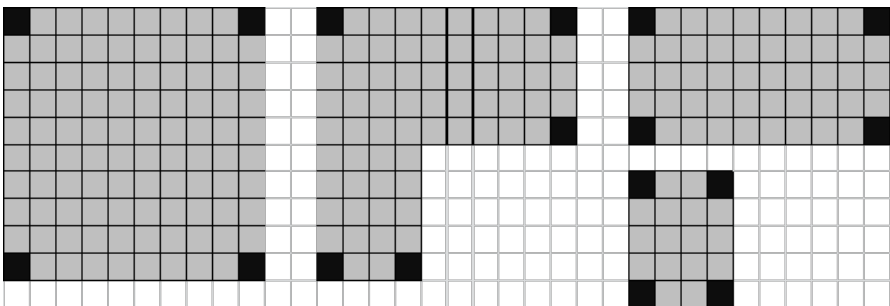
There were also regulations for taxing and sharing the spoils gained through warfare. When camped across the Jordan from Jericho, Israel was deceived into idolatry and sexual immorality with the Midianites. So God commanded Moses to call up twelve thousand men and strike Midian (Num 15:17–18). Following Israel's defeat of the Midianites, God commanded a tax upon the spoils of war which these warriors had plundered (Num 31–32). Half went to the warriors, half to the congregation and a little over one percent to the Lord as offerings (see Table 1). During David's rule, he followed this pattern of sharing the spoils with those watching the supplies/baggage as well as with tribal elders (1 Sam 30:24–26).

Spoils	Total	Warriors portion (50%)	Israel's Portion (50%)	High Priest's/ God's Levy/ Tax on the Warriors' portion (.2%) ¹	Levite's/ God's Levy/Tax on Israel's portion (2%) ²	Warriors Freewill Offering to God ³	God's Percentage of the Total	Actual Spoils Per Warrior
Sheep	675,000	337,500	337,500	675	6750		1.1%	28
Cattle	72,000	36,000	36,000	72	720		1.1%	3
Donkeys	61,000	30,500	30,500	61	610		1.1%	2 to 3
Young Women	32,000	16,000	16,000	32	320		1.1%	1
Gold/ Jewelry	<i>indeterminate</i>	100%	0%	0%	0%	16,750 shekels	?	?

Table 1., Taxes and Regulations on Spoils of War

¹³James Sadowsky, "The Economics of Sin Taxes," <http://www.acton.org/pub/religion-liberty/volume-4-number-2/economics-sin-taxes> (Accessed 23 May 2017).

The average Israelite landowner's taxes can also be categorized into a few simple categories by what is being taxed: Grain, Vine, Orchard (olive, fruit, nut, etc.), Beast (herd animals: oxen, donkeys, etc), Flocks (sheep, goats), Labor (Israelite, Servant, Strong servant), Lending, Cleansing, and Sin.¹⁴ Table 3 presents the total annual costs to the average Israelite landowner in the column "taxes before kingship." The amounts were determined through analyzing the economic social and religious laws/taxes presented in the appendix. The actual amounts were in places fixed, but in other places were percentages and/or dependent upon other variables (actual production, size/corners in fields, harvest dropped, head tax taken, loans made to Israelites, and cleansing or sin taxes necessary, etc.). For example in Table 2A., the images for gleaning the corners of a field demonstrate this variability. The large square field has the smallest area (and resulting lowest tax) in its corners—approximately 2%. The odd shaped field in the middle has less area but more corners and approximately 3.5% to be left unharvested. While the same area field physically separated into parts has even more corners and approximately 5.7% to be left unharvested. If the term פְּאֵת שְׂדֵךְ (Lev 19:9) means not corners but "edges of your field,"¹⁵ the percentage left to gleaning comes out a little differently (see Table 2B.). In this case, the actual percentage would vary according to how far from the edge was the appropriate distance to leave unharvested. Counting a one meter wide unharvested strip around the perimeter of a field, the percentages required for gleaning range from 3.6% to 5.7%. However, these numbers would be minimums, because some crops would be harvested and harvesters would have left unripened/late ripening grains or fruits in the field itself. This also does not include the other agricultural economic/gleaning taxes: dropped harvest, forgotten harvest, imperfect grape clusters, or fallen grapes/fruit.¹⁶

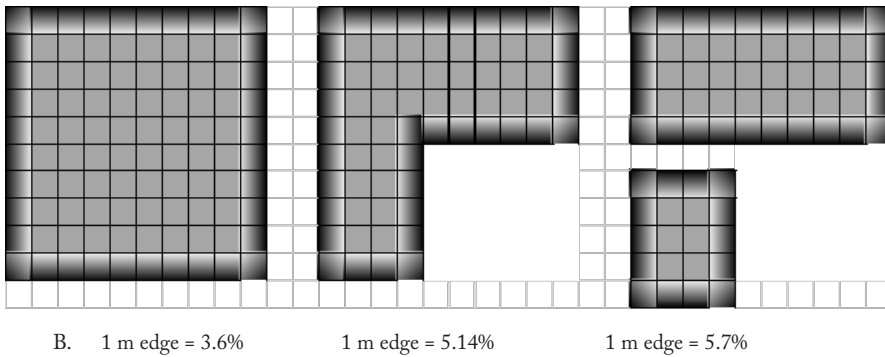


A. Corners of field = 2% Corners of field = 3.5% Corner of field(s) = 5.7%

¹⁴These categories are found both in the appendix and on table 3. For appendix see https://swbts.edu/sites/default/files/images/content/docs/journal/59_2/SWJT_59_2_Mitchell_Appendix.pdf

¹⁵Ludwig Koehler, et al., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (HALOT) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 907.

¹⁶Grapevines are one example where some clusters ripen later. See the appendix for these laws.



*Table 2, Gleaning Corners as a percentage.*¹⁷

The total cost of the economic burden upon the average Israelite landowner was not that great. Compared to taxes upon the middle class today in the U.S.A. it is quite modest. Basically a ten percent income tax, a 10 % capital goods tax (flocks) and other minor or only potential taxes. There was a mandatory six-day workweek with another week of mandatory time off during the year. The sin taxes were even graduated for the poorer Israelite to be able to make a less costly payment (Lev 1:14).

Pre-monarchy taxation and tithing focused mainly on support for the priests, levites, and worship infrastructure—such as the poll/census tax, offerings, and voluntary gifts—as well as on providing for the poor. All of these taxes/tithes/offerings work toward the end of motivating the Israelites to love/honor God and love/help their fellow man.¹⁸ Biblical offerings might be viewed as proportionate taxes supporting priests and tabernacle. Gleaning, lending, Sabbatical Year, and Jubilee Year laws were essentially taxes that supported the poor, but their very nature also reduced the workload of the land-owner/taxpayer. In this instance, the tax and distribution were proportionate to the property held. For the most part, the tax burden was not applicable to the poor, or to non-agricultural work. So the poor and urban areas were not as heavily taxed.

The Lord made provision for taxes/tithes to be collected by the Levites (as in Num 18:25; cf. Neh 10:37–38; 12:44; 13:5) and every third year the tithe was to be brought to the Levites—likely at their local levitical cities (Deut 14:29). In other years, the Israelites were told to bring their tithes to the place “where God causes His name to dwell” for collection (Deut 12:6–11). The offerings were to be brought to the priests there as well (Lev

¹⁷In Table 2, each square is counted as 10 m on a side. So the largest square is 10,000 m². In 2A, each square is 100 m² out of the possible total; for tabulation, each corner is taken only half harvested; In Table 2B, the edge left unharvested is proposed at 1 m wide all around the perimeter of the field. So in the largest field, a 360 m perimeter multiplied by 1 m wide strip = 360 m². This divided by the 10,000 m² area leaves the percentage as shown.

¹⁸See Deut 6:5 (Love God) and Lev 19:18 (love your neighbor as yourself); Jesus summarizes these when He says, “On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets” (Matt 22:35–40).

2:8). Later, the Levites were given charge of the tithes and consecrated things brought into the temple (2 Chron 31:11–12). The tithes were likely brought in at each festival. Annually, the poor worked the fields to collect the gleaning tax themselves.

In Israel, the people at first looked to their elders for leadership and later for justice.¹⁹ The regulations for governing Israel found in Deuteronomy promoted several functions of governance (justice, atonement, protection, and guidance). Israelite government was focused initially on judges, priests, and tribal leaders/elders (Deut 16–18). As a theocracy, Israel had both civil and religious leadership roles mixed within its charter. The roles of Leader/Judge, Priest, Levite, Prophet and later King were all viewed both as servants of God and of the people. The laws concerning these leaders and the simple demands upon them for ethical governance and leadership are spelled out clearly. However, each type of leader was eventually shown to be capable of corrupt practice (Judges like Samson, priests like Eli and sons, The Levite as priest for Dan, the old prophet in 1 Kings 13). Even before Israelite kingship was begun Israel's leadership had become twisted.

The Rise of Israelite Kingship

The deuteronomic covenant allowed for human Israelite kingship. Moses stated that an Israelite king must: (1) be God's choice, (2) be an Israelite not be a foreigner, (3) not multiply horses, (4) not let the people return to Egypt, (5) not multiply wives or his heart would turn away from God, (6) not increase silver and gold, (7) write, read, and keep the Law, (8) Fear the Lord God, and (9) not to lift his heart above his countrymen (Dt 17:14–20). However, this role was not immediately filled upon entering the land. Israel was sporadically led by varied military leader-judges as Israel's obedience to God waxed and waned over several centuries. The author of the book of Judges made a clarion call for kingship because there was no consistent leadership (Judg 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). However this call for human kingship was not to deliver Israel from its enemies but to lead them into acting according to God's covenant; and so deliver them from their own self-centered, sinful, and idolatrous actions. When some of the people wanted to make Gideon their king, he recognized that it was the Lord who ruled over Israel (Judg 8:23).

In the book of 1 Samuel God is presented as God, King, and Deliverer of Israel in chapters 1–7. In an interesting crossing pattern, God raises the lowly barren Hannah (giving her a prophet/son) and lowers Peninnah (2:5). God judges Eli and sons as wicked and raises Samuel as upright and knowing God. God humbles Israel before the Philistines, humbles the Philistines in His ark travels (1 Sam 5), and then raises up/delivers Israel through the prayer of His old prophet in chapter 7. Then in chapter 8 Samuel is the old judge with corrupt sons, but by chapter 12 he is vindicated as God's

¹⁹Exod 3:16, 18.; 4:29; 12:21; 17:5–6; Lev 4:15.

spokesman and kingmaker. So in 1 Samuel 8 the elders request for a king was ostensibly to remove Samuel (and his sons) from the governing role of judging/justice (1 Sam 8:6). However, it was really another function of government which they desired—a military protector against Ammonite invasion (1 Sam 8:20; 12:12).

The elders demand for a king “Like the nations” essentially would remove God from His role as direct military protector of Israel and was deemed by God as an idolatrous rejection of His rule (1 Sam 8:7–8). This “king like the nations” was not about “let us have a king so that we will be ‘like’ other nations that have kings,” but “let us have and serve a king ‘like the nation’s kings/kingship.”²⁰ This was a breach of the covenant in Deuteronomy 17. In response, to their request, God speaks to Samuel a commissioning/judgment speech presented in two parts. The first part is God’s explanation to Samuel of the idolatrous nature of the request (1 Sam 8:7–9) which included God’s plan to test the people by having Samuel report to them the “Judgment concerning the King”²¹ (מִשְׁפָּט הַמֶּלֶךְ) to see if they would press for their demand for a king. This second part is presented in Samuel’s speech to the people.

²⁰This is clearly revealed in the people’s response in 1 Sam 8:19–20. The phrase כְּנֹחִים is found in Ezek 20:32; Deut 8:20; and 2 Kings 17:11 in the context of serving idols.

²¹The word *mišpāt* may mean “judgment, dispute, legal claim, claim, measure, or law.” HALOT, 651–52. Most scholars take this term as “legal claim, right, or custom” leading to a translation of the term *mišpāt hammelek* as “manner of the king” (KJV, J.P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on the Stylistic and Structural Analyses*, Vol. 4, *Vow and Desire [1 Sam. 1–12]* [Assen: Van Gorcum, 1993], 352; Lyle M. Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis: A Close Reading of 1 Samuel 1–12* [Decatur, GA: Almond, 1985], 269); Eliezer Berkovits, “The Biblical Meaning of Justice,” *Judaism* 18 (1969): 199; “behavior of the king” (NKJV), “procedure of the king” (NASB), “ways of the king” (NRSV, ESV; Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, Interpretation [Louisville: John Knox, 1990], 63; Robert P. Gordon, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library, 1988], 110); “custom of the king” (Moshe Garsiel, *The First Book of Samuel: A Literary Study of Comparative Structures, Analogies and Parallels* [Ramat-Gan: Revivim, 1985], 58); “practice of the king” (JPS); “rights and duties of the king,” (Herbert Marks and Robert Polzin, eds., *Samuel and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993], 85); “justice of the king,” (P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., *I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible. [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1979], 153); “ordinance of the king” (Diana Vikander Edelman, *King Saul in the Historiography of Judah* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991], 40–41. This view takes the *mišpāt hammelek* as the expected equivalent of Deut 17:14–20); “rule of the king,” (Shemaryahu Talmon, “‘The Rule of the King:’ 1 Samuel 8:4–22,” in *King, Cult and Calendar in Ancient Israel* [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1986], 61.); “what the king will do” (NIV). See also, Eric Mitchell, “Give Us A King: The Triumph of Satire in 1 Samuel 8,” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002).

Types of Taxes	Taxes before Kingship	Taxes added by 1 Sam 8 Kingship
Grain Taxes—Festivals	9.6 qt flour [6.4 qt flour as 2 loaves of bread] + 1 sheaf of grain	
Grain Taxes—Tithes	10% of increase	10% of increase=20%
Grain Taxes—Sacrifices	1 bread cake per crop of grain [3.2 qt flour]	
Grain Taxes—Other	3.5 to 6% gleaning, + dropped harvest, don't muzzle ox	best fields
Vine Taxes—Festivals	1 qt wine [1/4 hin]	
Vine Taxes—Tithes	10% of increase	10% of increase=20%
Vine Taxes—Other	dropped harvest	best vineyards
Orchard Taxes—Festivals	oil [to mix in flour - firstfruits offering]	
Orchard Taxes—Tithes	10% of increase	
Orchard Taxes—Other	100% produce of the 3rd/4th yr of planted tree	best orchards
Labor Taxes—Festivals	2.17% [1.9% (7 days no work)+.27% (1 day building booth)]	
Labor Taxes—Sabbath	14.28% [reduction in work]	Corvee Labor – servants [at times 33%]
Labor Taxes—Other	goods to freed bondservant, 1/2 shekel head tax, parapet	for Male/female/strong male/beasts
Beast Tax—Tithes	10% of herd	
Beast Tax—Sacrifices	120% of cost to redeem animal	
Beast Tax—Other	kill firstborn or lamb, or 5 shekels	
Lending Tax—Yearly	loss of interest to Israelites, bad debt risk	
Flock Taxes—Festival	3 male lambs	
Flock Taxes—Tithes	10% of total herd/flock	10% of herd/flock=20%
Cleansing Taxes—Woman/man	24 turtledoves/pigeons [@ 2 per month per couple]	
Sin Taxes—Optional		
Flock—Guilt Offering	2 lambs/goats/birds+1/10 ephah flour	
Flock—Guilt Offering with compensation	1 ram+120% of value of profaned item	
Flock—Sin Offering	1 female goat/lamb	
Flock—Atonement	1 bull/ram/turtledove/pigeon	
Grain—Offering	fine flour with salt, oil, & frankincense	
Cleansing Tax—Leper	2 clean birds, 2 male lambs a female lamb+ephah of flour w/oil	
7th Yr Taxes		
Labor Taxes—Sabbath Year	[100% @ 1yr - offset by God's blessing in 6th yr]	
Lending Tax—Sabbath Year	loss of principal	
Jubilee Taxes		
Labor Taxes—Jubilee	[100% @ 2 yrs - offset by God's blessing in 6th yr]	

Table 3. Annual Israelite Taxes before and after Kingship

This type of **מִשְׁפָּט**, found here in 1 Samuel 8, is similar to that mentioned in Deuteronomy 17:9–11 which speaks of the people coming to the judge to inquire about a verdict. The judge is to declare the verdict (v. 9) and the people are to observe the verdict/oral judgment (v. 11, **מִשְׁפָּט**).

God's Commissioning / Judgment Speech: Part 1: God to Samuel

Introduction: to the Commissioning of the Messenger:
("Obey the voice of the people for" v. 7)

Reason for Judgment:

Accusation ("they have rejected me," v. 7)
Development ("as all the things" v. 8)

Commissioning of Messenger: ("Obey their voice only" v. 9a)

Reason for Messenger:

Accusation (Testify, v. 9b)
Development (Proclaim the *mišpāt hammelek*, v. 9c–d)

Part 2: Samuel to the "Ones Asking for a King"

Report of Messenger's Speech: (Testify [vv. 7–9], v.10a–11a)

Announcement/Messenger Speech:

Intervention of God

("This will be the *mišpāt hammelek*," v. 11b–c)

Results of God's Intervention/Judgment (vv. 11d–18c)²²

In this judgment, God warns Israel of the worldly standard of ancient Near Eastern city-state kings (expansive oppressive government and taxation, including *cor-vee* labor)—the type of king for whom they were clamoring.

The **מִשְׁפָּט הַמֶּלֶךְ** (1 Sam 8:10–18) is a parodic satire upon the elders request for a king. A parody is a form of sarcastic satire that imitates its literary object by exaggeration in order to ridicule it.²³ Samuel's judgment speech parodies the kingship passage in Deuteronomy 17:14–20 (see Table 4.) but is not ridiculing it. There is satire involved here as well. Biblical satire takes a high moral tone and reproaches a real and current deviation of a covenantal norm (in order to reform that deviation).²⁴ So put together this judgment speech is a parodic satire upon the elders request for a king which reflects the ideal kingship text of Deuteronomy 17, but which reproaches the request as a deviation from the covenant with God. In it, God's prophet tries to restrain the people from pressing their request by reporting to them both the nature of the kingship for which they are asking and the resulting state in which they will find themselves serving such a king. It is also argued

²²Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, 142, 170–71. Eric Mitchell, "Give Us a King," 168, 188.

²³Edwin Marshall Good, *Irony in the Old Testament*, Bible and Literature Series 3, (Sheffield: Almond, 1981), 27.

²⁴Mitchell, "Give Us A King," 76.

here that the judgment speech, as it is reported by God to be a serious breach of the covenant (1 Sam 8:8), is also intertextually recalling the covenant curses of Deuteronomy 28. These concepts are presented in 1 Samuel 8 in the following order:

- 14–15: if you follow other gods, these curses will overtake you
- 32, 41: your sons and daughters taken into captivity
- 33: a people you do not know will eat the produce of your ground
- 38: you will plant fields, vineyards, and olive orchards but will not eat of it
- 49, 31: a nation will come eat your herds, grain, wine, oil, and produce . . .
your ox, donkey and sheep will be taken and given away to enemies
- 48: you will serve your enemies
- 68: you will be taken to Egypt and offer yourselves as slaves
- 31: no one will save you
- 36: the Lord will bring you and your king to exile and you will serve idols
- 43: foreigners will lord it over you, you will be indebted to them
- 45: these curses will overtake you because you would not obey God.

Deuteronomy 17:14–20— “A King who is an Israelite”	1 Samuel 8— “A King like the Nation’s Kings”
14–15 An Israelite king to rule . . . not a Foreigner	5 A pagan-style king/military leader ⁴
16 He will not multiply horses	11 He will <i>take</i> your sons for Chariot drivers, horsemen, messengers, and officers.
17 He will not multiply wives	13 Your daughters he will <i>take</i> for perfumers, cooks, and bakers—these are all tasks performed by concubines and wives for the king’s court.
17 He will not greatly increase silver and gold	14–17 He will <i>take</i> your best fields, vineyards, and olive groves and give them to his servants He will <i>impose a 10% tax</i> on your grain, grapes, and other harvests to give to his servants He will <i>take</i> your male and female servants, as well as the best of your strong young workers and beasts of burden to do his work. ⁵ He will <i>impose a 10% tax</i> on your flocks of sheep and goats
20 He will study the Law, Fear God, and His heart will not be lifted up above his fellow Israelites	17 You will be his slaves
15 He will be chosen by The LORD God to serve as a vassal king	18–20 Chosen/demanded by Israel to replace God as king

Table 4. Parody: Israelite Kingship vs. “A King like the Nations”

So this “king like the nations” that they demand will “take, and take, and take” from them until they will end up as his slaves. He will be far worse for them than both an invader (like Nahash the Ammonite) who takes and

leaves or judges who take only bribes (Samuel's sons). This will be a serious expansion of governmental power and taxation.

God gave Israel a choice to trust God and live under His limited government (and limited taxation—with protection from enemies dependent upon their faith in God), or to trust in a king “like the nations’ kings” (with a standing army for protection, tyrannical oppression, subjective justice, extreme taxation, and eventually debt slavery of the people). If they pressed this demand for kingship, as God’s judgment for their rejection of Him they would get an ancient Near Eastern type of king and not the benevolent, humble leader found in the laws on kingship in Deuteronomy 17. Also, if they did trust in an earthly king, they would still rise or fall on the character of their king’s maintenance of their covenant relationship with God (1 Sam 12:22–25). The people’s response, an emphatic “No, but there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles” (1 Sam 8:19–20).

When the people disregarded God’s warning/judgment and adamantly demanded this type of king, the oppressive governance and taxation of kingship became a pragmatic standard for governance which was implemented by good and bad kings throughout Israel’s history and with which God rarely interfered (1 Sam 8:18).

The first king Saul (lit. “the one asked for”) reflected God’s judgment upon Israel quite well.²⁵ He governed in manner of ancient Near Eastern kings. Saul took: (1) men for his army (1 Sam 13:2; 14:52; 18:2), (2) men as commanders (1 Sam 14:50; 18:12; 22:7) (3) men to oversee and work his lands and livestock (1 Sam 21:7; 2 Sam 9:2–13), (4) men as servants (1 Sam 16:15, 18), (5) women for perfumers, cooks, and bakers (2 Sam 3:7), (6) fields, vineyards, and wealth for his military retainers/servants (1 Sam 17:25; 22:7), and (7) a tithe/tax of produce and livestock (1 Sam 17:25; 1 Sam 16:20). Saul also offered “tax free” status to his favorite servants (as offered to the one who would kill Goliath, 1 Sam 17:25).

Solomon is perhaps the best prototype for the judgment concerning kingship in 1 Samuel 8. Solomon took: (1) men for his army (1 Kgs 9:22), (2) men as commanders (1 Kgs 2:35, 1 Kgs 9:22), (3) men to oversee his lands and livestock (1 Kgs 9:22), (4) men as servants (1 Kgs 5:13–17; 7:13–14; 9:22), (5) women (possibly concubines were used for perfumers, cooks, and bakers, 1 Kgs 4:20–27), (6) land and wealth to whom he wished (1 Kgs 9:11–14), (7) and a tax of produce and livestock (1 Kgs 4:1–27). Solomon also broke all the prohibitions in Deuteronomy 17 when he: (1) acquired many horses and chariots from Egypt (1 Kgs 10:26–29), (2) made peace with Egypt (marrying an Egyptian princess—1 Kgs 3:1), (3) acquired much wealth (1 Kgs 10:10, 14–24), and (4) acquired 700 wives and 300

²⁵Saul was a false-start at kingship. He is presented in the narrative of 1 Sam—in almost every instance—in a negative light. Even the positive narratives have a subtle negative portent or intention. He fails in too many ways to mention here.

concubines—many of them foreign (1 Kgs 11:1–3).²⁶ The narratives of the Old Testament indicate that most of the kings of Israel and Judah both ruled and taxed the people in this manner.

Taxes Under Israelite Kings

Looking at the additional taxes presented by the kingship of 1 Samuel 8, the tax burden upon the people's agricultural income (and total herds/flocks) increased 100%—from 10% to 20% (see Table 3). The tax on their laborer capital goods (male/female/strong male laborers, donkeys/beasts of burden) went from 0% to as much as 33% of their time.²⁷ This would both reduce the productivity and increase the cost of a slave/bondservant. Perhaps the worst tax was not really a tax but a theft of their inheritance.

The king would also take their best fields, vineyards, and orchards and not even to keep for himself, but to give away to his servants.²⁸ This was a direct breach of the Law of inheritance (Num 27; 36). The family inheritance of lands within the land of Canaan were permanently given to each family and tribe. Naboth mentions this to Ahab and refuses to sell his vineyard for this reason (1 Kgs 21). Ahab resorts to Jezebel's trumped up charges to kill Naboth and take not only his family inheritance but his life. It is unlikely that these "taken" lands would be returned in the Jubilee Year, because there would be no contract, just confiscation; and then the crown did not hold the lands but the one to whom the king gave them. It is also oppressive that the king will take not just any part of their inheritance, but the best part. One would think that this would be time when the Israelites would "cry out in that day" (1 Sam 8:18).

The increase in taxes was the resulting effect from the expanded government that kingship would bring. The people wanted military protection and a standing army led by their king would need to be equipped and paid. When Saul was anointed as king 3,000 men were selected to serve him as his army (1 Sam 13:2). The King's army needed chariots, charioteers, horsemen, messengers, commanders, and blacksmiths (See Table 5, below). The king needed his own lands and fields as well as servants to work those fields, so plowmen and harvesters were needed. The army, the king's household, his field servants, and his court needed to eat, so kings took women for cooks,

²⁶However, Solomon was never condemned by God for his wealth (instead, God gave him wealth, 1 Kgs 3:13; Deut 17:17). Neither was Solomon reproached for his horses and chariots (Deut 17:16) or for acquiring a great many wives (Deut 17:17). It was Solomon's foreign wives (cf. Deut. 7:3) who led him into idolatry, that caused the negative editorial comment about Solomon's reign (1 Kgs 11:1–13).

²⁷In 1 Kgs 5:13, Solomon levied a labor force of 30,000 from all Israel, but 1 Kgs 9:21–22 indicates that the non-Israelites left in the land were the forced laborers while the Israelites were only Solomon's leaders (reflecting the case in 1 Sam 8:16).

²⁸In the Alalakh tablets and at Ugarit the king seized and redistributed land. Alalakh (no. 17, 238–[269]–286, 290–299, 410).

bakers, and even as perfumers (perhaps as concubines).²⁹ It was not only the provision for the royal servants, but also the loss of their freedom to work when and where they wished which taxed the people.³⁰

Royal servants increased. There are mentions of counselors, deputies, secretaries, chiefs of forced labor, “one over the household,” recorder, scribe, royal steward, overseer of the men of war, captain of the army, advisors, tutors for royal children, court prophet, bodyguards, etc. to name just a few (1 Kgs 1:38; 4:1ff; 2 Kgs 18:18; 25:19; 1 Chr 27:32). Solomon apportioned the land into tax districts whose boundaries crossed tribal lands. These were run by appointed deputies/officials responsible for taxing their district to support the king’s household and court with food and supplies for one month each year (1 Kgs 4:7ff). Archaeology has discovered *Lemelek* (“for the king”) seal impressions on the handles of large storage jars in Israel which are evidence of royal taxes in the kingdom period.³¹ Over fifty *Lemelek* bullae (inscribed clay seal impressions) have also been found but may have been used for taxes in the time of Manasseh.³² Royal building projects, expanded government, and costly court expenditures were a heavy burden upon the people. So much so that Solomon’s son Rehoboam even had a tax rebellion which split the kingdom over his plan to continue Solomon’s policies (1 Kgs 12).

From a human standpoint, this is just what kings do: Tax and rule. However, while government expanded, taxation increased, and kings ignored the restrictions of Deuteronomy 17:14–18, God’s plan for Israelite kings in Deuteronomy 17 had only slightly shifted. The focus was now on the last part of the constraints for kingship: the king fearing God, keeping the Law, and having a humble heart (Deut 17:19–20). While David broke the Law in serious ways (Bathsheba affair/rape, Uriah’s murder, etc), he was repentant, and strived to follow God with a humble heart (1 Kgs 11:33). God gave David the eternal covenant of kingship in 2 Samuel 7, but it was David’s example that became the standard to which the narrator of 1–2 Kings compared all

²⁹Peter Ackroyd (*First Book of Samuel*, 72) takes “perfumers” as a euphemism for concubines. David had concubines who kept his house (2 Sam 12:11; 16:21). Saul had only one concubine presented in the Biblical text (2 Sam 3:7). Wives/women often prepared the food. Sarah baked for the three strangers (Gen 18:6) and David’s daughter Tamar made cakes and baked them for her brother Amnon (2 Sam 13:8). Perfumes were used in ancient Israel. Scented oils were used for skin ointments, to cover odors, as well as for religious purposes. A perfumer blended the oils and ingredients to produce these. Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, Library of Ancient Israel (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 50, 65, 280–81.

³⁰David was pressed into Saul’s service (1 Sam 16:17–22; 18:2); and Jeroboam was pressed into Solomon’s service (1 Kgs 11:28).

³¹Many from the time of Hezekiah. About two thousand seal impressions have been found.

³²Gabi Barkay’s Temple Mount Sifting Project discovered a seventh century B.C. bulla inscribed in paleo-Hebrew “Gibeon, for the king.” 19 cities are identified in *Lmlk* bullae which represent nine of the 12 Judahite districts mentioned in Josh 15:20–63. Barkay ties these bullae to taxes imposed by king Manasseh. Biblical Archaeology Society, Bible History Daily, <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/ancient-cultures/ancient-israel/how-ancient-taxes-were-collected-under-king-manasseh/> (Accessed 24 May 2017).

following kings. David's heart was "wholly devoted to the Lord, his God" (1 Kgs 15:3ff) and David "did what was right in the eyes of the Lord" (1 Kgs 15:11). David's multiple-great-grandson, King Josiah was a good example of this, "He did right in the sight of the Lord and walked in all the way of his father David, nor did he turn aside to the right or to the left (1 Kgs 22:2).

Property	The King Will...	The King Will...	Recipient of the Tax	Income Tax to King	Israelite Rights Violated	God's Law Violated	Type of Tax
Sons	Take	Appoint as: Charioteers	King's service		Loss of self-determination	Deut 17:16	Labor
		Horsemen	King's service		Loss of self-determination	Deut 17:16	Labor
		Heralds/ messengers	King's service		Loss of self-determination		Labor
		Military commanders over 1000s & 50s	King's service		Loss of self-determination		Labor
		plowers	King's service		Loss of self-determination		Labor
		harvesters	King's service		Loss of self-determination		Labor
		Military blacksmiths	King's service		Loss of self-determination		Labor
Daughters	Take	For perfumers	King's harem		Loss of self-determination		Labor
		For cooks	King's harem		Loss of self-determination		Labor
		For bakers	King's harem		Loss of self-determination		Labor
Best Fields	Take	Give	King's servants		Loss of Inheritance	Num 36:9*	Field (inheritance)
Best Vineyards	Take	Give	King's servants		Loss of Inheritance	Num 36:9	Vineyard (inheritance)
Best Olive Orchards	Take	Give	King's servants		Loss of Inheritance	Num 36:9	Orchard (inheritance)
Grain Tax	Take	Tithe	King's officers & Servants	10%			Grain (income)
Vineyard Tax	Take	Tithe	King's officers & Servants	10%			Vine (income)
Male/ Female Servants Tax	Take	Impose Corvee labor	Kings court, fields, & building projects	Up to 33% of their time, 1 Kings 5:13	Interferes with right to work, with Service (bond-servant) contracts	Deut 5:21	Labor
*See also Num 27:811; Lev 25:23ff. In 1 Kings 21:3, Naboth states to Ahab, "The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers."							

Property	The King will...	The King will...	Recipient of the Tax	Income Tax to King	Israelite Rights Violated	God's Law Violated	Type of Tax
Strong Laborer Tax	Take	Impose Corvee labor	Kings court, fields, & building projects	Up to 33% of their time, 1 Kings 5:13	Interferes with right to work, with Service (bond-servant) contracts	Deut 5:21	Labor
Beast of Burden (Donkey) Tax	Take	Impose Corvee labor	Kings court, fields, & building projects	Up to 33% of their time, 1 Kings 5:13	Interferes with property ownership		Labor (capitol goods)
Sheep/ Goats Tax	Take	Tithe	King	10%	Interferes with property ownership		Flocks (capital goods)
Israelites	Enslave		King		Loss of freedom; people become serfs		

Table 5. The King's Expansion of Taxes and Oppression

Land Grabs, Unjust Exchange, and Bribes: Economic Opportunism and the Rights of the Poor in Ancient Israel

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Introduction

Scholarship on the economic ethics of the Old Testament has highlighted the creation values and concern for the poor embedded in the wisdom and prophetic literature.¹ It has also explored the institutional arrangements and norms respecting property rights and exchange and the innovations that impacted them over the history of ancient Israel.² This study seeks to extend these lines of research by exploring the development of several specific economic practices that undermined the norms of transparency and honesty governing property rights and exchange expressed in the Pentateuch. Examples of arbitrary taking of land and produce, deceit in exchange, and economic compulsion with respect to lending arrangements are explored in light of the economics of opportunism. Opportunism occurs when there is renegeing on fulfillment of a promise by either party to an economic exchange; it means there is a lack of a credible commitment as promises between the participants break down.³ Elements of deceit, fraud, and in some cases coercion may be involved. Often it occurs when one party to an exchange is at an informational or bargaining disadvantage, so that the other party is able to secure economic gain at their expense. With respect to labor, opportunism can include both withholding of worker's wages and shirking by employees as a form of moral hazard.

Transaction cost and contracting analysis sheds light on the dynamics of exchange relationships and the problem of poverty in Israel's ancient economy. Given the kinship basis for the division of the land, reciprocity in exchange relies upon mutual obligation as a means to reduce transactions costs. Personal economic interaction and kinship relations mean that in the

¹Christopher J.H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004).

²Edd Noell, "Exchange and Property Rights in Light of Biblical Values," *Journal of Private Enterprise*, (2007).

³Oliver E. Williamson, *The Economic Institutions of Capitalism* (New York: The Free Press, 1985), 32.

absence of a formal enforcement mechanism, an implicit contractual obligation is upheld to come to the aid of a fellow peasant villager in the face of a drought or flood. With a greater division of labor and expansion of Israel's territory under Solomon, market relations come to be more prominent. Yet the developing agrarian economy suffers from inadequately defined or enforced property rights, lack of credible commitments, and unequal bargaining power. These features become the basis upon which economic injustice is practiced. Bribes and other measures by the wealthy are used to extract from civil authorities numerous economic advantages over the poor. Examples include the seizure of the peasant's land arbitrarily by wealthy landowners and merchants engaging in lopsided lending and trading practices. Old Testament prophets expose the corruption in the courts and the ruling Israelite bureaucracy that takes the form of "favoritism towards those in power and mistreatment of the disenfranchised."⁴

Through an examination of the prophetic and wisdom literature in the pre-exilic era, it becomes evident that the rights of the poor extend far beyond "welfare relief" in the form of charitable actions. The poor are also to receive justice by the civil authorities in terms of fair exchange for products, loans, and their labor. Said another way, the property rights of the poor are not to be subject to opportunistic predation. The just monarch will support the position of those economically disadvantaged with respect to administrative oversight and court rulings respecting property holdings, loan foreclosures, and weights and balances used in economic exchange. The study also considers the manner in which formal methods of governance (the elders at the gate and the monarchy) explicitly and implicitly back these forms of opportunism via the role of bribes and other economic mechanisms.

The article is organized around five sections. Section 2 examines the relevant provisions of the Pentateuchal case law that provide for just economic exchange and proscribe particular instances of economic opportunism. In Section 3 the particular responsibilities of Israel's civil authorities towards the poor are shown to include economic impartiality in judgment and incorruptibility. Economic injustice towards the poor through actions by the wealthy to obtain the backing of civil government authorities in seizing land and engaging in lopsided lending and trading practices is discussed in Section 4. Section 5 concludes by overviewing "the rights of the poor" to be defended by the just ruler in Israel and briefly considers their responsibility towards minimizing income inequality.

Economic Case Law and the Rights of the Poor

Its evident that the Decalogue is the moral foundation for economic life in ancient Israel. Yet it also enables specialization and exchange by constraining opportunistic behavior. Consider the eighth and tenth

⁴Erika Moore, "Ruth 2: Ancient Near Eastern Background," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*. (Downers Grove: IVP, 2008), 692.

commandments Israel receives at Mount Sinai, “You shall not steal” and “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house . . . [including] anything that belongs to your neighbor” (Exod 20:15, 17). In these commands and the subsequent limitations upon moving a neighbor’s boundary marker (Deut 19:14; 27:17), the foundations of respect for property rights are laid. Secure property rights protect families from social and political arbitrariness, families that are broader than the “nuclear family.”⁵ More generally, property rights are part of the economic institutions of ancient Israel that serve to diminish the uncertainty of exchange and reduce the cost of transacting. In general, such institutions “consist of both informal constraints (sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions, and codes of conduct), and formal rules (constitutions, laws, property rights).”⁶

Respect for property rights is linked to the just way fellow Israelites are to be treated. In a broad way, the people of Israel are told “not to oppress your neighbor” but rather “to love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev 19:13, 18). These injunctions from Moses present a “moral trajectory” for economic behavior that is not subject to explicit sanctions (unlike the laws regarding murder, for example). The land is initially distributed among the clans and families of Israel’s tribes. In this setting, when personal “kin” relations characterize exchange and “people have an intimate understanding of each other,” North observes that personal relations in effect keep transactions costs relatively low.⁷ He adds “reciprocity societies can be considered as a least-cost trading solution where no system of enforcing the terms of exchange between trading units exists.”⁸ Working the land in a context of kinship-based reciprocal obligations between households in a village network, the Israelite family faced shame and dishonor if they did not come to their neighbor’s aid, for they triggered the implicit enforcement provision of “an essentially person-to-person agreement among long-term neighbors.”⁹

Numerous specific economic applications of the Mosaic case law provide evidence of its moral trajectory. This part of the Pentateuchal code, as found for example in Exodus 21–24, applies the Decalogue’s standards to everyday life.¹⁰ Of particular relevance for this study is how the standards of the second table of the law (the last six commandments) find specific

⁵See Noell, “Exchange and Property Rights in Light of Biblical Values,” 71–94, for a more detailed discussion of the significance of secure property rights in the Mosaic law code.

⁶Elio Lo Cascio, “The Role of the State in the Roman Economy: Making Use of the New Institutional Economics,” in *Ancient Economies, Modern Methodologies: Archaeology, Comparative History, Models and Institutions* (Bari: Edipuglia, 2006), 219.

⁷Douglass C. North, “Institutions,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (1991): 99.

⁸Douglass C. North, “Markets and Other Allocation Systems in History: The Challenge of Karl Polanyi,” in *Economic Sociology*, edited by R. Swedberg (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1996), 165.

⁹Kurt C. Schaefer and Edd S. Noell, “Contract Theory, Distributive Justice, and the Hebrew Sabbatical,” *Faith and Economics* (2005): 9.

¹⁰The case laws range from matters such as an accidental goring of a neighbor’s ox (Exod 21:28–32) to having a parapet (fence) around one’s housetop (Deut 22:8).

expression in case laws governing economic relations between the poor and the rest of the community. In the Hebrew Bible, the poor are identified either as those living at society's margin as widows, orphans, or strangers (*ebyon*), those personally negligent (*atsel*), and those economically oppressed (*ani*).¹¹

Israel's God, the just Israelite, and the just King each attend to the rights of the poor (Exod 23:6; Deut 27:19; Ps 140:12; Prov 29:7; Job 36:6; Isa 10:2; Jer 5:28). The "rights of the poor" to economic provisions include in-kind benefits such as allowance for gleaning in the field for each harvest time in sheaves and fruit left for them by the landowner and the receipt of a particular tithe (Deut 14:28–29).¹² In various passages, those who are facing economic destitution due to natural calamity, as well as those who are in the status of "widow, orphan, and stranger" also receive an interest-free loan and the cancellation of debts. When one household's harvest is meager, another village neighbor makes them a commodity loan.¹³ For much of Israel's economic history, most loans were made for consumptive (and not investment) purposes to those who need food for their family or seed corn, hence the ban on lending at interest, particularly to the poor (Exod 22:25).¹⁴ The Pentateuch instructs Israelites to have compassion in lending to the poor. In the treatment of collateral pledges, the creditor must respect the rights of the debtor. Wright explains "On the one hand, there is the debtor's right to daily bread, so the creditor must not deprive him of the means of making it (the domestic millstone). On the other hand, there is the debtor's need for shelter

¹¹The *atsel* is consistently identified in the book of Proverbs as the negligent one who is not to be given provisions from the community. There is some fluidity in the use of Hebrew terms regarding those economically oppressed. Both the *ani* and *ebyon* are identified this way in Ezek 22:29; Amos 8:4 similarly depicts the needy (*ebyon*) and the poor of the land (*ani*) as being devoured by the exploitative merchant. J. David Pleins, *The Social Visions of the Hebrew Bible: A Theological Introduction* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 372.

¹²The various provisions of the Pentateuch's "safety net" for the poor are discussed in more detail in Schaefer and Noell, "Contract Theory, Distributive Justice, and the Hebrew Sabbathical."

¹³Douglas E. Oakman, "The Ancient Economy" in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, edited by Richard L. Rohrbaugh (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996); John D. Mason, "Biblical Teachings and the Objectives of Welfare Policy in the U.S.," *Bulletin of the Association of Christian Economists* (1993); Karl Polanyi, Conrad M. Arensberg, and Harry W. Pearson, *Trade and Market in the Early Empires: Economies in History and Theory* (New York: Free Press, 1957).

¹⁴Barry J. Gordon raises the likely possibility that it is only interest-taking for consumption loans that is banned here, suggesting that investment loans in ancient Israel were "the almost exclusive preserve of foreign traders and merchants," making loans to a foreigner identical to a commercial loan. This of course overlooks the possibility of making a consumption loan to a foreigner, for Israelites were to treat them with compassion. At the same time, Gordon is on target in affirming, "The law does not necessarily preclude taking interest from a fellow Israelite should he have borrowed for commercial purposes. The only clear ban is on a demand for a surplus over and above the principal in the case of a consumption loan." Barry J. Gordon, "Biblical and Early Judeo-Christian Thought: Genesis to Augustine," in *Pre-Classical Economic Thought: From the Greeks to the Scottish Enlightenment* (Doordrecht: Springer 1987), 50.

and warmth, so the creditor must not take basic clothing as security.”¹⁵ Loans were repaid in the form of agricultural produce out of a subsequent harvest.

Lending is framed by the values of Israel’s covenant at Sinai. While lenders certainly can abuse their powers by unscrupulous demands, they are thereby challenging the Lord who takes a special interest in the plight of the poor.¹⁶ The Hebrew Bible issues an apodictic call (Thou shalt . . .) to provide these loans. It is placed upon the conscience of the Israelite as a responsibility, for which they are motivated by God’s special concern for the powerless (Ps 146:9), and by placing themselves in the poor’s position (Exod 22:21; Deut 24:14–15).¹⁷ It seems evident that the laws cancelling debts operate on the same basis. The creditor supports them, knowing that he might find himself in need of a loan being cancelled at some point in his own financial struggle. Indeed, these voluntary laws are codified because “there is an obvious incentive for all parties to eliminate as much moral hazard as possible by restricting shirking behavior, by which those with no legitimate need might file a claim against the system.”¹⁸ These particular economic institutions are tied to “the rights of the poor.”

Yet it is also true that the Old Testament points to a different dimension of the rights of the poor, rights with respect to making fair exchanges in the market. The strong presence of reciprocity did not exclude the importance of reliance upon price-based exchange mechanisms. Contrary to Polanyi, in pre-monarchic Israel we find a degree of recognition of market institutions alongside of reciprocity and redistribution.¹⁹

Exchange practices provide a cogent example of how the vulnerable position of the poor is respected in Pentateuchal law. Justice is to govern the exchange of goods. This is stated succinctly in Leviticus 25:14, “And if you make a sale, moreover, to your friend, or buy from your friend’s hand, you shall not wrong one another.” This norm in effect is “the Mosaic law statement of the just-price law.”²⁰ It is applied in the determination of just and

¹⁵Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*, 313.

¹⁶Ibid., 170–71.

¹⁷Mosaic laws requiring gleanings for the poor and interest-free loans have as their purpose not merely to provide sustenance. Rather, because of the Scripture’s high view of personal economic agency, the goal is “to assist them to begin again to help themselves and so to regain their dignity.” Craig M. Gay, “Poverty,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Christianity and Economics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 620–36. See also, Hans Eberhard von Waldow, *Social Responsibility and Social Structure in Early Israel* (Washington D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association, 1970); Donald E. Gowan, “Wealth and Poverty in the Old Testament: The Case of the Widow, the Orphan, and Sojourner,” *Interpretation*, (1987).

¹⁸See Schaefer and Noell, “Contract Theory, Distributive Justice, and the Hebrew Sabbatical,” 9, for a discussion of the parallels between the sabbatical laws and modern bankruptcy laws.

¹⁹Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1944); Karl Polanyi, *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*; Santhi Hejeebu and Deirdre McCloskey provide evidence for the pervasive nature of market-based exchange relations in the ancient Near East. Santhi Hejeebu and Deirdre McCloskey, “The Reproving of Karl Polanyi.” *Critical Review* (1999): 285–314.

²⁰Dov Paris, “An Economic Look at the Old Testament,” in *Ancient and Medieval*

unjust gain in connection to the measures of exchange in ancient Israel's agrarian economy. In regards to exchange, the Mosaic codes presume that rates may fluctuate but make no attempt "to establish a fixed structure of prices for goods and services of every-day trade."²¹

In regards to market exchange, ancient Israel often relied upon implicit contracts. Opportunism in exchange becomes more likely with implicit agreements, in contrast to explicit contract arrangements that can increase the likelihood each party will fulfill their particular responsibility. Due to the incompleteness of the implicit contract, participants may not reliably disclose true conditions upon request or self-fulfill all promises. Thus "contract as mere promise, unsupported by credible commitments, will not be self-enforcing."²² In these situations economic participants take advantage of each other in both product markets, by failing to deliver goods or services, and labor markets, as when employees mislead employers and shirk or employers fail to pay employees in a timely way.

Consider how the Mosaic case law addresses instances of opportunism with respect to commutative justice (justice in exchange).²³ The directive to each party is to respect the standards regarding exchange, "You shall not cheat in measuring length, weight, or quantity. You shall have honest balances" (Lev 19:35). Likewise, in his repetition of the law Moses tells Israel, "you shall not have in your bag differing weights, a large and a small. You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. You shall have a full and just weight; you shall have a full and just measure" (Deut 25:13–16).²⁴ These weights then serve as the practical measure for fair transactions and just gains in exchange. Wiseman notes, "weights were carried in a pouch or wallet (Deut 25:13; Mic 6:11; Prov 16:11) in order that the purchaser could check with the weights current among the merchants at a given place (Gen 23:16)."²⁵ Promises of each party to fulfill their part of the

Economic Ideas and Concepts of Social Justice (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 87.

²¹Roman A. Ohrenstein and Barry L.J. Gordon, *Economic Analysis in Talmudic Literature: Rabbinic Thought in the Light of Modern Economics* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 30.

²²Oliver E. Williamson "The New Institutional Economics." *Journal of Economic Literature*. (2000): 601.

²³E.C. Beisner provides a helpful discussion of the biblical vocabulary regarding justice. E.C. Beisner, "Justice and Poverty: Two Views Contrasted," in *Christianity and Economics in the Post-Cold War Era: The Oxford Declaration and Beyond* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 57–80; cf. Andrew Hartopp, *What is Economic Justice? Biblical and Secular Perspectives Contrasted* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007).

²⁴Two examples of measures often referred to in discussions of exchange in the Old Testament are the "bath" and the "ephah." Leslie C. Allen explains that they are "respectively liquid and dry measures of the same capacity, about five gallons." Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 378.

²⁵Donald J. Wiseman, "Weights and Measures," in *The New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove: IVP, 1996), 1245; Thomas E. McComiskey notes that "ancient weights had flat bases, and often inscribed their weight." He adds that "because of restricted technology ancient balances had a margin of error of up to 6 percent." Thomas E. McComiskey, "Micah," in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, Vol 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker,

bargain are reinforced by the standard of adherence to commonly accepted weights and balances. This attempt to achieve a credible commitment on each side becomes more significant as Israel eventually makes the transition from barter to a monetized economy.

In the pre-monarchic period Israel relies first on barter but moves eventually to gold and silver ingots. De Vaux describes this transition:

The earliest form of trade was bartering merchandise, and payment was made, at first, in goods which could be measured or counted—so many measures of barley or oil, so many head of cattle, etc. For the sake of convenience, metal was soon adopted as the means of payment; sometimes it was wrought, sometimes in ingots, the quality and weight of which determined the value in exchange.²⁶

Until the seventh-century, gold and silver ingots are widely utilized for monetary exchange in ancient Near Eastern economies. By the pre-exilic prophetic era, the gold and silver ingots are spoken of in units of shekels in Israel. Smith explains that “Before the use of minted coins, a shekel served as a standard weight by which to measure the silver used to purchase commodities.”²⁷

Thus obligations and constraints are placed on merchants and consumers in monetary exchange to avoid the use of false weights and balances (Lev 19:36). As McComiskey notes, “Balances could be falsified by inaccurate pans, a bent crossbow, or mishandling.”²⁸ Through misleading measures of weight, consumers of foodstuffs and other necessities would be overcharged and farmers would be underpaid for their produce by wholesalers. The poor can be particularly the objects of such opportunistic behavior. How does one know for sure that their trading partner will live up to their promises of a fair price grounded in well-known customary measures of the product exchange, or a fair quality grounded in customary standards? How would their grievances be addressed? Waltke explains, “Standard weights and measures require legal sanction to enforce their authority.”²⁹ Ultimately the enforcement of the Mosaic law and its provisions for just exchange is the responsibility of the rulers of Israel.

1993), 738.

²⁶Ronald de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, translated by John McHugh (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 206.

²⁷Billy K. Smith and Frank S. Page, *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: B&H, 1995), 145.

²⁸McComiskey, “Micah,” 739.

²⁹Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 15–31* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 18.

The Responsibility of the Governing Authorities: Defending the Rights of the Poor

For most of its existence ancient Israel is governed by decentralized authorities. God/Moses allows for Israel to have a future king, but he must meet God's approval (Deut 17:14–20). By the period following the rule of the Judges, Israel is desirous of a king so as to follow the lead of other nations around it. Yet God warns Israel through Samuel about the consequences of a centralized monarchy. At the same time there is a set of norms found in the Mosaic law which serves as Israel's unique wisdom (Deut 4:8) but also will be a light for the Gentile nations.³⁰ Mason affirms that prior to the establishment of the monarchy we find a "centralized ethical/legal canon, but the absence of a centralized state or temple to enforce and interpret it. Interpretation and enforcement of this 'constitution' was to be accomplished at the local level by the community elders (heads of extended families) gathered typically at the administrative/judicial 'common' of the time, the main gate into and out of the city ('elders at the gate')."³¹ Village elders sitting at the gates oversee the administration of fair exchange arrangements. The particular responsibilities of the elder at the gate for the poor in this era are reflected in Job 29:7–17. Job and the elders were to be guided by the compassionate norms towards the poor found in the Mosaic law. Indeed, they "actively intervened to make sure that righteousness and justice characterized the community."³² They are responsible to administer justice for the poor. In Exodus 23:2–3, 6–8, the manner in which the poor are to be treated in Israel's courts is named. Elders who act as judges are instructed:

You shall not fall in with the many to do evil, nor shall you bear witness in a lawsuit, siding with the many, so as to pervert justice, nor shall you be partial to a poor man in his lawsuit. You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in his lawsuit. Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent and righteous, for I will not acquit the wicked. And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of those who are in the right.

If the poor has brought a lawsuit, the judge is not to begin with a presumption in the favor of the poor. At the same time, the judge is not to

³⁰John D. Mason and Karl Schaeffer offer a helpful presentation of how the Mosaic law provides the basis for normative biblical values that remain relevant in embodying God's revealed concerns for righteously ordered economic life. John D. Mason and Karl Schaeffer, "The Bible, the State, and the Economy: A Framework for Analysis," *Christian Scholar's Review*, (1990): 45–64.

³¹John D. Mason, "Centralization & Decentralization in Social Arrangements: Explorations into Biblical Social Ethics," *Journal of the UK Association of Christian Economists* (1992): 11.

³²Mason, "Biblical Teachings and the Objectives of Welfare Policy in the U.S.," 14.

disregard the rights of the poor by unfavorably ruling against the poor, as when the judge is swayed by a payment from the other party. Israel's judges are not to subvert the rights of the economically vulnerable (Deut 24:17).

In Deuteronomy 16:19, the instruction to Israel concerning judges emphasizes the need for their integrity. Judges "in all the towns" are to rule with righteousness. Block observes, "Moses qualifies 'towns' as those that 'the LORD your God is giving you,' assuming that kinship-based tribal structures and a settled agrarian life will coexist in Israel."³³ Yet this mandate also suggests a reoccurring pattern of temptations facing judges. Block adds, "The frequency with which the Old Testament speaks about bribery attests to its prevalence in ancient Near Eastern life."³⁴ Nonetheless, God's normative guidance is for bribes not to skew the decision of the judge; they must rule rightly, particularly with respect to the poor.

Presumably the poor would appeal to these judges if they believe their rights have been violated. This might involve denial of their rights to glean in a field or borrow money at zero interest. Yet the rights of the poor are to be respected in the marketplace as well. The standards for fair exchange are passed down verbally and through customary practice. Once the monarchy begins in Israel, the King and priests take on responsibility for enforcing just exchange, thus "in practice the king (2 Sam 14:26) and the priests (Exod 30:13) set the standard."³⁵ Whether they act to defend or deprive the rights of the poor becomes even more significant due to the economic and social changes occurring in Israel's divided kingdom in the period between 800–600 B.C.

Economic Opportunism: The Deprivation of the Rights of the Poor

The seventh and eighth centuries are a period in which Israel experiences a series of social disruptions related to battles with Syrian and Assyrian forces and there is a consolidation of Israel's monarchy.³⁶ Kings centralize power, and this "reorganization of the state cut across kinship groupings."³⁷ In addition, peasant hillside farms begin to specialize in food products such as wine and olives, increasing the extent to which their yields vary (in part due "to the vicissitudes of the environment").³⁸ With regional specialization,

³³Daniel I. Block, *Deuteronomy*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 403.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 273.

³⁵McComiskey, "Micah," 738–39.

³⁶W.A.L. Elmslie, "Ethics," in *Record and Revelation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1938), 283.

³⁷Christopher J.H. Wright, *God's People in God's Land: Family, Land, and Property in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 107; Gerald W. Brock provides a good discussion of the institutional features of Solomon's reign and the changes in Israel's governance. Gerald W. Brock, "The New Institutional Economics," *Faith and Economics* 2002).

³⁸Marvin L. Chaney, "Bitter Bounty: The Dynamics of Political Economy Critiqued by the Eighth-Century Prophets," in *Reformed Faith and Economics* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1989), 24.

peasants found it more difficult to make loans to each other, further eroding kinship ties.³⁹

Writing in this same era, with Israel's kingdom divided and ruled by a monarchy that has implemented a bureaucratic structure, the prophets explicitly declare that justice in exchange is the responsibility of Israel's rulers. Mays explains that "When the prophets spoke of justice, they frequently addressed specific groups whom they called 'officials,' 'chiefs or heads,' 'leaders,' 'elders,' all titles for persons who had roles of authority and power in the social and administrative structure of Judah and Israel."⁴⁰ They held vital responsibilities for maintaining social order. Mays observes that to administer justice, "the courts, the local assembly in the gate of each town and the legal apparatus created by the monarchy, were crucial social institutions because, through them, the conflicts of all kinds in Israel's society were settled."⁴¹ Yet the prophets charge the royal courts and priestly authorities of the divided kingdom with malfeasance, "At every level those in leadership have failed to serve justice and righteousness. Their loyalties have been turned from God to the lure of wealth and power. From rulers and nobles to prophet and priest—at every level the covenant has been forgotten and corruption is evident."⁴² We consider here significant examples of economic opportunism found in the prophets, historical writings, and wisdom literature.

In the seventh century B.C., Habakkuk in Judah pronounces "woes to the one who gains unjustly for his house" (2:9). Literally this refers to the one who is "cutting off an evil (material) cut"; as Bailey observes, "An 'evil cut' was shorter than promised and so involved cheating the customer. It is used more widely of making profits by cheating and violence."⁴³ It stems from the idea of the weaver's term "to cut off the threads."⁴⁴ Bailey adds that the "evil cut" likely refers to gains obtained by "the house or family of the king along with his political advisors, military leaders, and economic powers. These built their 'house' by taking unfair advantage of others. They and members of the family benefited from the unjust gain."⁴⁵ This unjust gain is obtained through land and property seizures and "raw deals" in product exchanges and loans.

Opportunistic behavior in the form of fraud or deceit with respect to the provision of credit particularly has an adverse impact on the economically

³⁹Marvin L. Chaney, "The Political Economy of Peasant Poverty: What the Eighth-Century Prophets Presumed But Did Not State," in *The Bible, the Economy, and the Poor*, Journal of Religion & Society Supplement Series, vol. 10 (2014).

⁴⁰James L. Mays, "Justice: Perspectives from the Prophetic Tradition," *Interpretation* (1983): 9.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 12.

⁴²Bruce C. Birch, *Let Justice Roll Down: The Old Testament, Ethics, and the Christian Life* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 265.

⁴³Waylon Bailey and Kenneth L. Barker, *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: B&H, 1998), 334.

⁴⁴Ralph L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco: Word, 1984), 111.

⁴⁵Bailey, *Habakkuk*, 334.

vulnerable in ancient Israel. Wealthy urban creditors form private coalitions with the backing of the governments of Israel and Judah to take advantage of economically vulnerable persons or groups by misleading them or limiting their ability to fully bargain or compete, or reneging on promises. As peasants turn outside of kinship sources for loans, they face increasing difficulty in making payments and the prospects of property loss and debt servitude. Lenders demanding repayment exercise their discretion to foreclose “on family land and/or the indentured labor of family members pledged as collateral.”⁴⁶ The seizure of land and property violates the provision not to seize the source of one’s livelihood established by Mosaic law (Deut 24:6).⁴⁷

Ancient Israel’s poor face economic duress in several other related forms. Economic compulsion occurs with respect to the royal treatment of both landholding and labor. Hay states, “In warning the people of Israel against a king, Samuel predicts that a king will accumulate land for himself, and will require forced labor to work it.”⁴⁸ Arbitrary taking of land is evident when King Ahab seizes Naboth’s vineyard (1 Kgs 21). The prophets also rebuke the practices of monarchial officials who draw profit from their positions and the favors granted to them by the king.⁴⁹ They enable the wealthy to arbitrarily seize the land of the poor. In Judah, Isaiah 5 depicts this practice, “they add house to house and join field to field til there is no room left” (5:8). Pleins observes, “the establishment and extension of the monarchy supplied the base for this economic development.”⁵⁰

As Palestine under the pre-exilic prophets experienced growth in its urban areas, both craft industries and the royal courts of Judah and Israel expand. Jeremiah 22 depicts the manner in which the king seizes the labor of individuals arbitrarily to be employed on royal projects. Hay delineates the particular lines of employment, “Part of the population would be officers of the king, both in the army and in civil administration. The great building projects of Solomon required a body of skilled labor in Jerusalem, as well as the levies that were sent to Lebanon to collect timber and to the hill country to cut stones (1 Kgs 5:13–18; 9:15–22). International trade was also a monopoly of the king (1 Kgs 9:26–28).”⁵¹

⁴⁶Marvin L. Chaney, “Micah—Models Matter: Political Economy and Micah 6:9–15,” in *Ancient Israel: The Old Testament in Its Social Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 148.

⁴⁷Job describes property stolen by the moving of boundary markers and theft of flocks (24:2–3). The widow who borrows finds her ox, set forth as pledge, taken from her by the creditor (Job 24:3). This opportunism could take extreme forms, as Job speaks of an orphaned infant taken from its mother as security for a loan to its widowed mother, with the child then seized to be a slave when the widow could not pay (Job 24:9). See August H. Konkel and Tremper Longman III, *Job, Ecclesiastes & Song of Songs*, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream: Tyndale House, 2006), 157.

⁴⁸Donald A. Hay, *Economics Today: A Christian Critique* (Vancouver: Regent, 2004), 40–41.

⁴⁹De Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, 73.

⁵⁰Pleins, *The Social Visions of the Hebrew Bible*, 254.

⁵¹Hay, *Economics Today*, 41.

Israel's prophets identify the linkage of the wealthy oppressors of the poor with royal connections. Micah states that if these wealthy with government approval "covet more fields they seize them; if houses they take them" (Mic 2:2). Here Micah depicts a violent seizure of property that is depicted verbally as "an illegal action that manifests power" most likely referring to land taken due to foreclosure on a loan.⁵² Hosea 5:10 also points to the actions of Israel's princes in backing the seizure of property, declaring "Judah's leaders are like those who move boundary stones." Violation of the prohibition against farmers attempting to extend their property surreptitiously is applied by Hosea. It is a charge against Israel's bureaucratic establishment of engaging in political power moves that destabilize the nation in the form of "land accumulation by the court officials."⁵³

The rights of the poor are violated when a landowner, merchant or lender leverages their economic advantage over a poor Israelite who is a tenant on the land, a farmer selling his crop, a consumer buying grain, or a borrower of basic foodstuffs. These rights are trampled by landowners and merchants who have the backing of the civil government. We find here the phenomenon of judicial malpractice for "the mortgaging of and foreclosure upon family lands, members, and property involved court action."⁵⁴ Thus Amos 2 states that judges are bribed by the wealthy, and thereby the righteous poor are "sold for silver" (2:6). Amos ridicules the practice of selling persons into debt slavery for defaulting on very small loans as selling "the needy for a pair of sandals."⁵⁵ The economically disadvantaged Israelite who goes into debt faces economic compulsion, having little leverage in setting the terms of repayment.⁵⁶

The writing prophets explicitly identified commercial dishonesty in both the Northern Kingdom and Judah. The capitals of both regions, Samaria in the North and Jerusalem in the South, had "begun to enjoy immense material prosperity."⁵⁷ The prophets targeted urban merchants and traders for making use of deceitful scales.⁵⁸ For example, Hosea singles out "A merchant,

⁵²Bruce K. Waltke, *A Commentary on Micah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 95–96.

⁵³Pleins, *The Social Visions of the Hebrew Bible*, 355–56; D.N. Premnath, *Eighth Century Prophets: A Social Analysis* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2003), 107.

⁵⁴Chaney, "Bitter Bounty," 27.

⁵⁵Victor H. Matthews, *Social World of the Hebrew Prophets* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2001), 69–70.

⁵⁶Economic compulsion in the form of leveraging an advantage over the poor is condemned consistently by the Scriptures, Patristics, Scholastics, and Protestant Reformers. Often it is associated with creditor/debtor relationships, though lending of funds does not necessarily have to produce this outcome. Edd S. Noell, "Bargaining, Consent and the Just Wage in the Sources of Scholastic Economic Thought," *Journal of the History of Economic Thought* (1998); Idem, "In Pursuit of the Just Wage: A Comparison of Reformation and Counter-Reformation Economic Thought," *Journal of the History of Economic Thought* (2001).

⁵⁷David Prior, *The Message of Joel, Micah & Habakkuk: Listening to the Voice of God*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove: IVP, 1998), 104.

⁵⁸Morris Silver, "Prophets and Markets Revisited," in *Social Justice in the Ancient World* (Westport: Greenwood, 1995), 183.

in whose hands are false balances, [who] loves to oppress" (12:7); as it is expressed in some translations, this is the trader who "overreaches" and receives "riches" as unjust gain (12:8). Here the prophet speaks of a merchant who "totals the payment he receives for his goods with deceptive scales. The altered scales work to his benefit, of course, but this merchant is not just a cheat; he loves to extort as well [as the Hebrew term used here tells us that] he is not beyond the use of force and intimidation to gain wealth."⁵⁹ In the second half of the eighth century B.C., the prophet Micah also rebukes unjust exchange. Micah says that the man who uses a short measure receives "treasures of wickedness" (6:10). In Micah 6:11 God asks, "Can I justify wicked scales and a bag of deceptive weights?" In the face of biased balances and fraudulent weights, the impoverished buyer of grain is operating at a disadvantage, being essentially dependent on the merchant's honesty. It is probably true that "The fact that Micah complains of false weights indicates a lawless period" that lacks the impartial enforcement of the law in line with the law of the covenant.⁶⁰ In general the prophetic complaint about false weights and balances indicates the extent to which economic participants, particularly the poor, found a lack of credible commitment in monetary exchanges.

The prophet Amos identifies the same practice in the markets in the eighth century B.C. Samaria and reproves merchants for deceiving the poor in trade through capitalizing on imperfect information. Amos highlights how the poor are defrauded by merchants employing dishonest scales. These merchants seek to "open the wheat market, to make the bushel smaller and the shekel bigger, and to cheat with dishonest scales, so as to buy the helpless for money and the needy for a pair of sandals" (8:5–6). McConville observes that "the traders [here] want to make the ephah [bushel] small when selling grain, and the shekel large, being a measure of the weight of the silver in which they will be paid."⁶¹ "Making the shekel bigger" means that a poor grain buyer would overpay. Smith states, "If one pays three shekels of silver for a product, the merchant can quickly increase his profit by setting on one side of a scale a three-and-a-quarter pound weight, which the buyer must balance with his silver."⁶² Moreover, merchants dilute the quality of the product they sell without informing the consumers through "selling the refuse of the wheat" (8:6) as wheat itself. This form of unjust gain through deceit was truly at "the bottom of the barrel," as B.K. Smith claims, "To sell the sweepings with the wheat was as low as greedy merchants could go in their oppression of the poor. Putting chaff and trash with good grain to sell to desperately hungry poor people was the ultimate in greed."⁶³ Moreover,

⁵⁹McComiskey, "Hosea," 205.

⁶⁰John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2000), 786.

⁶¹J. Gordon McConville, *Deuteronomy*, *Apollos Old Testament Commentary* (Leicester: Apollos, 2002), 372.

⁶²Gary V. Smith, *Hosea, Amos, Micah*, *The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 556.

⁶³Smith and Page, *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah*, 146.

Amos states that these traders “buy the helpless for money, and the needy for a pair of sandals” (8:6). Evidently the pair of sandals is the collateral the poor person has offered for their loan. Niehaus explains, “the net effect of the people’s deceit is that the poor and needy must pay the going rate for adulterated goods, and thereby become so impoverished that they must sell themselves to the very ones who have impoverished them.”⁶⁴ Again the poor, with unequal bargaining power, are the objects of opportunistic predation.

The book of Proverbs also highlights instances of unjust gain in the form of economic opportunism. Proverbs affirms God detests dishonest scales, as when there are differing weights and measures; thus 11:1 states, “A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight”; 20:10 adds, “Differing weights and differing measures, both of them are abominable to the Lord.” The need for fair exchange to protect the poor is to shape decisions made on economic matters by the village elders, “Do not rob the poor because he is poor, or crush the afflicted at the gate; for the Lord will plead their case, and take the life of those who rob them” (22:22–23). Proverbs describes the problem of unjust gains coming at the expense of lower-income individuals. Thus we read, “A poor person’s farm may produce much food, but injustices sweeps it all away” (Prov 13:23). While the specific injustice is not named here, another proverb suggests it may very well be due to the cornering of the market for grain.⁶⁵ At several points in the Old Testament, the power of wealthy buyers (with likely backing by corrupt members of the monarchy) to pay poor farmers inordinately low values for their crop is named. Wholesalers who in turn corner the market in order to gain a higher price for their grain are chastised with a “public censure” according to Proverbs, “He who withholds grain, the people will curse him, but blessing will be on the head of him who sells it” (11:26).⁶⁶ Along these same lines Proverbs states that ultimately economic gains obtained fraudulently will generate elusive and transient wealth.⁶⁷

As we have seen, prior to the monarchy in ancient Israel, the poor were to find “justice at the gate” from the elders who ruled the village. Even when Israel is governed by a king, the local determination of just gains was administered through the elders in the gate, as Hoppe observes, “With the rise of the monarchy, royal appointees sat with the elders to dispense justice. The

⁶⁴Jeff Niehaus, “Amos,” in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, Vol 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 471.

⁶⁵Bruce K. Waltke explains that grain here “refers to precious cereals/grain of the field (Pss 65:13[14]; 72:16) brought to the threshing floor (Joel 2:24), from which food was made; it is the opposite of inedible straw (Jer 23:28),” Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1–15*, 508.

⁶⁶Gary North, *Tools of Dominion: The Case Laws of Exodus* (Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990), 793.

⁶⁷For example, Prov 10:2 states “Ill-gotten gains do not profit”; 13:11 tells us “wealth obtained by fraud dwindles”; and 21:6 says “The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor, the pursuit of death.” Such gains provide temporary material benefits, but no lasting value.

system depended on the veracity of witnesses and the honesty of the elders who sat in judgment.”⁶⁸ The particular economic vulnerability of the poor frames the affirmation of just exchange practices in the wisdom literature. Thus the book of Proverbs speaks of those who are righteous and do not take a bribe at the gate; they rule with righteousness when they enforce just transactions; they don’t rule in favor of the rich at the expense of the poor. In this sense the “rights of the poor” are to be upheld by the elders of the village.

Likewise the Old Testament highlights the righteous practices of a king who ensures there is economic justice by defending the rights of the poor. Does this mean the king is enjoined to minimize income inequality in Israel? By way of conclusion we reflect on this question through a brief discussion of the manner in which the economic responsibility of Israel’s civil authority towards defending the rights of the poor is portrayed.

Conclusion: Just Civil Rule for the Poor in Ancient Israel

The rights of the poor in the Old Testament include being free to engage in exchange in the face of minimal economic opportunism. The civil authorities, whether court elders, administrative officials in the monarchy, or the king himself, are challenged to defend the rights of the poor throughout the Hebrew Bible. This means directed oversight of the process by which particular economic participants engage in exchange. As Wright observes, “Israel’s law lays its primary responsibility to act justly on those who have some form of economic advantage, rather than their counterparts who are in an economically vulnerable position.”⁶⁹ It requires employers to not act in an opportunistic manner by withholding the wages of laborers who are poor, but instead pay them promptly (Deut 24:14–15). It demands that lenders not take advantage of borrowers by seizing key capital goods or possessions as collateral (Deut 24:6, 10–13).

Once Israel is ruled by a monarchy, they are expected to act with compassion towards those who are economically disadvantaged. The prophet Jeremiah outlines this task of ensuring economic justice for the civil rulers, “Hear the word of the Lord, O king of Judah, you who sit on David’s throne—you, your officials, and your people who come through these gates. This is what the Lord says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of his oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless or the widow . . .” (Jer 22:2–4). Doing right means not giving special advantage to those who can leverage economic power over the poor. They could gain this advantage by judicial rulings, but also by the King’s legal decrees. Jeremiah contrasts the exploitative greed of King Jehoiakim with the justice and generosity of King Josiah towards the poor

⁶⁸Leslie J. Hoppe, *There Shall Be No Poor Among You: Poverty in the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 69.

⁶⁹Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*, 174.

(22:13–17).⁷⁰ Jehoiakim is a ruler whose “eyes are set on dishonest gain, on shedding innocent blood and on oppression and extortion” (Jer 22:13–14, 17). This orientation clearly challenges the norms of the Mosaic law. Therefore kings such as Jehoiakim face the prophetic warning against oppressing the poor, “Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and rob my oppressed people of justice, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless” (Isa 10:1–2).

Are Israel’s monarchs charged to reduce the gap between the poor and the rich? Some modern Christian activists read the pre-exilic Hebrew prophets and wisdom authors this way, because the Hebrew Bible highlights examples of the exploitation of the poor by the wealthy. One commentator argues that private property holders exploit the economically disadvantaged in ancient Israel to such a degree that the prophets call for the abolishment of property rights and abolition of all income inequality.⁷¹ An evangelical activist goes so far in his reading of the latter prophets (e.g., Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, and Micah) to declare “God hates income inequality.”⁷²

No doubt the civil authority is charged with ensuring that the poor do receive the provisions of gleanings and interest-free loans. However, reading the Old Testament as if God makes it the King’s responsibility to directly eliminate or even lessen income inequality is an error.⁷³ What has been overlooked is that the rights of the poor also include freedom from economic opportunism and compulsion that is backed by the power of the civil authority. Just rule will minimize fraud, seizure of property, and unjust exchange.

The standard with respect to governing economic activity the King is to follow is found in the Mosaic laws regarding secure property rights and credible commitments in exchange. As Mason observes, “He was to protect property rights so that each family could sit under its own vine and fig tree (Mic 4:4).”⁷⁴ The righteous king of Psalm 72 ensures that the poor is rescued from economic oppression and is not the victim of opportunism (Ps 72:14).

For most of ancient Israel’s economic history, economic activity beyond simple cash market exchanges took place in relatively small groups (as was true for most of human history).⁷⁵ By the period of 800–600 B.C. Israel’s territorial expansion and economic specialization is contributing to economic

⁷⁰Ibid., 176.

⁷¹Birch, *Let Justice Roll Down*, 1991.

⁷²Jim Wallis, *Rediscovering Values: On Wall Street, Main Street, and Your Street* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010).

⁷³This remains true for the discussion of wealth and poverty in the church fathers. Daniel K. Finn observes that there is no discussion of income inequality per se when the obligation of the wealthy towards the poor is preached by the Patristics. He adds “the key issue is always whether or not people’s needs are met, not whether some are less wealthy than others,” Daniel K. Finn, *Christian Economic Ethics: History and Implications* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 100.

⁷⁴Mason, “Biblical Teachings and the Objectives of Welfare Policy in the U.S.,” 14.

⁷⁵David C. Rose, *The Moral Foundation of Economic Behavior* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 10.

growth. As Rose observes, “societies that grow in this manner have realized the need for institutions to combat opportunism that would otherwise raise transactions costs and impede economic development. This puts a particular focus on the need for generating pervasive social trust that will undergird more widespread exchanges realizing the gains from specialization.”⁷⁶ Reflection on the best ways to disseminate social trust more widely would seem to be an appropriate application of the prophetic vision of securing of the rights of the poor.

Israel’s eschatological hope is for economic flourishing on the Day of the Lord. Isaiah fashions a detailed picture of vibrant economic life in the eschaton, “They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands” (Isa 65:21–22). A close reading of Isaiah makes clear that this is in fact the Hebrew Bible’s vision for the Gentiles as well, so that the rights of the poor are ensured and all of mankind, being made in God’s image, enjoys the possibility of economic flourishing. With this vision in mind, there is the possibility for Christian economists to profitably explore the institutional dynamics of measures that constrain economic opportunism and promote economic gains both for the poor and across society as a whole.

⁷⁶Ibid.

Labor of Love: The Theology of Work in First and Second Thessalonians¹

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Introduction

Given the importance of work to human life, finding a biblical approach to work is of vital importance. But Miroslav Volf argues in his 1995 book *Work in the Spirit* that it is a mistake to try to formulate a theology of work by starting with the biblical data that discusses work. The Bible, and especially the New Testament, simply does not contain enough material directly on work to successfully undergird a theology of work.² It is true that a fully-orbed systematic theology of work cannot only be based on the explicit biblical data concerning work, but must set work in the wider context of biblical Christian theology. We should be grateful for the careful and theologically rich way in which Volf has addressed the topic, but we should not underestimate the extent, value, and significance of the biblical data, which is not, of course limited to that discovered by a concordance search or a word study.³ It is rare that biblical scholars concern themselves with elucidating a biblical view of work, but there is far more relevant material than is sometimes recognized, and we are helped by the increased volume of research being produced on the social, archeological and economic setting of biblical literature. Our limited goal here is to look at the evidence of two of Paul's letters that are most concerned with the work: First and Second Thessalonians. These letters, particularly the first, focus on work more than any other letters in the Pauline corpus, and in a far-from-incidental manner. There is evidence that Paul intended to make work one of the key threads in his argument.

¹This article is a version of a chapter forthcoming in R. Keith Loftin and Trey Dimsdale, eds., *Work in Christian Perspective: Theological Foundations and Practical Implications* (London: SCM, 2018)."

²Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 77.

³For example, Volf only mentions two verses in Ecclesiastes (4:4, *Ibid.*, 121; 6:19 *Idem*, 159), a biblical book which reflects substantially on work, but he ignores, for example, Ecclesiastes chapter two, which focuses almost entirely on work, and which includes 2:24: "There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink, and cause his soul to see good in his labor," surely a reflection on human work in relation to God's creative work in Genesis 1. He also ignores most of the discussion of work in 1 Thessalonians.

Until recently, there has been something of a consensus that the problem of work—or the lack of it—in the church at Thessalonica, was due to eschatological enthusiasm, a misguided expectation of the immediate return of Christ, which led to people abandoning their proper work, there being no need to prepare for the future.⁴ Both Thessalonian letters display a lively expectation of the return of the Messiah. The traditional scenario, however, is implausible for several reasons. First, it is highly doubtful, at least in regard to 1 Thessalonians, that there was a serious problem with an overly-enthusiastic eschatology in Thessalonica. It is true that they were alive to the possibility that Jesus would return in their own lifetime. But Paul does not correct this as a mistaken belief. Instead, the first letter to the Thessalonians seems to reveal a loss, for some at least, of eschatological hope, especially in regard to the situation of those believers who have died. Hope is the last element in the triad of faith, love, and hope in 1:3, and therefore likely the one with most significance for the recipients of the letter. This is much like First Corinthians 13:13, where love as the last element in the triad is the most significant in the argument. The Thessalonians began with faith, love, *and* hope (1 Thess 1:3), but they are commended later only for their continuing faith and love (3:6). Though they are exhorted repeatedly to grow further in both faith (3:10, 5:8) and love (3:12, 4:10, 5:8), the loss of hope is even more significant. Paul does not want them to be distressed like outsiders who have no hope (4:13). They are to comfort one another in view of the coming resurrection (4:18). They are told to put on hope, the hope of salvation as a helmet, because they were appointed not for wrath but for salvation through Christ, at his return (5:9–11). There is also the distinct possibility that an eschatological carelessness has crept in. Calls to holiness in the letter are based on the expectation of the Parousia, and the judgment that awaits (3:13, 4:6, 5:23). Paul insists: “Let us not sleep, like others do, but let us watch and be sober” (5:6). The warning in Second Thessalonians not to believe reports that the Lord had already returned is based on the possibility of a false teaching coming in, through pseudonymous letter, or false prophecy, claiming that the Lord had already returned (2 Thess 2:1–2). Paul makes the point that other apocalyptic events had to take place first (2:3–8), but he also tells them (2:2) not to be shaken (σαλευθῆναι) or alarmed (θροεῖσθαι). Both these terms

⁴See for example Ernest Best, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (London: A&C Black, 1972), 175–78: “Work is neglected for the future can be ignored” (175). Frame has a psychologizing approach with the same frame of reference: “Paul recognizes that the source of meddlesomeness and idleness is inward, the excitement created in the minds of some by the expectation that the day of the Lord is at hand,” James Everett Frame, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912, 161–62). Some have challenged this perspective, arguing that the idleness or disorder in Thessalonica was simply an ethical issue, and that when Paul brought eschatology and ethics together it was to show that the expectation of the Parousia should in fact motivate holiness. See B.N. Kaye, “Eschatology and Ethics in 1 and 2 Thessalonians,” *Novum Testamentum XVII* (1975).

indicate not excitement but distress and alarm, and so even here Paul is not addressing eschatological enthusiasm.⁵

Second, the traditional scenario envisages people *leaving* work; therefore they would be those who were already working, who had to work for their living. They would not be the rich, who had property and passive income, nor clients, who did not have to work, but were provided for in daily distributions by rich patrons, nor slaves, who had no choice but to work. But given the vulnerable and tenuous economic conditions for most people in the cities of the early empire, the practice of paying laborers daily, and the difficulty of storing food, anyone who needed to work, who then gave it up expecting to survive until the Lord returned, would be quickly disabused of his or her presumption, and would be unlikely to have kept the enthusiasm going for long—certainly not for the months it took for Paul to write his second letter to the church, addressing the same practice of idleness. Paul in a later letter singles out the Macedonian churches, which would include the Thessalonians, as experiencing real poverty (2 Cor 8:2), especially by comparison to Corinth, where we are informed that at least some people in the gathering are wise humanly speaking, powerful or well-born, implying wealth. Few people in the Thessalonian church would have food reserves sufficient to enable survival for months without doing any work, or the financial reserves repeatedly to buy food other people produced.

Third, Paul nowhere makes any particular connection between imminentist belief and the problem of idleness.⁶ Rather, his argument against idleness is largely made on moral and missional grounds, as we shall see below. If anything, it is more likely that eschatological carelessness contributes to the problem of idleness in Thessalonica than does eschatological enthusiasm. It is possible that the older imminentist scenario was over-influenced by the spectacle of nineteenth-century millenarian movements where people abandoned work and possessions anticipating the Lord's return on a particular date.

Fourth, there are other possible explanations for the problem that Paul is addressing, which shall be discussed below. A better overall approach, however, is to place the warnings against idleness within the broader discussion of work which inhabits the Thessalonian letters. The approach here is to examine briefly in turn the main passages that concern work in order to find out whether there are common threads that allow the reader to the start to develop a coherent theology of work. It will be argued that Paul's main thrust is to picture work as an act of love. In so doing he is adopting the kind of

⁵For σαλεύω see e.g. (LXX) Isa 7:2, Zech 12:2, 1 Macc 6:44, and Acts. 2:25; for θροπέω see Matt 24:6 and Mark 13:7. Paul also describes the return of Christ in startling terms as both as a day of judgment and vengeance for the persecutors of the church (1:7–9), and as a day of glory, as the saints are gathered to meet him (1:10–2:1). That is, that day will be dramatic in its finality; there will be no secret return of Christ.

⁶See e.g. Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 341; Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 32B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 253.

approach he also takes in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12–14, and Galatians 5, which places love at the center of ethical reflection; love which has the key place in the world-in-waiting, both in Christ and through the Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 1:1–3

The main body of the first letter to the Thessalonians is bracketed by the triad of faith, love and hope (1:3, 5:8). At the beginning of the letter, Paul recalls and celebrates the Thessalonians' early experience in Christ in terms of this triad. At the close of the body of the letter Paul defines the response he expects from his readers in terms of the same triad: putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and the helmet of the hope of salvation (5:8). It has been suggested that the triad provides an outline for the entire letter,⁷ but even if this is unlikely, faith, love and hope are prominent throughout.⁸ The same triad is also found elsewhere in a number of passages, most of them in the Pauline corpus,⁹ and many commentators see the triad as a summary of the essence of Christian life or existence.¹⁰ For Collins, "eschatological existence . . . is an existence in faith, love and hope."¹¹ Such a claim could be more strongly made on the basis of 1 Corinthians 13:13, but it is likely that the Thessalonians would also have read Paul in this way. Concerning the origin of the triad, all the non-Pauline references "are clearly later than Paul," making it "possible that Paul himself is its creator,"¹² despite the common suggestion that it reflects pre-Pauline tradition.¹³ Given that this is likely the

⁷Robert W. Thurston, "The Relationship between the Thessalonian Epistles," *Expository Times* 85.2 (1973), suggests as an outline: faith, 1:1–3:11; love, 3:12–4:12; hope, 4:13–5:22. The division he advocates between 3:11 and 3:12, in the middle of a prayer, seems an attempt to force the threefold structure onto the letter.

⁸ἀγάπη: 1:3; 3:6, 12; 5:8, 13. ἀγαπάω: 4:9. φιλαδελφία: 4:9. ἐλπίς: 1:3; 2:19; 4:13; 5:8.

⁹Rom 5:1–5; 1 Cor 13:6–7, 13; Gal 5:5–6; Col 1:4–5; Heb 6:10–12, 10:22–24; 1 Pet 1:3–9, possibly 1:21–22; Barn. 1:4, 9:8; Pol. Phil. 3:2f.

¹⁰Gunther Bornkamm, *Paul*, translated by D.M.G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 219; Willi Marxsen, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher*, Zürcher Bibelkommentare: NT 11.1. (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1979), 35; Colin R. Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair in Thessalonica: Situating 1 and 2 Thessalonians*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 126 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 85; Béda Rigaux, *Saint Paul: Les Épîtres aux Thessaloniciens*, Études Bibliques (Paris: J. Gabalda et Cie, 1956), 368; Thomas Söding, *Die Trias Glaube, Hoffnung, Liebe bei Paulus*, Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 150 (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1992), 216.

¹¹Raymond F. Collins, "The Faith of the Thessalonians," *Louvain Studies* 7 (1978): 253, 67.

¹²Best, *Thessalonians*, 67.

¹³See Traugott Holtz, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher*, Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Zurich: Benziger, 1986); Franz Laub, *1. und 2. Thessalonicherbrief*, Die Neue Echter Bibel (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1985), 16; Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1959), 43; Karl Friedrich Ulrichs, *Christusglaube: Studien zum Syntagma πίστις Χριστοῦ und zum paulinischen Verständnis von Glaube und Rechtfertigung*, WUNT 2. Reihe, 227 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 71. It is not possible to say for certain that the triad began with Paul, but it is most probable, especially given Paul's demonstrated linguistic and theological creativity.

earliest of Paul's letter that we have access to, we may be seeing the triad in its first formulation, much as we see the early and unelaborated use of the Pauline greeting formula, "Grace to you and peace," in 1:1.

But it is the other triad in verse three which has received comparatively little attention, even though the work, labor, and endurance of the Thessalonian believers are the actual objects of Paul's thankful remembrance. We may ask why Paul is interested in these aspects of the Thessalonians' experience? Why is it these things that Paul celebrates? If faith, love, and hope are constitutive of eschatological existence in Christ, then work, labor, and endurance seem for Paul to be intrinsic to Christian experience. But unlike his use of the language of faith, love, and hope, which he repeats in varying forms in other letters, Paul nowhere else repeats the triad of work, labor, and endurance—it has particular relevance for the Thessalonians. In other words, verse three is far from a generic pre-formulation mildly adjusted for the Thessalonians, even though the unwarranted tendency to dwell on the possibility of "faith, love, and hope" being a pre-Pauline expression has led to the disregarding of the true significance of this verse. The point is that work, labor, and endurance are just as much Paul's focus in this document as the more lofty-sounding faith, love, and hope, which is confirmed later in the letter where Paul repeatedly returns to the topic of work in various ways.

How do the two triads relate together? How do work, labor, and endurance relate to faith, love, and hope? Most commentators, and rightly so, see the genitive relationships (τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως καὶ τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος) as indicating source or origin: work, labor, and endurance derive from faith, love, and hope.¹⁴ But to what does the triad of work, labor, and endurance, with its modifiers, refer? Commentators vary at this point, especially on the first two elements. Most discussion concerns the first element, the "work of faith" (τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως), because of abiding interest in the relationship of faith to works, particularly in Romans, Galatians, and Philippians. Here (and in the similar expression in 2 Thess 1:11) nothing in the context suggests that Paul is addressing the issue of the law and faith, or comparing "works of the law" with faith in Christ, as, say in Galatians 2:16. The use of the singular ἔργον makes it unlikely that simply "deeds" of any kind are in view.

Malherbe thinks that the triad points to the Thessalonians' strenuous preaching of the gospel, in light of 1:5–10, where the "preaching and reception of the word" is discussed, and especially verse 8, where the word of the Lord and faith of the Thessalonian believers are described as going out into the surrounding region.¹⁵ Paul in this letter (2:9, 5:12–13) and elsewhere (1 Cor 3:13, 15; 16:16; 2 Cor 11:23, Eph 4:12; Col 1:29) emphasizes the nature

¹⁴The other main possibility is that they are genitives of description: "Faithful work, and loving labor, and hopeful endurance," but the meaning does not change significantly, and in view of the letter's later interest in the ongoing faith of the Thessalonian church, faith rather than faithfulness should be preferred here for πίστις.

¹⁵Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 108.

of Christian ministry and proclamation as work and labor, which the expression in 1:3 certainly includes. In view of the frequent references to working for a living in the letter, however, more than gospel ministry is included here. It is unlikely in any case that Paul would distinguish starkly between his work as a tentmaker and his work as an apostle. The kind of sacred-secular or “bi-vocational” division that is presently common does not make an appearance in Paul.

Fee takes “work of faith” as “probably Christian service,” work directed towards Christ, and “labor of love” as “probably manual labor,” work done in love for others.¹⁶ Green takes “work of faith” as equivalent to “good works” towards all, whereas “labor of love” signifies strenuous action on behalf of other believers.¹⁷ Wanamaker sees “work of faith” as the “Christian lifestyle that distinguished [the Thessalonians] from the pagans,” while their labor of love was possibly their acts of love towards other believers in Macedonia.¹⁸ But these explanations neglect the fact that the difference, if any, between the “work of faith” and the “labor of love” is not so much in the outcome but the source. In addition, the stylized nature of the overlaying of the two triads, along with the juxtaposition of work and labor (ἔργον and κόπος), suggests that the expressions “work of faith,” “labor of love,” and “endurance of hope” are not to be strongly contrasted but treated as near-synonymous, with the contribution of κόπος emphasizing the nature of work as toil, and ὑπομονή its duration.

Κόπος can mean “trouble,” as well as labor or toil, and the use of ὑπομονή, “endurance,” following may suggest that sense as appropriate. Although the Thessalonians have undoubtedly had their troubles (1:6, 2:14–15), Paul uses θλίψις for their sufferings under persecution, as well as his own (3:3, 7). We must ask why Paul would be so eager to express thanks for trouble visited upon them, in a list which otherwise thanks God for their own actions of work and perseverance. Elsewhere, including several instances in Paul, ἔργον and κόπος, or their cognates, are brought together in in synonymous fashion in discussion of work (Wis 3:11; Sir 6:19, 1 Cor 4:12, 15:58, 16:16; Eph 4:28). In 1 Thessalonians 2:9 (and 2 Thess 3:8; 2 Cor 11:27), κόπος and the similar term μόχθος are brought together as a pair to emphasize the laborious nature of the work Paul was doing to support himself.¹⁹ In the thanksgiving section in 2 Thessalonians Paul boasts of the “endurance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you are undergoing” (2 Thess 1:4). We do find works, labor, and endurance listed together in Revelation 2:2, and “works and love and faith and service

¹⁶Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 26.

¹⁷Green, *Thessalonians*, 90.

¹⁸Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Exeter: Paternoster, 1990), 75.

¹⁹When κόπος and πόνοσ are brought together as a syntagm, the emphasis is on trouble and strife (Job 5:6; Ps 10:7 (9:298 LXX), 90:10 (89:10 LXX)).

and endurance” in Revelation 2:19, though in those verses ἔργον is in the plural. There seems to be a common field of terms appropriate for describing the work performed in faithful endurance, the hopeful waiting of God’s people who are looking for final salvation.²⁰

Thus the thanks given for the triad ἔργον, κόπος, and ὑπομονή implies that Paul is reflecting on a difficult period which the church has endured. Malherbe claims that the sufferings described in 1 Thessalonians (1:6, 2:2, 3:3–5) leading up to Timothy’s mission, whether for Paul or the church, were not the result of persecution or outward trouble, but are inner struggles, whether because of “Paul’s own ‘internal distress’, the knowledge of which may upset the young believers,”²¹ or, for the Thessalonians, “the distress and anguish of heart experienced by persons who broke with their past as they received the gospel.”²² We may acknowledge the likelihood that social dislocation and distress might add to the pressure on the young church, but the account in Acts 17 describes persecution in the early days of the church in Thessalonica, and this letter was not written all that long after the church was begun. Marcus Bockmuehl has highlighted the sixth-century account of Malalas of Antioch, who describes a persecution taking place in Judea in the year 48/49,²³ which, although a late testimony, may help also to reinforce the historical accuracy of the Thessalonian persecution, mentioned alongside the Judean persecution in 2:14–15. Further evidence of the reality of persecution taking place in Thessalonica comes from 2 Thessalonians 1:4: “Therefore, among God’s churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.”

²⁰See 4 Macc 17:4: τὴν ἐλπίδα τῆς ὑπομονῆς γενναίως ἔχουσα πρὸς τὸν θεόν (“bravely maintaining with God the hope of endurance”); Rom 5:3–5, 8:24–25, 15:4–5; Gal. 5:5–6; Jas 1:3–4.

²¹Malherbe, “Conversion to Paul’s Gospel,” 236, Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 193. This view is found in St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on First Thessalonians*, 3.3.3, where he claims that “the temptations of the teachers trouble their disciples,” and “they are not so much troubled at their own temptations, as at those of their teachers,” and in von Dobschütz, though he saw θλίψις in Paul as always referring to tribulations, not so much internal anguish. Ernst von Dobschütz, *Die Thessalonicher-Briefe*, 1974 ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1909), 134; see also Traugott Holtz, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher, Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* (Zurich: Benziger, 1986), 127. Best thinks that the sufferings of both Paul and the Thessalonians are in view on the basis of the first person plurals of 3:3–4, Ernest Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1972), 135. Likewise Lightfoot interprets, “in the midst of these afflictions which befall us and you alike,” J.B. Lightfoot, *Notes on Epistles of St Paul* (London: MacMillan, 1895) 42. Neil thinks that these troubles are “in this case not Paul’s troubles—the new converts needed someone to strengthen them.” William Neil, *The Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians*, Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1950), 63.

²²Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 48.

²³Bockmuehl is assiduous in not giving the account too much historical certitude, but he suggests that there is little reason for such a tale to be manufactured. Marcus Bockmuehl, “1 Thessalonians 2:14–16 and the Church in Jerusalem,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 52 (2001): 23.

I suggest, then, that Paul's thanksgiving, functioning as so often to introduce themes which will appear later in the letter, is written to a church which has suffered, and is in need of encouragement that the path it began was no mistake, despite the early departure of the apostle. Their life as believers has consisted of work, labor, and endurance, and Paul encourages them that this is consistent with, and derives from the eschatological nature of their life in Christ, a life of faith, love, and hope as they wait for the Son of God from heaven. There is no contradiction between the faith, love, and hope that constitute and define their existence in Christ, and their experience of work, labor and endurance. On the contrary, work, labor, and endurance are the necessary outcome and demonstration of their faith, love, and hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. In a letter filled with reminders of what the Thessalonian church experienced and learned since their conversion, it is of particular interest in interpreting later portions of the letter, that not only does Paul remind them of the work that derives from faith, and the endurance which derives from hope in the Lord Jesus, but also the labor and toil that derives from love.

1 Thessalonians 2:8–9

Discussion of 1 Thessalonians 2:1–12 has focused on genre. By describing his virtuous behavior in Thessalonica was Paul defending himself against already-voiced accusations? He may be responding to charges of being a false prophet,²⁴ or of being a money-grubbing glory-seeking philosopher, such as in the similar defense he mounts for working to support himself in 2 Corinthians 11:7–15. He may have been making an ethos appeal (of the kind described in Acts 20:33–35, where he recounts his working practices in Ephesus) perhaps to contrast himself to disreputable travelling sophists, without having any particular accusations made against him.²⁵ Or he may have been reminding them of his way of life, as a model to imitate, as he mentions explicitly in the similar passage in the second letter (2 Thess 3:7–9; cf. 1 Thess 1:6; 1 Cor 4:16, 11:1). The confidence that the Thessalonians retain in Paul, as reported by Timothy (1 Thess 3:6) and the tone of the letter, suggests that he was not under sustained attack, but he feels the

²⁴William Horbury, "1 Thessalonians 2:3 as Rebutting Charges of False Prophecy," *Journal of Theological Studies* 33 (1982), and William Horbury, *Jews and Christians in Contact and Controversy* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 14–16, and cf. Jeffrey A.D. Weima, "An Apology for the Apologetic Function of 1 Thessalonians 2:1–12," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 68 (1997).

²⁵The language Paul uses is similar to that found in defending charges made against Graeco-Roman philosophers. For the idea that Paul is not defending against accusation but deliberately distancing himself from comparison to the Sophists, see Abraham J. Malherbe, "Gentle as a Nurse: The Cynic Background to 1 Thess ii," *Novum Testamentum* 12 (1970): 205, who writes that Paul is presenting himself as an example: "It is understandable that the genuine philosophic missionary would want to distinguish himself from other types without his having explicitly been accused of acting like a particular type;" and Bruce W. Winter, "The Entries and Ethics of Orators and Paul (1 Thessalonians 2:1–12)," *Tyndale Bulletin* 44 (1993).

need to explain his absence as well as to remind the church of the way of life he practiced among them. So, perhaps, some combination of the above is to be preferred. Paul's overall paraenetic purpose in 2:1–12 is to affirm the validity of his readers' faith in the gospel by establishing the integrity of the messenger. Paul is emphasizing his integrity as an apostle whose word was received and believed.

Much of the letter is filled with reminders of what the Thessalonians ought to have kept in mind. In 2:6 he says that his lifestyle among them was not a cover for greed. In 2:9 he reminds them of the labor and toil of Paul and his companions. They worked for their own living while in Thessalonica, so as not to be a burden to anyone. The participle ἐργαζόμενοι is a temporal modifier of the aorist ἐκηρύξαμεν, so that Paul's "labor and toil" was not simply his hard work in supporting himself, but in particular *preaching the gospel* while working night and day not to be a burden to anyone. Paul wants the Thessalonians to remember his preaching in the context in which it was given. Communication of the gospel is mentioned four times in the passage (vv. 2, 4, 8, 9). The issue is the financial and ethical credibility of Paul and his companions as apostles of Christ in the preaching of the gospel of God.

Just how does his preaching while working to support himself establish his integrity? Further, how might that reveal aspects of his theology of work? First, self-support is opposed to flattery, greed, and seeking financial rewards through gaining honor (2:5–6). In a world trammled by self-seeking teachers of philosophy,²⁶ and clients sponging off patrons, in which love of money was pervasive (1 Tim 3:3, 6:10; Heb 13:5), work was for Paul the arena to live out and demonstrate his genuineness. Second, Paul saw no contradiction between his self-supporting labor and the preaching of the gospel. The phrase "working night and day" may be somewhat hyperbolic, but the genitive nouns indicate the kind of time when Paul was working, not the length of time.²⁷ The language of 2:9 means that his preaching was contemporaneous with his work; it was the arena for his proclamation of the good news. His customers, suppliers, market neighbors, and even perhaps fellow guild members, would have provided a steady stream of potential converts—some at least of the recipients of the letter were the "you" whom Paul evangelized while working.

Third, Paul explains that the motive of his self-support was to avoid being a financial burden to anyone. The term used here, ἐπιβαρέω, is one of a group of terms that Paul uses on the several occasions when he insists that he will not become a burden to others.²⁸ Elsewhere also it can be used

²⁶See Bruce W. Winter, *Philo and Paul among the Sophists: Alexandrian and Corinthian Responses to a Julio-Claudian Movement*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 91–94, 166–69.

²⁷See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 124.

²⁸Ἐπιβαρέω: 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thes 3:8 (though the range of the word is not limited to financial burdens. E.g. 2 Cor. 1:8; Josephus, *Ant.* 15:55); its cognates βαρέω (2 Cor 5:4; 1 Tim 5:16) and καταβαρέω (2 Cor 12:16); καταναρκάω (2 Cor 11:9, 12:13, 12:14).

in regard to financial burdens.²⁹ The prefixed ἐπι- seems to be an intensifier, indicating *overburdening* someone. The passage here accepts that there was an obligation on the Thessalonians, or some of them, to provide for Paul if necessary, though we are not told explicitly why such an obligation would exist.³⁰ It may simply have been a function of the common practice of providing hospitality, even to strangers,³¹ though that obligation did not usually require the provision of hospitality for extended periods. The obligation could derive from Jesus' instructions, as understood by Paul, that "those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (1 Cor 9:14), which is the basis of the "right not to work" that Paul identifies in 1 Corinthians 9:9–18, a right which he claims not to use (cf. also Acts 20:34–35), though he did accept support from believers *outside* the cities where he was working (2 Cor 11:7–9; Phil 4:16–18).

The obligation to provide hospitality could be a significant burden, especially to those who were poor.³² Paul sometimes stayed with wealthier believers, as with Gaius in Corinth (Rom 16:23), but here he shows awareness of the cost that housing a guest could impose. Paul explains his decision to work for his living as motivated by love. The γάρ in 1 Thessalonians 2:9 is illustrative. The work of Paul and his companions exemplified or demonstrated the truth of the claim made in verse 8, where he says, "Having in this manner [i.e. the affection of a nursing mother for her children, v. 7] such an affection for you, we were pleased to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you were beloved to us." "Beloved," here translates ἀγαπητοί. Work, especially work as self-support, was for Paul an act of love. As unlikely as it may sound to modern ears, he was a church leader who wanted his people to give less. His working for money did not derive from selfishness—quite the opposite. It ensured that he was not a burden on others. It was the practice of love.

1 Thessalonians 4:9–12

Paul recognizes the Thessalonians' love in 1:3 and again in 3:6. In 3:12 he prays for their love to increase, both for each other, and for all. In 4:9 he exalts their love in lofty terms, using the figure of speech known as *paralipsis*. He says that their love is something which need not be written about, directly before writing about it:³³ "You yourselves are taught by God to love one another, for indeed you are doing so towards all the brothers in the whole of Macedonia." In 4:10 he urges them to abound all the more in that love for

²⁹Josephus, *War*. 2.273; Appian, *Civil Wars* 3.2.17, 4.5.31; ᾤ. Bad. 1.39.3.

³⁰Verse 6 may hint at the possibility that apostles could demand financial support.

³¹See Andrew E. Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels: Early Christian Hospitality in its Mediterranean Setting* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2005), 94–97.

³²That is why later Christians legislated limits to the provision of hospitality for extended periods. See *Didache* 11.3–6.

³³The περί δέ of 4:9 makes it possible that Paul is responding to a question the Thessalonians have communicated.

one another and for all. Thus he is saying to them, “You do love; love more.” In the same sentence he urges them to follow what he had previously commanded them—that is, to aspire to live quietly, look after their own affairs, and to work with their own hands. Once again then, contextually Paul is associating love with work. Grammatically the connection between love and work here is not absolute; the *καί* (“and”) at the start of 4:11 followed by the infinitive verb may simply indicate a second characteristic that Paul is urging upon his readers. But the way the sentence starts with the thematic subject of love, the alliterative use of *φιλαδελφία* and *φιλοτιμείσθαι*, and the goal of walking properly before outsiders (4:12), tie this long sentence together. In 3:12 they are to love one another as well as those those outside; here they are to do so through the way they work.

In the light of what was already said in chapter two, the exhortation to work as an act of love, for one another and for all, should be seen as instruction to the church to work so as to be self-supporting, in the manner of Paul who was not to a burden on others. This is confirmed by the last clause in in verse 12: “that you should have no need of anyone” (taking *μηδενός* as masculine not neuter). Love for all meant maintaining the credible witness of their lifestyle. Through self-supporting work believers will live in a seemingly manner before outsiders. There is evidence of public disdain for those who begged,³⁴ or those clients who relied on rich patrons for their food, visiting them every morning for a formal greeting, and to receive handouts of food or money.³⁵

The three ambitions or aspirations of verse 11 have presented challenges to interpreters. The commands to live quietly and tend to one’s own affairs have frequently been interpreted as the requirement to withdraw from political life, not in the sense of abandoning civic life altogether, but to maintain a low profile, especially where persecution is a reality.³⁶ However, the verb *ἡσυχάζω*, which usually means to “stay quiet,” can sometimes signify “resting,” as in Luke 23:56, which says that the women who had come to prepare the body of Jesus “rested on the Sabbath, according to the commandment.”³⁷ It is intriguing to speculate whether Paul is telling his readers both to rest and to work. In the light of the warning against disorderliness or idleness in

³⁴Dio Chrysostom (*Or.* 32.9) excoriates “these Cynics, posting themselves at street-corners, in alley-ways, and at temple-gates, pass round the hat and play upon the credulity of lads and sailors and crowds of that sort, stringing together rough jokes and much tittle-tattle and that low badinage that smacks of the market-place. Accordingly they achieve no good at all, but rather the worst possible harm, for they accustom thoughtless people to deride philosophers in general, just as one might accustom lads to scorn their teachers, and, when they ought to knock the insolence out of their hearers, these Cynics merely increase it.”

³⁵Juvenal, *Satires* III. 126–170.

³⁶Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 163; Bruce W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens*, First Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 48.

³⁷*καὶ τὸ μὲν σάββατον ἡσύχασαν κατὰ τὴν ἐντολήν.* See also Philo, *Quod deus sit immutabilis*, 1:38; *Quis rerum divinarum heres sit*, 1:13.

5:14, and the similar warning in 2 Thessalonians 3:6, along with the strictures there against being busybodies, it seems that there were some who were causing trouble in the city, having the leisure to do so, either because they were supported by wealthy patrons, or perhaps because the church was supporting them. Paul told them to look after their own affairs. Πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια likely means to take care of one's own financial affairs or occupation.³⁸

Paul also insisted that they work with their hands. There is evidence of disdain among the elite of Graeco-Roman society, including some philosophers, for manual labor. Aristotle, envisaging an ideal city, considered manual labor to be necessary for the maintenance of the state but a hindrance to virtue. Only those who did not work with their hands had the leisure to study and attain virtue, and so only these should be citizens involved in government:

The citizens must not live a mechanic or a mercantile life for such a life is ignoble and inimical to virtue, nor yet must those who are to be citizens in the best state be tillers of the soil, for leisure is needed both for the development of virtue and for active participation in politics.³⁹

Cicero says,

The callings of hired laborers, and of all who are paid for their mere work and not for skill, are ungentle and vulgar; for their wages are given for menial service. . . . Those who buy to sell again as soon as they can are to be accounted as vulgar. . . . Least of all can we speak well of the trades that minister to sensual pleasures; "Fishmongers, butchers, cooks, poulterers, and fishermen," as Terence says. Add, if you please, to this list perfumers, ballet-dancers, and the whole tribe of dice-players. . . . Commerce, if on a small scale, is to be regarded as vulgar; but if large and rich, importing much from all quarters, and making extensive sales without fraud, it is not so very discreditable . . . nothing is better than agriculture, nothing more productive, nothing more pleasant, nothing more worthy of a man of liberal mind.⁴⁰

Plutarch comments:

When we are pleased with the work, we slight and set little by the workman or artist himself, as for instance, in perfumes and purple

³⁸In Prov 11:24, and Luke 18:28, τὰ ἴδια indicates finances or occupation. In Luke 19:28, πρᾶσσω is used in the context of handling money.

³⁹Aristotle, *Politics*, 1328b.

⁴⁰Cicero, *On Duties*, 1.42 (44 B.C.). The exception of farming from the list of disreputable manual occupations exempts wealthy Romans whose incomes derived from agriculture from Cicero's criticism.

dyes, we are taken with the things themselves well enough, but do not think dyers and perfumers otherwise than low and sordid people. It was not said amiss by Antisthenes, when people told him that one Ismenias was an excellent piper. "It may be so," said he, "but he is but a wretched human being, otherwise he would not have been an excellent piper."⁴¹

This is often contrasted with a less delicate Jewish attitude to manual work. Some rabbis at least approved of artisan occupations, as in the Mishnah we read, from a fourth Generation tannaim (c. A.D. 140–165):

Rabbi Meir said: Let a man always teach his son a clean and a light trade; and let him pray to Him whose are wealth and riches; for there is no trade which has not both poverty and riches, and neither does poverty come from the trade nor yet riches, but everything according to one's deserving (*Quiddušin* 4:14).

Philo exalts labor, which, although it exists because of sin in the world (*Leg. Alleg.* 1.25), is not only necessary for survival (*De opificio mundi* 1.167), but is the occasion of moral improvement:

But labor is the enemy of laziness, as it is in reality the first and greatest of good things, and wages an irreconcilable war against pleasure; for, if we must declare the truth, God has made labor the foundation of all good and of all virtue to man, and without labor you will not find a single good thing in existence among the race of men (*De sacrificiis* 1.35).

This apparent Jewish/Gentile distinction, however, is by no means universal. The Hellenistic Jewish writer Ben Sirach, though he like the Greeks and Romans acknowledged the need for manual occupations (at least those which were not inherently bad), thought that manual workers are too concerned with their occupations to have the understanding of the law and of the world necessary to be able to govern: "Without them [i.e. manual workers] no city can be inhabited, and wherever they live, they will not go hungry. Yet they are not sought out for the council of the people" (Sir 38:32). Wisdom only comes with a life of leisure, "How can one become wise who handles the plow?" (Sir 38:25).

On the other side, the Greek orator Dio Chrysostom saw manual work as fitting for free men who wished to escape poverty:

Now so much for the life of the farmer, the hunter, and the shepherd. Perhaps I have spent more time on this theme than I should have done, but I desired to show in some way or other

⁴¹Plutarch, *Lives*, Pericles 1.1.4–5.

that poverty is no hopeless impediment to a life and existence befitting free men who are willing to work with their hands, but leads them on to deeds and actions that are far better and more useful and more in accordance with nature than those to which riches are wont to attract most men.⁴²

The majority of the people the church was connected to were not the wealthy but the poor or middle income. For Paul manual work was enabling not demeaning.

We are not told why some were not working. As we have seen, it is unlikely to be eschatological enthusiasm. Bruce Winter suggests that suffering due to famine may have lain behind some of the issues in the Thessalonian letters.⁴³ Hunger pushed believers into seeking a patron to feed them, whether a wealthy church member or a non-believer, and the client could repay this provision by offering political support in the polis. There is some uncertainty that personal patronage, on the scale Winter envisages, was as significant a factor in a largely Greek city like Thessalonica, as it was in Rome, or Roman colonies like Corinth or Philippi. There certainly was a developed system of patronage in the first century Roman world. Personal patronage involving the daily distribution of money was largely a phenomenon of the educated Romans.⁴⁴ Wealthy and influential people would act as patrons to their clients, or followers, dispensing favors and financial benefactions in return for loyalty and service. Though Thessalonica was a free city Roman influence in it was strong. Thessalonica was the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia, where Roman governors and some other officials lived. The head of the city council “served as the high priest in the cult of Augustus.”⁴⁵

The gospel was counter to the hierarchical distinctions prevalent in the culture. In Paul’s vision, this hierarchical and stratified community is transformed into a community of love living with mutual obligation and care. It is possible that the practice of giving and care for the poor, including regular common meals (as is seen in Acts 2–6, 1 Cor 10–11, and 2 Cor 8–9), made it possible for believers who were in need to find help in their church community. Perhaps it also allowed them to become continually dependent on that help. Paul expected believers to work hard to provide for themselves rather than to seek the indulgence of wealthy patrons, or even the patronage of the church, in a way that brought the church into disrepute. The point was not to meet outsiders’ expectations in every possible way, but to act in a manner

⁴²Dio Chrysostom, 7.103.

⁴³Bruce W. Winter, “‘If a Man Does Not Wish to Work...’ A Cultural and Historical Setting for 2 Thessalonians 3:6–16,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 40 (1989): 309–12.

⁴⁴Erlend D. MacGillivray, “Re-evaluating Patronage and Reciprocity in Antiquity and New Testament Studies,” *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism*, no. 6 (2009): 43; despite Peter Garnsey and Greg Woolf, “Patronage of the Rural Poor in the Roman World,” in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (London: Routledge, 1989).

⁴⁵Green, *Thessalonians*, 24.

appropriate to the gospel and its credibility, and consistent with their God-taught love for one another.

1 Thessalonians 5:12–14

The double use of “brothers” (ἀδελφοί, 5:12, 14) along with the two first person plural requests with synonymous verbs (“Now we ask you,” ἐρωτῶμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς; “Now we urge you,” παρακαλοῦμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς) signals not only a change of subject matter but also the transition to the final set of exhortations in the letter. The two requests (5:12–13, 5:14) are united also by the repetition of νουθετέω (“admonish”), and by the contrast made between hardworking leaders, and some people who are idle. Verse 11, beginning with διό παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους, concludes the section on the resurrection of believers at the Parousia which started in 5:1, much as the ὥστε παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους in 4:18 concludes the section on preparedness for the Parousia which started in 4:13. The effect of this context, along with the concluding prayer in 5:23, which mentions the Parousia, is that the exhortations of 5:12–22 have an eschatological focus. That is, in view of the return of Christ, this is how the Thessalonians are to live. Thus again we can see that the working habits of the church are meant to be motivated by the second coming of Christ; quite the opposite of the view of some that enthusiastic eschatological expectation led to idleness.

A single Greek article governing three participles is used in 5:12 to let the readers know that “those who labor among you, are over you in the Lord, and admonish you,” are largely same group. All three participles are present tense, the imperfective aspect indicating the ongoing nature of the activities. The significance of work is again addressed: the church is urged to acknowledge their spiritual leaders because of their labor (κοπιᾶω) and work (ἔργον). Indeed the church is to “regard them very highly in love (ἠγείσθαι αὐτοὺς ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ) because of their work.⁴⁶ Paul is not condemning church leaders to a life of mere busyness or constant activity. Rather, as some in the community are avoiding work, as is briefly indicated in 5:14, he is setting forth those who work hard as examples to the community. These are the leaders who are worthy of honor,⁴⁷ and by calling for this

⁴⁶Ascough notes, “It is likely that the leaders at Thessalonica continued with both kinds of activity, manual labor alongside community members and the labor of community formation” (Richard S. Ascough, “The Thessalonian Christian Community as a Professional Voluntary Association,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119, no. 2 (2000): 318). Ascough’s larger point, that the Thessalonian church was a voluntary association of workers in the same trade as Paul, is however a stretch too far. It is based on what Ascough himself notes is a presumption: “Presumably Paul and the Thessalonians worked at the same trade, or at least trades within the same general area, thus facilitating contact between Paul and the Thessalonians. And it was while at work that Paul preached the gospel and presumably made his initial converts. Thus, the core of the Thessalonian community comprised handworkers who shared Paul’s trade” (Ascough, “Voluntary Association,” 315). But while this is interesting speculation, there is nothing in the letters or the account in Acts 17 that lends it support.

⁴⁷See Green, *Thessalonians*, 248–51.

honor Paul reiterates his emphasis on the right view—the right value—of work and labor, in light of the return of Christ.

Honor is given to leaders who admonish the church (5:12), but the whole church is called to join in admonishment for those who are idle, while encouraging the fainthearted. As is well known, ἄτακτος (5:14) can be translated as “unruly” particularly in regard to soldiers who did not maintain order in battle,⁴⁸ or disordered,⁴⁹ but the context, with its commendation of leaders’ work, and indeed the interest in work displayed in the entire letter, selects the meaning “idle.”⁵⁰ Far from being eschatologically over-eager, some have become careless about the return of Christ. Paul has just reminded them “So then, let us not sleep, like others do, but let us watch and be sober” (5:6). Perhaps some wanted to continue the life of a client, or are taking advantage of the church’s practice of generosity. Nevertheless, despite this apparent abuse, Paul instructs the church to continue doing good “to one another and to all” (5:15).

2 Thessalonians 3:6–15

This letter, written about six months after the first,⁵¹ repeats several of the same points about work, in even stronger fashion. Idle believers are not simply to be admonished but to be avoided (2 Thess 3:6). If they are not willing to work they should not eat (3:10). This means at least that the offenders would be excluded from the church’s gatherings, including gatherings for common meals. This would also mean exclusion from the Lord’s Supper, as-

⁴⁸Josephus, *Ant.* 15.150, 152; *War* 1.101, 1.382.

⁴⁹Philo, *De Agr.* 74; *De Abr.* 151.

⁵⁰BDAG, sv. ἄτακτος. The cognate verb ἀτακτέω, though it most often is used to describe disorder on the battlefield, is also used for those who refused to fight. Demosthenes (*Olynthiacs* 3.11) complains of laws that grant impunity to those who will not line up alongside (οἱ δὲ τοὺς ἀτακτοῦντας ἀθώους καθιστᾶσιν) their fellows to serve in the war. Demosthenes, *Olynthiacs I–III*, edited by H. Sharpley (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1900), 67. Likewise Lysias (*Against Alcibiades* 1.17–18) criticizes those who avoided military service (τοὺς οὕτως ἀτακτοῦντας) because of cowardice (οὐκ ἐτόλμα μεθ’ ὑμῶν μάχεσθαι: “he did not dare not fight alongside you”). Demetrius (*On Style*, 53) uses the adverbial comparative form ἀτακτοτέρως to mean “negligently”, suggesting that good style allows, even prefers, negligence in not always matching every μεν with a contrasting δέ. The cognates in 2 Thess 3:6, 7, 11 refer to idleness or shirking of work, as is evident from the context (See the discussion below). There is enough evidence to allow that ἄτακτος and its cognates can refer to someone who refuses to undertake difficult tasks, or is negligent in the performance of duties.

⁵¹Despite a minor academic tradition going back to Hugo Grotius, and including Charles Wanamaker (Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 37–45), we can assume that this work was written subsequent to the first. Amongst other reasons, especially the second letter’s mention of a prior epistle (2 Thess 2:15), the discussion of idleness, in expanded and more vehement form, suits a situation where the first letter failed to elicit a satisfactory response. The “tradition which you received from us” (2 Thess 3:6) may include the discussions of work in 1 Thess. I am assuming the Pauline authorship of 2 Thess. See the discussion in Fee, *Thessalonians*, 237–40, and Paul Foster, “Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians? A Fresh Look at an Old Problem,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 35 (2012).

suming that the Thessalonian church had a similar practice to that evident in Corinth (1 Cor 11:20–34). It is a safe assumption that the Thessalonian church had a regular common meal, given the evidence of 3:10,⁵² and the discussion of meal practices in letters to several of the Pauline churches (Rom 14:1–15:13; 1 Cor 5:11, 10:16–21, 11:20–34; Gal 2:11–14). Similar regulations for discipline are found at Qumran. The Community Rule prescribes punishment for lying about property (“If one of them has lied deliberately in matters of property, he shall be excluded from the pure meal of the congregation for one year and shall do penance with respect to one quarter of his food” 1QS 6.24–25). Likewise, for “speaking in anger” against a priest, “he shall do penance for one year and shall be excluded for his soul’s sake from the pure meal of the congregation” (1QS 7.2–3). A similar kind of discipline is seen in 1 Corinthians 5:11 for immoral believers,⁵³ which also included a ban on association, where the church was commanded “not even to eat with such a one.” The avoidance would presumably be wider than the context of the assembly of the church. In 2 Thessalonians 3:14–15 the ban on association is extended to “anyone who does not obey” the message of the letter. In both 1 Corinthians and 2 Thessalonians the intent of the punishment is restorative (1 Cor 5:5; 2 Thess 3:12, 15), but for Paul to command this kind of action on account of someone’s unwillingness to work shows how seriously he took the problem.

There also are clues in the text itself as to the theological approach Paul took to work. First, immediately before our passage Paul has prayed for the Lord to direct the Thessalonians’ hearts “to the love of God and to the endurance of Christ” (2 Thess 3:5). As we have seen already, notions of love and endurance have been key in Paul’s discussion of work (E.g. 1 Thess 1:3). It was love that led Paul to earn his own living while preaching in Thessalonica, love that labored and endured that would not be a burden to the community: “With labor and toil working night and day so as not to burden any of you” (2 Thess 3:8). This way of life was intended to set an example for all believers (2 Thess 3:9). In other words, the Thessalonian believers were commanded to work, enduring long and hard toil, so as to be self-supporting, and this enduring labor was an act of love. To live this way required the heart’s focus on the love of God and the endurance of Christ. Even if some in the church have been taking advantage of others’ generosity, and made themselves burdens to the community, Paul tells the church, “Do not be weary in doing good.” The prohibitive subjunctive command raises the possibility that the believers had already grown weary of well-doing. Paul

⁵²Jewett says that “The creation of the regulation required a community that was eating its meals together, for whom the willingness or unwillingness to work was a factor of sufficient importance to require regulation, and in which the power to deprive members of food was in fact present.” Robert Jewett, “Tenement Churches and Communal Meals in the Early Church: The Implications of a Form-Critical Analysis of 2 Thessalonians 3:10,” *Biblical Research* 38 (1993): 38. While it be pressing too hard to require that the community was eating all its meals together, certainly the text makes sense where common meals were frequent.

⁵³The punishment also covers greed, idolatry, abuse, drunkenness and robbery.

wanted them to renew their love for those with needs at the same time as they disciplined idle brothers and sisters.

Second, the commands to dissociate from the idle, and to work, are made “in the Lord Jesus Christ,” “Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness” (2 Thess 3:6); “And such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ, that working quietly they should eat their own bread” (2 Thess 3:12). The point is that the instructions regarding work are not simply Paul’s own admonishments. The attaching of the name of Jesus to the instructions not only gives them significance but Christological weight. Everything the church does, including work, is to be done in and for the Lord Jesus Christ as an act of faith. Paul prays that Jesus would lead the church into good work: “For this reason we are always praying for you, that our God may make you worthy of the calling and may fulfill every desire for good and every work of faith by power” (2 Thess 1:11). “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word” (2 Thess 2:16–17). The working lives of believers are not somehow separate from their religious experience but are the place of faith and obedience to Jesus Christ, the place of response to the love of God the Father, and the place where prayer makes work a response to the grace of God.

Conclusion

We have seen that the problem of idleness in the Thessalonian church cannot simply be resolved by pointing to an extreme imminentist enthusiasm, largely because Paul himself does not point in that direction. Instead he sets his comments on idleness in the context of a broader discussion of work. The working lives of the believers are the proper place for the expression of love and faith. Work is meant to be an act of love. Paul celebrates the work, labor, and endurance of the Thessalonians as the proper products, and therefore evidence, of their faith, love, and hope in Jesus. Working to support themselves, and refusing to burden others, as Paul had set an example, is an act of love and faith as well as an expression of eschatological hope. Thus believers should, where possible, avoid dependence on a patron, particularly if that meant they were avoiding labor themselves, and they should refuse to abuse the generosity of the church. Rather, through humbly working with their own hands they would establish a credible witness to the surrounding community. Conversely, those who refuse to support themselves are acting counter to love, and should be disciplined, even to the point of being unable to eat the church’s common meal, with the hope of course of transformation and restoration.

*The Business Secrets of Paul of Tarsus*¹

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“Or is it only Barnabas and I who lack the right to not work for a living?”
1 Corinthians 9:6 (NIV)

Paul’s ironic defense of his self-funded ministry highlights an often-neglected aspect of his Christian mission: his success in business and how that effected his ministry. Of course, “tentmaking” has become proverbial for conducting Christian ministry under the cover of business ventures, to which numerous titles in a Christian bookstore can testify.³ However, too often the term has simply become a metaphor, ignoring the first century reality that underlies the concept. In what follows, we will examine the first century business world of Paul and speculate on ways the lessons he may have learned though his life as a businessman may have shaped his missionary efforts.

First Century Context

Luke reports that Paul was a tentmaker, or more generally, a worker in leather (Acts 18:3).⁴ Cameron Hawkins, in a recent discussion of manufacturing in the Roman world, highlights the importance of professional guilds, or *collegia*; “Professional associations—known by a range of terms in antiquity, and generally referred to as professional *collegia* in modern scholarship—are the most visible networks to which artisans and manufacturers belonged in the Roman world . . . professional associations in particular were similar enough in structure to private-order enforcement networks that they likely functioned as such in practice.”⁵ Inscriptional evidence gives us

¹This title consciously (and ironically) echoes a large sub-genre of business self-help books; my personal favorite is *The Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun* by Wes Roberts (New York: Warner, 1989).

²I am an archaeologist, not a New Testament scholar; however, like Paul I too have lived a life of business as mission, working for 20 years in the secular world before coming to teach at Southwestern Seminary.

³See, Patrick Lai, *Tentmaking: The Life and Work of Business as Missions* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006); or Toby Miles, *7 Reasons Tentmaking Businesses Fail and How to Overcome Them: Lessons Learned in Business as Mission* (Amazon Digital, 2013).

⁴“Tentmaker” is the translation of the Greek term *σκηνοποιός*; a leatherworker is more properly termed a *σκυτοτόμιος*.

⁵Cameron Hawkins, “Manufacturing,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman*

some insight into how tentmaking and leatherworking were carried out in the Roman world. An inscription from Colossae attests to a local Colossian leatherworking industry, probably organized by a *collegia*.⁶ Following this understanding, a plausible reconstruction of the relationship of tentmaking to leatherworking can be proposed. This appears to be the situation in Rome.⁷ In this model, a tentmaker is a sub-discipline of “leatherworker” (i.e. a tentmaker is a member of a leatherworking *collegia*). Other sub-disciplines in a leatherworking *collegia* would be tanners, cobblers, and the makers of horse furniture, although no exact internal structure is documented for leatherworking *collegia*.

Inscriptional evidence indicates that professional guilds were a common presence in first century cities, particularly port cities such as Ostia, where guilds were involved in all aspects of the grain trade.⁸ Guilds allowed free competition amongst their members, but there were significant benefits to membership. As the economic historian Peter Temin points out, “the strong organization of the guild and its ability to exert collective action made guild membership desirable.”⁹ Guilds could have patrons who could provide social benefits as well as access to customers. The fundamental benefit may have been the guarantee of the trustworthiness of the professional who was in a guild. A funerary inscription from Rome identifies the deceased as a high office holder in the *collegium fabrorum tignuariorum*, a builders *collegium*. This man served as a judge in the association, probably arbitrating professional misconduct.¹⁰ A customer would be more likely to patronize an artisan who had guild backing.

Membership was not a hereditary right, but sons often followed fathers into the same guilds. It is interesting to speculate whether Paul was following his father’s trade. Of course this was the expected Jewish pattern as well, most famously exemplified by Jesus. Paul also inherited Roman citizenship from his father (Acts 22:26–28). Paul would have had three names as a Roman citizen—a forename, (*praenomen*), a family name (*nomen gentile*) and a personal name (*cognomen*). We only have his personal name Paullus. Intriguingly, Paul never claims to be a Roman citizen in his own writings. However, Paul uses his Roman name exclusively in his letters and there is no reason to doubt that the citizenship claim was accurate. By the time of Paul’s birth, well-placed provincials could become Roman citizens.¹¹ How a previous generation of the family acquired this status we do not know. As

Economy, edited by Walter Scheidel (London: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 175–96.

⁶Allan H. Cadwallader, “A New Inscription, a Correction and a Confirmed Sighting from Colossae,” *Epigraphica Anatolica* 40 (2007): 109–18.

⁷Inscriptions indicate a tentmaker association in Rome. (CIL 6.518b, 9053, 9053a).

⁸Russell Meiggs, *Roman Ostia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 316.

⁹Peter Temin, *The Roman Market Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 109.

¹⁰Hawkins, “Manufacturing,” 192.

¹¹A.N. Sherwin-White, (1973) *The Roman Citizenship*, 2nd ed. (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1973).

F.F. Bruce suggests, it may have been that the tentmaking firm, (assuming that was the trade of Paul's family), had been helping one of the civil war generals who had the authority to grant citizenship, such as Anthony.¹²

The history of Paul's hometown, Tarsus, provided numerous opportunities for a tentmaker to meet a Roman general. Paul is an urban man.¹³ He reflects an urban self-understanding when he tells the arresting Roman officer in Acts 21 that he is from "Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city" (Acts 21:39, my translation). He has the urban pride of the Levantine world where one's city was more important than one's province or kingdom. Tarsus is the principal city of the territory of East Cilicia and is about ten miles inland from the sea and thirty miles south of the famed Cilician Gates. The natural advantages of the site have insured an almost continuous occupation from the Neolithic to the present. "As for Tarsus," writes the first century geographer Strabo, "it lies on a plain, founded by Argives wandering in search of Io. The Cyndus River flows through the middle, past the gymnasium of the young men. Because the source of the river is not far off, and flows through a deep ravine before it falls into the city, the current is both cold and fast, and soothes the swollen nerves of men and livestock in its current."¹⁴

The strategic location naturally attracted the interest of the expanding Roman Empire, which became the ruler in 67 B.C. when the Roman general Pompey made the city the capital of the newly acquired territory of Cilicia after he defeated the pirates based there. Cicero lived in Tarsus when he was proconsul of Cilicia in 51–50 B.C. Its strategic location meant that the city gathered the attention of the competitors during the Roman Civil Wars of the Late Republic. Julius Caesar visited here and Mark Anthony famously met Cleopatra at Tarsus in 41 B.C.¹⁵ Any one of the Late Republican generals could have needed the services of a tentmaker to house their troops. Anthony's conqueror, Augustus, took a personal interest in the city, sending his tutor, Athenodorus, to govern the city. Strabo describes the city as a cultural and educational center with "all kinds of schools of rhetoric"¹⁶ and it has been aptly described by one modern Pauline scholar as "a university city."¹⁷

We know very little about the physical world of first century Tarsus. Hetty Goldman of Bryn Mawr College carried out a series of excavations on the fringe of the modern city before and after World War II, but very limited material was recovered from the Roman period.¹⁸ The recent excavation of

¹²F.F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 37.

¹³Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

¹⁴Strabo, *Geography*. 14.5.12, in Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1932), my translation.

¹⁵Plutarch, *Lives*, in Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1920).

¹⁶Strabo, *Geography*, 14.5.12.

¹⁷Bruce, *Paul*, 35.

¹⁸Hetty Goldman, ed., *Excavations at Gözlü Kule, Tarsus. Vol I: The Hellenistic and*

an underground parking garage has turned into a research excavation in downtown Tarsus. The Republic Square Excavations are under the leadership of Professor Levent Zoroğlu of Selcuk University in Konya. Reported discoveries from the first century include shops and a basalt-paved street.¹⁹

Paul was converted on the road to Damascus, probably on the main Roman road running east of the Jordan River, linking Philadelphia (modern Amman) to Gerasa (Jerash) and Damascus. This would have been the most attractive route from Jerusalem to Damascus for a devout Jew who wished to avoid encounters with any Samaritans. With the support of the High Priest, Paul (then still known as Saul) sets out to Damascus in pursuit of the scattering followers of Jesus, known as the followers of “the Way” (Acts 9:1–2). First century Damascus hosted a major Jewish community. Josephus reports that more than 10,000 Jews were killed in the city in immediate reprisals after the beginning of the first revolt in Judea.²⁰ Despite the large community of Jews, Paul was relatively safe from direct action by the Jewish High Priest, since the Nabateans governed the city.²¹ However, his conversion would have created an immediate economic hardship for Paul. He came to Damascus with letters of authority from the chief priest in Jerusalem (Acts 22:5). These letters probably functioned not only as letters of introduction to the Jewish community but, more importantly, they could have functioned as letters of credit for Paul that he could use to draw on resources of the local Jewish community for his upkeep. Obviously, after his conversion this potential source of support was gone. It is possible that Ananias and his fellow believers supported Paul initially, but if he stayed in Damascus and the region for as long as three years, he probably worked for his own support. This was his pattern throughout his later career and it is likely that he pursued the same course here.

Economic pressure is the simplest explanation for why the Apostle goes to Arabia (Gal 1:17).²² Roman Arabia included parts of modern Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Sinai, but in the first century, the term Arabia primarily refers to the Nabatean Kingdom, headquartered in Petra.²³ The Romans did not annex the Nabatean kingdom until A.D. 106. The Nabateans established extensive settlements in the Negev, southern Jordan, and northwest Saudi Arabia, and controlled trade routes all the way to the Indian Ocean including

Roman Periods (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950).

¹⁹L. Zoroğlu, “Tarsus Cumhuriyet Alanı 1995 Yılı Kazısı,” *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* XVIII (1996): 401–08.

²⁰Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, 2.20.2, in Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1927).

²¹As 2 Corinthians 11:32 makes clear, the account in Acts 9 identifies Jews as the main protagonists, but the governance of the city was in the hands of the Nabateans.

²²Luke ignores the Arabian trip and reports that Saul goes into the synagogues of Damascus and starts teaching about Jesus as Messiah. Luke’s choice in Acts 9 is to emphasize the immediate outreach of the new convert. There is no contradiction here since the account in Galatians indicates Paul did return to Damascus, in keeping with the Acts narrative.

²³G.W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983).

the lucrative trade in frankincense and myrrh from southern Arabia.²⁴ It is certainly possible that they supplied the Magi with their gifts for the child Jesus. They also controlled the trade links between Rome and the Parthian Empire located in Persia. By the first century A.D. they may have been the middlemen in the silk trade between China and Rome.

It is probable that Paul went to Petra, the Nabatean capital. Petra is one of the great archaeological sites of the world. King Aretas IV, (9 B.C.–A.D. 40) greatly expanded the city and the basic urban infrastructure, visible today, dates from the time of Paul. The Nabateans were brilliant hydraulic engineers and this skill enabled them to thrive in a hostile environment. The most visible expression of the wealth of the city is the magnificent series of rock-cut tombs, which line the ceremonial entrance into the city, the famously narrow Siq. Large carvings of camel caravans show that the Nabateans understood the source of their wealth. King Aretas was popular with his subjects and he was entitled “He who loves people.”²⁵ The magnificent tomb, the so-called “Treasury” that dominates the ceremonial entrance into Petra, may belong to Aretas IV.²⁶

Paul would have wanted to establish his credentials with the Nabatean government, both economically and politically. He needed to demonstrate that he was capable of supporting himself economically, thereby not being a drain on the royal treasury. More importantly, Paul needed to convince the Nabatean government that he was no longer an emissary of the high priest and therefore not a potential security threat. Aretas held an antagonistic approach to Jewish authority, warring with Herod Antipas after the Jewish king had divorced his wife (Aretas’ daughter) to marry Herodias.²⁷ The Nabatean king also was very likely wary of any infiltration or influence from Judea proper since the Romans were threatening an invasion of his kingdom from Judea during the time Paul was in Arabia. Since the Romans directly ruled Judea, any contact from the high priest in Jerusalem would be treated with suspicion. This atmosphere of wariness probably helped to ensure Paul’s safety after he converted to Christianity.

Economics may also have played a part in Paul’s return to Damascus from Arabia. Damascus, a major commercial center, would have been an excellent place for his trade.²⁸ The raw material for his tents would be easily obtainable from the eastern steppe lands that have supported nomadic herders from the Neolithic onwards, and the passing trade caravans would be a likely market for Paul’s products. He probably rented a spot on one of the colonnaded markets in Damascus.

²⁴Avraham Negev, *Nabatean Archaeology Today* (New York: New York University Press, 1986).

²⁵Julius Euting, *Nabatäische Inschriften* (Berlin: Reimer, 1885), 85.

²⁶Iain Browning, *Petra* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973).

²⁷Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 18, in Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1920), 109–18.

²⁸Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC–AD 337* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

Political tensions may help to explain why Aretas eventually orders Paul's arrest in Damascus. According to Luke, "after many days . . . the Jews" form a conspiracy to kill Paul. In 2 Corinthians Paul tells his version of the story and blames the agents of Aretas for the threat, perhaps after Paul had been denounced as a provocateur by the Jewish leadership in the city (Acts 9, 2 Cor 11:32). If the agents of Aretas were quietly watching Paul, then the religious conflict in the Damascene Jewish community generated by Paul's conversion may have appeared to be political in nature to the pagan Nabateans. Of crucial importance is what is *not* said by either Luke or Paul: neither Luke in Acts nor Paul in his letters make any mention of gentile-mission work that Paul might have undertaken during this period. His proselytizing appears to have been confined to the Jewish community of Damascus and possibly Arabia. Paul may have visited the city again during his years "in Syria," (Gal 1:21) but the Christian community here does not figure in his later ministry nor is it mentioned in his letters except in relation to his conversion. If he did reach out to gentiles in Arabia and Damascus the results have gone unrecorded. It is even possible that it was through his mercantile activity that he caused offense to the Nabatean government, resulting in the order for his arrest.

Pauline Business Principle Number 1: Learn Your Trade

After his dramatic escape in a basket, Paul leaves Damascus and returns home to Tarsus. In many ways he has few options. He is no longer welcome in Damascus or, by extension, the Nabatean kingdom; nor is he safe or welcome in Jerusalem (Acts 9).²⁹ I think his return home is essentially a business decision. He needs to earn a living while he studies and grows in his new faith. As a Roman citizen, he also needs to pay his taxes. Non-land-owners paid a poll tax; urbanites paid taxes on their properties and on their wages. His family connections may have provided him with easier access to guild membership, which would allow him freedom to establish and grow his business. His extended family (if he had them) may even have provided him with free lodging and free labor in his shop, at least until his business was established.³⁰

Tarsus was a strong commercial center. The strategic roadway nexus of the Cilician Gates offered the merchants of Tarsus many opportunities for commercial success. They would have had easy access to the central Anatolian plain to the north and west, and to the major markets of Antioch and the Syrian cities to the south. The fertile plain of the Cyndus River

²⁹Paul was not fully trusted by the Jerusalem leadership. Their wariness was not from a lack of faith, but a well-earned respect for the powers arrayed against them. Paul could have been a "deep cover" agent living a lie to better destroy the new faith.

³⁰All we know of Paul's family is that he had a sister and a nephew; however, by A.D. 60, at least the nephew lived in Jerusalem (Acts 23:16). He appears to have been still loyal to Paul, although we do not know if he had become a believer.

provided numerous products for export including flax and a local product called cilicium made from goat hair. In the eastern Roman Empire, a “tentmaker” would of necessity have had to deal with cloth as well, because only the Roman military would have used leather for tents in such a warm environment. This would have widened the potential customer base for Paul and opened up new possibilities when he established himself in business. For a tentmaker from Tarsus, marketing a luxury product like cilicium may have looked like a winning formula. For the next decade, Paul made Tarsus his base and his survival demonstrates that he was at least minimally successful as a businessman.

After ten years, Paul’s foundational time is over when Barnabas goes to bring the apostle to help minister to the burgeoning church in the metropolis of Antioch-on-the-Orontes, in Syria. Barnabas was himself a businessman and had known Paul from his first visit to Jerusalem where Barnabas appears to have been the initial person to place trust in the new convert (Acts 9:27). Barnabas was a businessman and a property owner although we do not know his trade (Acts 4:37). Antioch’s prime mercantile location at a nexus of trade routes was an obvious advantage for Paul. There is a considerable body of evidence for local merchants engaged in overseas trade under the Romans.³¹ From a base here, Paul could easily have traveled throughout Syria and along the Levantine coast trading and making contacts. Antioch and Tarsus lay within the same market region being directly linked by road and sea routes, so this was a familiar world for Paul. If he had already established a network of clients while he was based in Tarsus, his clientele could easily have included contacts in Antioch. The wealthy Jewish community would have provided a strong potential market for Paul, easily accessible due to his shared cultural identity, particularly, since at least initially, they would have had no reason to be suspicious of him. The presence of a Roman army base in the city also provided another potential local market for Paul’s leather goods and tents. Armies need tents and a Roman century, the basic unit of the Roman army, would need ten to twelve tents;³² if Paul’s citizenship derived from his father’s or grandfather’s service to the Roman army, then Paul would have been well aware of the specific requirements of Roman tents and thus able to quickly provide product for the army.

Pauline Business Principle Number 2: A Team is More Effective than an Individual

Paul appears to enjoy success when he works with partners, both as direct associates, and as investors. It may be no coincidence that his first mission partner is another businessman: Barnabas, a Jewish Christian from Salamis in Cyprus, who accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey

³¹Alan K. Bowman, ed., *The Cambridge Ancient History, Volume 10: The Augustan Empire, 43 BC–AD 69*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 723.

³²Pat Southern, *The Roman Army: A Social and Institutional History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

which saw the birth of the Gentile mission (Acts 13:4). Salamis was a major commercial center, closely linked with Antioch in Syria.³³

In Philippi, Paul meets another successful entrepreneur: Lydia, a wealthy woman from Thyatira in Asia Minor who is a dealer in Tyrian purple dye (Acts 16:14–15). Being from Thyatira, Lydia may have been connected to a more eastern oriented commercial network than most of her fellow merchants in Philippi. One of the main attractants for an outsider seeking to set up business in Macedonia was the Via Egnatia, a major roadway built to link the Adriatic Sea to the Aegean. A bilingual milestone found near Thessalonica informs us that Gnaeus Egnatius, the proconsul of Macedonia, ordered its construction.³⁴ The road connected the main cities of Macedonia. By Paul's day it reached Neapolis (modern Kavalla) where Paul and his companions first landed in Macedonia. The main construction force was probably the Roman army, since the road provided a vital strategic route across Macedonia.

Recent archaeological study of the Via Egnatia has given us a better understanding of the typical embellishments of a major Roman road.³⁵ The road was approximately six meters wide, paved with flat stones, and equipped with curbs and rains to regulate runoff. The roadway had a well-drained foundation (agger and rudus) of smaller stones and gravel placed on bedrock where possible, which supported the paving stones. Commercial inns occurred approximately every 30–35 miles, interspersed with official posting stations where horses could be changed with the appropriate permissions, insuring a swift passage for official couriers. Small garrisons placed with easy access to the roadway protected travelers and couriers. The road was well maintained and continued in importance after the first century.

The excellent road connections made Philippi a viable base for a commercial operation such as that run by Lydia, Paul's convert who imported purple dye from the east (probably Phoenicia). In 30 B.C., following his own victory against Anthony, Augustus re-founded the city as Colonia Iulia Augusta Philippensium and its status as an Augustan colony exempted the city from significant forms of taxation and gave it additional privileges of land ownership.³⁶ The colonists had the full legal status of citizens of Italy. The legal and judicial systems were Roman, and Latin was the official language of civic administration. The Roman ethos of the colony is evident in Philippi's Latin civic inscriptions and in the worship of Roman gods. According to

³³Thomas W. Davis, "Saint Paul on Cyprus: The Transformation of an Apostle," in *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith? A Critical Appraisal of Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Scripture*, edited by J.K. Hoffmeier and D.R. Magary (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 405–23.

³⁴G.H.R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 81.

³⁵M.G. Amore, L. Bejko, Y. Cerova, and I Gjipali. (2005) "Archaeological Reports and Notes—Via Egnatia (Albania) Project: Results of Fieldwork 2002," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 18 (2005): 336.

³⁶Charalambos Bakirtzis and Helmut Koestler, eds. *Philippi at the Time of Paul and after his Death* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1998).

a recent study, of the 421 inscriptions recovered from Philippi, only 60 are Greek.³⁷ Lydia, and other non-local merchants, may have been successful because they had better contacts across the Aegean than the more western oriented descendants of the Roman colonists and so could provide exotic products more easily. Her outsider status may have led Lydia to be more socially isolated in Philippi, which may have contributed to her openness to the gospel message. She causes her entire household to be baptized, although we are not told if this included immediate family members or not. In this way, she would have an immediate “congregation” of fellow worshippers in her own house.

As a dealer in purple dye Lydia must have access to capital to conduct her business. That she is wealthy is evidenced by the fact she has a large house in Philippi capable of hosting guests. Acts 16:40 records that Paul and Silas met with “the brothers” (i.e. the believers, both men and women) at Lydia’s house. As a successful merchant, Lydia would most likely have had a spacious upper-class house able to accommodate the entire membership of the young church. She is Paul’s first convert in Europe and hosts him during his stay in the city. A clearly forceful woman, she is able to persuade Paul to stay in her house despite his initial reluctance.

Essentially, she becomes Paul’s patron. A patron describes a very specific social/economic role in the Roman world.³⁸ The patron/client relationship, although private, had clear expectations for both parties. Operated from the household of the patron, the relationship existed to promote the political and social ambitions of the patron by expanding his power base through the acquisition of clients. Clients were free Roman citizens with a vote, who attached themselves to an elite patron to gain financial and social support. Anybody can buy slaves; you need free clients to gain prestige. The first century B.C. writer Vitruvius notes that the house of a patron needed expansive public spaces such as receiving vestibules and well-proportioned atria, (and additional household staff) to accommodate the clients who would appear at dawn to greet their patron.³⁹ The clients were expected to form an escort and accompany the patron throughout the day, wherever his business took him. Their visible presence at law courts and business establishments reinforced the status of their patron and reminded observers that the patron was an individual to be reckoned with. It would be difficult for a client to maintain his own business, since the patron dictated his schedule. In return for his time, a patron would financially support his clients and often feed them at his house at the end of the day. The members of the church in Thessalonica who are “walking in idleness” (2 Thess 3:6) are probably clients parasitically waiting on patrons. Christian patrons, such as Lydia, turn this power game upside

³⁷Barbara Levick, (1967) *Roman Colonies in Southern Asia Minor* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967).

³⁸Richard P. Saller, R. *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

³⁹Vitruvius, *On Architecture* 6, 5.1–2, in Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).

down. In the church, the clients do not serve the patron, rather the patron acts as a servant to the clients. The Christian patron opened his or her house to the church, and supported the church financially. In return, the Christian patron gained eternal “status” in the eyes of God.

It appears that Lydia and the church in Philippi act as financial patrons to Paul throughout his later ministry (Phil 4:15). When Paul gets to Thessalonica he is able to set up quite quickly in business because the church in Philippi apparently provided him with the necessary “seed money” to get started. Even if he carried his own tools with him, he would have needed capital to rent a shop and purchase raw materials. “Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again,” says Paul in Philippians 4:16. This ability to give financial support reflects the financial strength, and by implication, the high social standing, of some of the membership of the Christian community in Philippi. If the church in Philippi is generously supporting Paul then almost certainly Lydia is a major financial contributor. It may be that this repeated financial support of Paul is the product of Lydia’s newly baptized understanding of what a Christian patron does.

Paul also had business partners in addition to financial patrons. He reminds the Thessalonians that “we worked night and day” in his shop (1 Thess 2:9). By using the plural “we,” Paul makes clear that his co-authors, Timothy and Silas, also worked in the shop with him. This would have been a good model of Gentile/Jewish cooperation for Thessalonian believers and may have been part of the reason the Jews in the city were upset with him. This passage also tells us that for Paul, his work is part of his ministry. In 1 Thessalonians 3:10 he reminds his audience that he prayed “night and day,” neatly reversing the order from 1 Thessalonians 1:9. When both passages are seen together, it is right to conclude that Paul prays when he works, and works when he prays.

Thessalonica possessed a fine natural harbor and its placement on key north-south trade routes meant that it was a flourishing center of trade.⁴⁰ Parts of the visible city walls rest on Roman foundations. The Vardar Gate, dismantled in the nineteenth century, marked where the Via Egnatia entered the city from the west. The main Roman market has been excavated, along with an older Hellenistic agora.⁴¹ The forum included a large open square surrounded on four sides with two story porticoes; statues of gods and goddesses watched over the market from one of the upper porticoes. The porticoes provided covered arcades for the convenience of the shoppers. Inscriptions from the city record professional associations of purple dyers, muleteers, garland makers, and a gladiatorial school.

⁴⁰Laura Nasrallah, Charalambos Bakirtzis, and Steven J. Friesen, eds., *From Roman to Early Christian Thessalonikē: Studies in Religion and Archaeology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

⁴¹Michael Vickers, “Hellenistic Thessaloniki” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 92 (1972): 156–70.

In Corinth, the churches in Macedonia (probably the Philippians) supplement Paul's income just as they had done when he was in Thessalonica (2 Cor 11:9). Paul would have needed "seed money" in this new city, at least until he met Priscilla and Aquila. Paul refused compensation from the Corinthian church when he was there, because he did not want to be included amongst the traveling philosophers and debaters who earned a living through public speaking.

Paul was especially active in his profession in Corinth where he teamed up in both his mission and his working life with Priscilla and Aquila, professional tentmakers from Rome (Acts 18:1–3). The partnership must have been quite successful in both business and mission, because Priscilla and Aquila go with Paul when he leaves Corinth. When Paul visited in the mid-first century, Corinth was on the verge of becoming the economic engine for the region and a burgeoning central market for goods and services.⁴² Paul stays at least 18 months in the city and if he worked the entire time, he must have contacted the local tentmakers guild. This would have been vital for the survival of the business. Priscilla and Aquila would almost certainly have been guild members in Rome, where commerce was highly regulated.⁴³ The tentmaking business may have operated out of one of the shops lining the forum. The excavated shops near the forum measured 4 meters high by 4 meters deep, with a width from 2.8 to 4 meters; there may have been a communicating door or a window connecting to the shop next door. The doorway opening to the forum was the main source of light; shopping was a daytime activity only. Archaeologists have found evidence of tents and other temporary structures set up in the open spaces of the forum, undoubtedly for commercial activity.⁴⁴

One of Paul's new colleagues in the Corinthian region, Phoebe, was another patron of Paul who shared the new Christian ideal of patronage. She was "the servant" (a deaconess, Rom 16:1–2) of the church in Cenchreae. Paul names Phoebe as a patron of many, including himself. She must have supported Paul financially as well as provided a space for the church to meet in Cenchreae. It is probable that Paul asks the Roman church to host her because her networks do not include Rome. Her homeport traded with the eastern Mediterranean world. Archaeological investigations by the American School and the Greek Ministry of Culture indicate that this port city, although small, was very wealthy.⁴⁵ Harbor installations included

⁴²David K. Pettegrew, "The Changing Rural Horizons of Corinth's First Urban Christians," in *The First Urban Churches 2: Roman Corinth*, edited by J.R. Harrison and L.L. Welborn, Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2016), 153–83.

⁴³Temin, *The Roman Market Economy*.

⁴⁴Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology*, 3rd ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2002), 192–98..

⁴⁵Robert Scranton, *Kenchreai, Eastern Port of Corinth: Results of Investigations by the University of Chicago and Indiana University for the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, Volume 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1976).

warehouses, moles, fish tanks, and taverns. The second century A.D. travel-writer Pausanias records a temple to Aphrodite and a shrine to Isis.⁴⁶ A spectacular archaeological discovery from the harbor excavations consisted of decorative panels of glass opus sectile mosaic still in their original shipping crates; these may have been intended for the Isis shrine. Although they date later than the time of Paul, they bring us a vision of his world, because they depict the harbor as seen from an approaching ship.⁴⁷

Pauline Business Principle Number 3: Know Your Markets

One of the reasons for Paul's business success is that he understood that the eastern, Hellenistic, markets he was most familiar with were very different from those in the Aegean or the Roman west. In his home world of Syria and Cilicia, Paul does not appear to have needed business partners. Colonnaded streets are a dominant feature in eastern Roman urbanism. They function as market centers, replacing the typical western style forum.⁴⁸ He flourished in the less-regulated world of the street markets of first century Syria and Asia Minor whose cities mostly lacked large, formal market agorae or fora. The only formal market spaces normally attested in the east are Marcella—small, specialized market squares usually controlled by guilds.⁴⁹ The presence of a more formal market in the first century east is usually a mark of a strong Roman presence, such as at Paphos on Cyprus.⁵⁰

When Paul comes into more strongly Romanized cities, he takes advantage of the presence of colleagues who understand the local markets. Lydia is a perfect example of an eastern merchant who has been quite successful in integrating herself into a more western oriented market system. As a Roman colony, Philippi had a Roman legal and judicial system, which regulated the markets. The physical structure of the city reflected a western orientation. Although relatively small, the first-century forum was linked to two small temples, a library, and administrative buildings. A commercial market adjacent to the forum was later demolished and replaced by a Christian basilica.⁵¹

In Corinth, Paul gains by partnering with western oriented colleagues such as Priscilla and Aquila. The partnership would have given Paul the expertise needed to take advantage of the biennial Isthmian Games held

⁴⁶Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 2.2.2, in Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1918).

⁴⁷Paul will sail from this harbor to Syria in Acts 18:18.

⁴⁸Warwick Ball, *Rome in the East: The Transformation of an Empire* (London: Routledge, 2001), 262.

⁴⁹The marcellum of the Butchers in Jerash is an example. See Rubina Raja, *Urban Development and Regional Identity in the Eastern Roman Provinces, 50 BC–AD 250: Aphrodisias, Ephesos, Athens, Gerasa* (Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen Press, 2012), 158.

⁵⁰Davis, *Saint Paul on Cyprus*.

⁵¹Bakirtzis and Koester, *Philippi at the Time of Paul and after his Death*.

outside of Corinth, which occurred during his residency in the city.⁵² The large influx of pilgrims, athletes, and attendees would have needed temporary accommodations during the festival. Some of the temporary visitors flooding Corinth for the games would have been elite Romans wanting to host banquets and needing opportunities to meet socially with their clients; temporary awnings would have been in high demand. Paul could have brought to the partnership his knowledge of the high quality goat hair textile called cilicium, originally produced in his home province. This would have made an excellent raw material for tents and awnings designed for elite clients and Paul's knowledge of the characteristics of this material may explain some of the partnership's professional success.

After success in Corinth, the partnership moves on to the greatest entrepot in the Aegean, Ephesus. Paul first came to Ephesus in Acts 18:19 for a short visit. After speaking in the synagogue, he continued on his journey back to Caesarea, sailing before winter closed the shipping lanes. He left Aquila and Priscilla to establish both the gospel mission and the tentmaking business in the city. Apollos, a Jewish Christian believer from Alexandria, joined them in ministry, and by the time Paul returned (Acts 19) the gospel was well established. It is certainly a reasonable assumption that Paul may not have known all of the believers personally.

Ephesus was a natural base for Paul, offering excellent land and sea connections. Just a few decades before Paul, Strabo called Ephesus the greatest emporium in the province of Asia Minor.⁵³ From Ephesus, Paul could easily stay in touch with the churches he had previously founded in Philippi, Corinth etc. Ephesus also was the terminus of the main east/west routes across Anatolia to the eastern provinces of the Empire, including the ancient Persian Royal Road. Paul returned to Ephesus from Antioch in Syria overland, rather than by sea, probably because a road journey gave Paul the opportunity to visit the churches he had founded in Galatia (Acts 18:23, 19:1). This route also could have provided the Apostle with an opportunity to bring to Ephesus additional business supplies, since he clearly intended to stay in Ephesus for an extended stay. The land route was relatively safe for travelers like Paul: the roads in the province were actively patrolled by the soldiers of the Legio XII Fulminata who built the road between Eumenia and Apamea.⁵⁴

Commercially, Ephesus was a combination of east and west, which made it a perfect spot for the partnership to flourish. Ephesus had both constructed markets and street markets.⁵⁵ Embolos Street was lined with shops with colonnades shielding the sidewalks for customers to browse in comfort. Behind the street lay a wealthy residential neighborhood that has

⁵²Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology*, 12–15.

⁵³Strabo, *Geography* 12:8.15; cf. 14.1.20–26.

⁵⁴Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993) 121.

⁵⁵Raja, *Urban Development and Regional Identity in the Eastern Roman Provinces*.

given archaeologists the best glimpse of upscale urban housing in the eastern empire.⁵⁶ The eastern complex was one large urban villa, with a ground floor measuring more than 3000 square feet with numerous and spacious public rooms. It would have had a second floor that was private space for the family and servants. The seven houses in the western complex were also of two stories, but were much smaller, with ground floors measuring between 1000 and 1300 square feet. The public spaces included entry halls, a central atrium enclosing an impluvium (a pool) and usually two dining rooms opening off of the atrium. If one of these elite residences was the setting for a house church, the congregation would probably have numbered 30–40. Of course, the large urban villa could have hosted many more.

At the foot of Embolus Street, a beautifully constructed gate marked a roadway junction and gave entrance to the main market of the city, identified by inscriptions as the “Square Marketplace.” Scherrer states that “after the earthquake of 23 CE, the new Tetragonos Agora [Square Marketplace] was the most important building project undertaken. It was a square with an open courtyard measuring 112 m in length, far exceeding the Hellenistic predecessor in size and magnitude. Most Recent excavations and architectural investigations show that its two-aisled stoa had an upper story on all four sides.”⁵⁷ Sixty or so shops lined three sides of the square with a water clock in the center. The west gate led to the harbor of the city, which would have allowed direct access for cargoes. Representatives of the various guilds would have had their stalls here, probably including the silversmiths. Later inscriptions mention a guild of silversmiths and even provide the names of specific silversmiths.⁵⁸ Father Murphy-O’Conner identifies the agora as a likely location for the partnership to set up shop: “the sixty or so shops that surrounded three sides of its periphery provided the sort of space in which Paul, Prisca, and Aquila plied their trade, and perhaps lived. Their main light source was a door that looked out onto a magnificent two-story, two aisled portico running along all four sides and pierced by gates on the north and west.”⁵⁹

Pauline Business Principal Number 4: Always Outwork the Competition

The ideal of first century society was to not have to work physically, but to be wealthy enough to live off of the labor of others. This is not surprising

⁵⁶Ibid.; Nadine Zimmerman and Sabine Ladstätter, *Wall Painting in Ephesos* (Istanbul: Ege Yayinlari, 2011).

⁵⁷Peter Scherrer, “The City of Ephesos: From the Roman Period to Late Antiquity,” in *Ephesos: Metropolis of Asia: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Its Archaeology, Religion, and Culture*, edited by Helmut Koester, Harvard Theological Studies (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995), 7–8.

⁵⁸Scherrer, “The City of Ephesos,” 4.

⁵⁹Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Ephesos: Texts and Archaeology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical 2008), 197.

in a society where slave labor was the base of the economy.⁶⁰ As such, physical work could become devalued. In contrast, Paul had an excellent work ethic.⁶¹ Paul, a Hellenistic Jew, openly embraced his status as a working merchant and was proud of his productivity. He openly bragged of his capacity for physical labor reminding the Corinthians that “we work hard with our hands” (1 Cor 4:12). “Work with your hands as we instructed you” he exhorts the Thessalonian church (1 Thess 4:12). In an urban setting, the client/patron system could be abused with wealthier members of the church almost forced to provide for the poorer members. The extensive system of professional associations and guilds in Thessalonica, (attested by inscriptions),⁶² also could be abused by lazy workers and Paul is alert to this possibility. He commands the local believers to distance themselves from any “brother who is walking in idleness” (2 Thess 3:6). This is probably a reference to clients who are accompanying their patron on his round of duties, but not working themselves. This would have impacted the outreach of the Christian community as well, because an idler would be obvious in the business district during the main working hours of the day.⁶³

Paul worked very hard in Thessalonica at his profession so he would not be a financial burden to the church while he was in residence nor did he want this witness tainted. He reminds the Thessalonians that “we worked night and day” (1 Thess 2:9). The average Roman merchant worked intensely in the six hours before noon, but then closed the shop, although the shops sometimes were open in the late afternoon for more leisurely browsing. Daylight was the main requirement for conducting business; hours would be longer in the summer and shorter in the winter. Paul wants to remind the church that he worked when most places were closed for the evening. He also may have “outworked” the competition, and financial envy may have contributed to the local opposition to the apostle.

The Result

When seen through a business lens, Paul’s church planting strategy becomes clear. For Paul, business was ministry, and ministry was business. He made his shop an outreach center to all who came in to buy or negotiate.⁶⁴ It is probably no coincidence that the places where he stays the longest are the port cities of Corinth and Ephesus. The majority of churches he founds, are planted in ports and major commercial markets. He establishes the gospel in

⁶⁰Temin, *The Roman Market Economy*.

⁶¹Verlyn D. Verbrugge and Keith R. Krell, *Paul & Money: A Biblical and Theological Analysis of the Apostle’s Teachings and Practices* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 206–11.

⁶²Nasrallah, Bakirtzis, and Friesen, *From Roman to Early Christian Thessalonikē*.

⁶³We often forget that a strong work ethic (as long as it is balanced) can be a powerful witness in the secular world. I have personally observed that the strong work ethic of Christian employees makes them valuable hires and opens doors to sharing the faith.

⁶⁴Ronald F. Hock, *The Social Context of Paul’s Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 41.

the major ports and inland shipping centers of the Aegean world: Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, and on the island of Crete.⁶⁵ Paul's normal products would have been middle-market tents made out of goat hair or camel hair; leather tents for the military; and, awnings and sails for ships. This meant that a mission strategy of planting churches in port cities would have had as a bi-product, a positive impact on his bottom line because he would have found a ready market amongst the shipping community for his products. Because Paul can support himself, his ministry is not tainted with corruption. This is not a health and wealth gospel ministry, but one that reflects the example of Christ.

The Church appears to have continued to have a focus on ports and the people who frequent them even after the gospel has spread widely throughout the Roman Empire. The ports and their associated maritime communities of sailors and merchants provided an already existing network that eased the spread of the gospel.⁶⁶ Early Byzantine Archaeology throughout the eastern Mediterranean world documents the physical spread of the Church in coastal settings. The island of Cyprus, visited by Paul on his first missionary journey, provides an instructive example of the continued interest of the Church in port communities even after Christianity was widespread. By the fifth century, Christianity had become established throughout the island with dozens of major and minor churches built across the landscape.⁶⁷ Four of the major urban coastal centers on the island, Amathus, Kourion, Salamis, and Paphos, have large basilicas within the main urban fabric of the city. Each city also has a port basilica, adjacent to the presumed harbor facilities of these cities.⁶⁸ These structures are the result of massive investments of time, energy and financial resources. Sometimes the urban and port basilicas are quite close to each other in physical space, and the archaeology demonstrates that they were active at the same time. We must conclude that the Church felt a continuing need to provide an active center for worship, fellowship and care, catering to the needs of the maritime community. This is perhaps the best witness of the success of the business methods of Paul of Tarsus.

⁶⁵Recent archaeology on Crete documents the international networks connecting the island to the greater Mediterranean world. See Jane E. Francis and Anna Kouremenos, *Roman Crete: New Perspectives* (Philadelphia: Oxbow, 2016).

⁶⁶Network theory helps us to understand how the gospel took advantage of such connections. See Carl Knappet, ed., *Network Analysis in Archaeology: New Approaches to Regional Interaction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁶⁷Thomas W. Davis, "Earthquakes and the Crises of Faith: Social Transformation in Late Antique Cyprus" *Buried History* 46 (2011): 3–14.

⁶⁸Erin Daughters, *Basilica Function in the Urban Landscape of Late Antique Cyprus* (M.A. thesis, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015).

Book Reviews

Biblical Studies

***BibleWorks 10: Software for Biblical Exegesis & Research.* BibleWorks. Norfolk, VA. \$389.**

BibleWorks 10 improves upon an already excellent program. Remaining true to its vision, BibleWorks 10 focuses on the text while adding significant new features and tools which are included in the base price of the program. Maintaining its simple pricing (everything is included except for a few special modules), BibleWorks 10 provides in its base package far more than what 99% of Christians in history have ever accessed.

The amazing speed of BibleWorks 10 is on display with the new Forms tab. By simply hovering over a Greek or Hebrew word in the browse window, the Forms tab instantly shows all forms of the word in the entire version, including parsing and frequency statistics. This information may be sorted by form, by frequency, or alphabetically. This function is significantly faster and easier than other programs with similar features. It could be further improved by showing a total hit count at the top of the window as in the Use tab or by grouping the results in paradigm form.

Morphology Colors allows the user to automatically apply colors to any morphological form. As an example, one could easily highlight in one color all imperative verbs or highlight in another color all nominative masculine singular nouns. Multiple files can be created and the files may be shared with others, a significant benefit for professors who wish to share such files with students. Additional style options could further improve this tool. A new tab for *The Analytical Greek New Testament* shows information such as parsing, lexical form, and an English gloss in an interlinear display. Additional features may be toggled on and off with a click.

BibleWorks 10 includes NA28, two audio recordings of the Greek New Testament, and updates to several Hebrew and Greek databases. The Manuscript Project moves forward with the addition of two Greek texts, Ephraemi Rescriptus and Claromontanus, as well as complete morphological tagging for Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. Beautiful images of the Hebrew Leningrad codex may be viewed in the new Leningrad tab. Since the images are tagged with verse locations, the images automatically update as the user navigates through the biblical text. In addition to the extensive manuscript and apparatus features which come with the base package of BibleWorks, the apparatuses for NA28, UBS5, and BHS4 may be purchased as part of the Stuttgart Original Language Package, either in an New Testament or Old Testament edition. This is a very welcome yet expensive module due to the cost of licensing the products.

Additionally, the program adds more than 20 new versions and texts including *The New English Translation of the Septuagint* and *The Hebrew Samaritan Pentateuch*. New resources include Danker's *Concise Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Verbruggen's *Essential Biblical Hebrew*, and *The ESV Concise Bible Atlas*. The *BibleViews* picture library adds hundreds of images covering 57 biblical sites.

Electronic resources in EPUB format may now be integrated with BibleWorks. Two versions of the new EPUB tab appear which allow the user to view two resources at the same time. Two versions of the Verse tab also appear, enabling the viewing of two choices at a time from the CNTTS apparatus, Tischendorf apparatus, Metzger's *Textual Commentary* (if one has this resource), or *NET Bible* notes. It remains odd for these to be subcategories of the Verse tab rather than each having its own tab. Now that tabs are removable, such a change could be made without necessarily cluttering up the workspace.

Modifications to the user interface provide simple ways to de-clutter the page, whether hiding the search window, one or both analysis windows, or column headings. While the owner of the company stated that this is the first interface with which he is satisfied, the program maintains the same feel. Although more than cosmetic from a programming perspective, to the user, the changes with the user interface appear primarily cosmetic. Icons and color schemes have been tweaked, giving users the option to choose from fifteen pre-designed color schemes or create their own. In response to user suggestions, the entire program is now scalable for improved display when using projectors. Regrettably, this feature requires an automatic restart which is time consuming and may require an administrator password depending on your computer setup.

BibleWorks desires user feedback and feature requests. In response to our previous review, BibleWorks 10 contains the option to toggle parsing information in the Analysis tab. This allows users to view lexical information without necessarily seeing parsing information first. This is a helpful step for those trying to work through the text on their own. Furthermore, while BibleWorks does not yet contain multiple Analysis tabs, it is now possible to view multiple lexical entries in a single Analysis tab, partially accomplishing what would be possible with multiple Analysis tabs. Using this feature, one may wish to view a concise lexicon first while viewing a more detailed lexicon below. It will still be desirable for an additional coding scheme which incorporates tags such as 2nd aorist or 2nd perfect. However, such information may be viewed in *The Analytical Greek New Testament* which is more easily accessible by means of the new AGNT tab.

BibleWorks can improve the way in which one works from English to Greek. The program has Strong's numbers tagged to some English translations, allowing the user to see and search the Greek words underlying a translation. Rather than just the Strong's number, it would be helpful to see and search the Greek lexical form through a right-click search. Additionally, the program can improve by allowing users to add a word to a word list by right-clicking, by modifying the Example Finder in the Vocabulary Flashcard Module to find example verses in different versions such as the Septuagint, and by creating a color scheme based on word frequency, similar to the new Morphology Colors tool.

When comparing programs based upon the content to price ratio, BibleWorks 10 stands supreme. It is difficult to imagine life as a Greek professor without BibleWorks. Based upon its amazing speed, content, and price, BibleWorks 10 will surely thrill users for years to come.

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***Dictionary of Daily Life in Biblical & Post-Biblical Antiquity.* By Edwin M. Yamauchi and Marvin R. Wilson. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2016. 4-Volume Paperback Boxed Set, \$99.95.**

In this excellent multi-volume book, *Dictionary of Daily Life in Biblical and Post-Biblical Antiquities* (hereafter DDL) Edwin M. Yamauchi and Marvin R. Wilson have assembled a team of almost forty specialists or mostly well-known researchers along with research assistants and editors to produce an invaluable work with a very reasonable price. This enormous project was published in four volumes from 2014 to 2016 and is dedicated to R.K. Harrison, one of the contributors to the work. It completes the work, *Dictionary of Bible Manners and Customs*, started thirty years ago by Harrison. The publisher, Hendrickson Publishers, should be commended for undertaking this massive project designed to serve students of the Bible for many years. The DDL offers something for everyone and information for things one might have not even considered. It covers literally everything from the cradle to the grave, from teeth to toilets and incense to insects. Every time you consult this work you will find tidbits of information that will add depth and detail to your studies. This dictionary contained information that I never would have thought that there was information about.

The chronology that undergirds the DDL is repeated in each volume. This does offer various dates for the exodus from Egypt. It is based primarily on studies by Archer, Kitchen, Yamauchi, Hoehner and Finegan (4:xlili).

The selection of the articles is based on Human Relations Area Files (4:1–2). This allows the 120 articles to expose many facets of life that are significant to the way people survived in their environment, whether they are explicitly mentioned in the Bible or not.

The articles start with a description or definition of the topic. The research is then summarized in the following sections: the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Near Eastern world with the emphasis on Mesopotamia (though there are also numerous references to Persia and Anatolia), the Graeco-Roman world from the earliest Greek times through the Roman Empire (AD 600), the Jewish world through the time of the Talmud and then the Christian Fathers including Chrysostom, Augustine, the early Byzantine empire to Justinian (from early Mesopotamia to early Christianity). The articles are generally over 10 pages long, with many being over twenty pages.

The DDL is more than a simple Bible dictionary. It is an important collection of significant articles. It is well written and easily understandable for non-specialists, but offers specialized information in an easily accessible manner. There are no footnotes in the articles, but a thorough and up-to-date bibliography. For many, acquiring this material is either difficult to find, too technical to evaluate, or in a foreign language. Thus, the DDL becomes a welcomed tool and time saver. It is descriptive in nature, not building an argument. The broad scope, the bibliography, the discussion of life matters not mentioned explicitly in the biblical text make DDL invaluable.

The DDL is well documented and carefully described, detailed information. While the book processes and presents a massive amount of information, there will be some readers who will be unhappy. Their particular position or interest has not been discussed in as much detail as other positions. This is an unavoidable problem, though perhaps a valid criticism. This reader detected no bias or deliberate attempt to present a particular point of view. The DDL does not argue for a view, but seeks

to present the major (certainly not all) views in a fair manner, so that readers gained the information to evaluate for themselves.

There are some other works that are similar, though not identical in scope and purpose. The DDL compares very favorably to both in content and price to Jack Sasson's *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, 4 Volumes Bound in 2 Books, 2000 or *Brill's New Pauly* 22 volumes, 2002–2010. While the *New Pauly* offers more information, it is limited mainly to the Graeco Roman world. DDL does know of these works using them as source as well as other, hard to come works, such as Oded Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel*, 2009; *Every Living Thing: Daily Use of Animals in Ancient Israel*, 1999; *Daily Life in Biblical Times (Archaeology and Biblical Studies)*, 2003.

Some more major criticisms do detract somewhat from the usefulness of the DDL. Most readers will find them only minor annoyances, not major distractions, in light of the great insights offered. Any significant criticism is unfair and unjustifiable.

At times, the articles are uneven. Some of the articles offer significantly less information than what other articles do. One would expect there to be more on divorce (2:135) than on toilets (4:153ff) or teeth (2:44ff). One would expect the discussion of law to deal with more issues than a few summary pages on the use of Law in the Hebrew Bible and New Testament. The discussion of extra-biblical law is, in contrast, extensive. The use of graphics and pictures would greatly enhance the value and usability of this dictionary.

The biblical data is used at face value: e.g. dates. Alternative approaches to the interpretation of the text are ignored. Historical, critical views are not presented or discussed. The critical interaction with various views that are not in the mainstream of conservative scholarship would add to the page number, but also to the value of the book. It would also increase the circle of readers. The critical interaction by researchers of this caliber with differing views would be a welcomed chance of learning. This exclusion does seem to be a conscious editorial decision, which is certainly caused by the massive increase in discussion that an alternative decision would produce. The passing comment about a "late embellishment" (3:301) stands unexplained, as an indication of the awareness of critical views.

In summary, this reviewer's opinion could be expressed as: Run, not walk to get this dictionary, so that your studies will be enhanced. Buy the hardcover, not the paperback since there will be frequent use. Hope for a speedy electronic version of the complete work, not just the ability to purchase various articles, as this will enhance the value of the dictionary by keying it to biblical passages and concepts. Read the article numerous times to process the many details of information given. Read the bibliographies carefully, since they add a wealth of sources that most readers will not be aware of.

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***An Introduction to the Old Testament: Exploring Text, Approaches & Issues.* By John Goldingay. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015. 394 pages. Hardcover, \$45.00.**

For almost two decades, John Goldingay has taught Old Testament at Fuller Seminary. He previously taught at St. John's Theological College in Nottingham,

England. His publications span four decades, and evangelical scholars have long recognized his expertise. This introduction aims to enable students to study the Old Testament on their own. Goldingay does not intend to teach, but offer guidance as to how one should read the Bible. He does this through introductions to various issues that never span more than two pages. This method gives enough information for readers to know how to approach questions in the text, as well as where to look for further information.

Readers will find many helpful topics addressed. Helpful items include book outlines, introductions to biblical genres, and a framework for understanding the grand narrative of the Bible. He addresses the major themes of the Old Testament with the purpose of showing how themes develop throughout the Bible to culminate in the coming of the Messiah. Goldingay also shows great concern for the spiritual life of his readers. He desires that they read the Bible devotionally as well as academically.

Despite these positive contributions, and his pastoral intent, the book will not find acceptance with many evangelicals. Goldingay compares the features of story and history, arguing that the Bible most resembles a popular movie, rather than a documentary film—more story than history as moderns understand it. Goldingay contends that much of the Old Testament is parabolic in nature. He suggests Jonah, Esther, and Ruth most resemble parables, and that the Old Testament includes “fictional stories” (29). Since none of the sections in his book exceeds two pages, he often does not offer adequate support for these positions. This may lead readers to assume that most evangelical scholars hold these views, when in fact they do not. On the Exodus, for instance, he refers to a range of perspectives, but only refers to one evangelical—James Hoffmeier. He then states that most of the world considers it “pure fiction,” but he thinks “it is based on some real events,” because it is “unlikely that God inspired pure fiction here” (90). Readers may assume that most evangelical scholars agree, which they do not. The historicity of the exodus has long been a point of contention between evangelicals and certain sectors of the broader academic world.

These critical interpretations of biblical narratives reveal deeper theological presuppositions. He states that “there are no grounds within Scripture or outside Scripture for saying that the whole of Scripture is factual,” and that biblical inerrancy is “not based on Scripture” (26). Southern Baptists affirm that Scripture is without “any mixture of error” (2000 BF&M, Article I).

Goldingay continues, “I trust the OT because I trust Jesus” (27). However, it seems that his views on the origins and nature of Scripture differ from Jesus’s own views. For instance, he states that “we can know that Moses didn’t write the Torah, [and] Isaiah didn’t write all of Isaiah and so on” (31). Contrary to this statement, Jesus attributes words from the so-called deutero-Isaiah as “what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah” (Matt 8:17, HCSB). Jesus also speaks of what Moses spoke and proceeds to quote Deuteronomy. Goldingay knows this, because he presents counterarguments to Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy (124). Apparently though, for Goldingay one can trust the Old Testament through Jesus and disagree with Jesus about the Old Testament. Despite these differences with most evangelicals, Goldingay deserves praise for his forthrightness. Too often, scholars have hidden behind ambiguous statements. Goldingay’s honesty makes the distinctions between his perspective and others clear.

The book's format is unique. It is divided into five major sections—introductory matters, three sections that follow the Hebrew Old Testament sections of Torah, Prophets, and Writings, and a final section that considers the Old Testament as a whole. Each section contains a list of topics, followed by brief discussions of each topic. The discussions never surpass two pages in length. For topics that Goldingay does not address, the final page of each section gives a list of other topics that he has addressed on his website. The topic lists in each section exclude page numbers. It numbers the topic, but requires thumbing through topic headings to find the topical number. Since the book's interior sections all exceed 80 pages and 40 topics, finding topics may not seem easy at first.

Although an expert in Old Testament studies, Goldingay's presuppositions about the nature of the text differ from Southern Baptist convictions to such a degree that SBC seminaries and colleges could only use the textbook with critical interaction and supplemental readings. Southern Baptist pastors would find more value in other introductions, such as House and Mitchell's *Old Testament Survey* (B&H Academic, 2007), or Grisanti, Rooker, and Merrill's *The Word and the World* (B&H Academic, 2011).

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***The Greek New Testament, 5th Revised Edition.* Edited by Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce Metzger. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2014. 974 pages. Hardcover, \$69.95.**

The Greek New Testament, 5th Revised edition (UBS5), includes a revised Greek text and textual apparatus in the Catholic Epistles along with the same Greek text and textual apparatus as UBS4 in the rest of the New Testament. The revised text reflects progress made in the *Editio Critica Maior* of the Catholic Epistles. Due to the significance of this work, the editors chose to include the changes although it results in an admittedly uneven final product. The thirty-three changes include eleven omissions, eight word changes, five additions, three changes in word order, three changes of form, two changes of case, and one change in both words and word order. A table of the changes appears on pages 3* and 4* of the introduction.

The most notable change to the textual apparatus is the appearance of the diamond which indicates places where it was too difficult for the editors to decide the original reading. Rather than the grade (A, B, C, or D) appearing to the left of the chosen reading, a diamond appears next to the other variant judged to be equal to the chosen text. This display could be improved by placing the diamond both by the reading chosen for the text as well as the corresponding variant. As an example, see the two readings in 1 John 1:4, notably changed from a grade of A (the highest confidence) for "our joy" to a diamond for "our joy" and "your joy." By my count, eleven diamond readings appear in the Catholic Epistles, including James 5:4, 1 John 1:4, 1 John 2:6, 1 John 4:20, 1 John 5:6, 2 John 1:12, 1 Peter 1:22, 1 Peter 5:10, 1 Peter 5:14, 2 Peter 1:4, and 2 Peter 2:11. A table of alternative readings (890) includes thirty-two additional places where it was too difficult to determine the original reading. These readings appear in a table rather than in the text because of minimal impact upon translation and exegesis. If one finds this decision troublesome, it is helpful to remember that UBS5 and NA28 are hand editions designed for translators and students rather than a comprehensive listing of all readings. Other changes to the apparatus in the Catholic Epistles include the addition or removal of readings from

the apparatus as well as the combination or splitting of other readings for clarity. The manuscripts consistently cited reflect the new Coherence Based Genealogical Method (5*).

Outside of the Catholic Epistles, the text and textual apparatus remain the same aside from the inclusion of papyri 117–27. The apparatus appears to change, however, because of the inclusion of new data from modern translations in the same location as the textual apparatus. This apparatus notes places where eleven modern translations adopt a reading that differs from the base text. These translations include four English translations (Good News Bible 1992, New International Version 1984, New Revised Standard Version 1989, Revised English Bible 1989), as well as seven other translations in French, Spanish, and German. This apparatus presents data cautiously since it is not always possible to determine with certainty if a translation has adopted a different reading or simply made changes based upon translation philosophy or style considerations. While the editors would have liked to have placed this data elsewhere, they decided to locate it along with the textual apparatus for practical considerations. Experienced readers will learn not to confuse this information with evidence for a particular reading, although it will likely take time to reach this awareness. This apparatus makes a positive contribution although it may turn out to be a case of doing too little while trying to do too much since only some of the major translations appear. Adding additional translations could overwhelm the page and further substantiate the conclusion that the data belongs in a different place.

UBS5 also includes a thoroughly revised discourse segmentation apparatus showing places where Greek texts or modern translations differ in terms of section headings, paragraph breaks, clausal divisions, punctuation marks, and indentation of quoted or traditional materials. These and other differences noted in this apparatus can readily impact the interpretation of a text.

While UBS5 is admittedly uneven, readers will benefit from the progress made in the Catholic Epistles. The average reader will prefer this edition over NA28 (both of which share the same text aside from a few differences in punctuation and capitalization) since the apparatus of UBS5 is much easier to navigate than that of NA28. Readers wishing to dig deeper into text-critical issues will still consult NA28, although it is perhaps more fruitful simply to consult a fuller apparatus such as the one produced by the Center for New Testament Textual Studies.

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***Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology.* By Richard Bauckham. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015. 237 pages. Paperback, \$25.00.**

As expected from a renowned Johannine scholar, Richard Bauckham garners in this book an impressive array of essays devoted to some of the major theological themes of the Gospel of John. Indeed, this book is made up of eight self-contained essays Bauckham had published or lectured elsewhere, and can be read in any order. By gathering the essays into a single volume, Bauckham hopes to introduce readers to some of the significant themes in the Gospel that either have been much neglected or debated in Johannine scholarship in one setting, while presenting his insights on them.

Chapter 1 deals with the theme of individualism. Individualism here does not refer to the modern understanding of the autonomous self, but rather in the way the

Gospel lays considerable emphasis on the individual's relationship with Jesus. The prominence of the aphoristic sayings that deal explicitly with the individual's relationship with Jesus and the extended conversations Jesus has with the individuals in the Gospel is the case in point. While the reason for this emphasis is not clear (17), Bauckham clearly shows the purpose of the emphasis: it is to stress the importance of an exclusive, personal relationship between the individual believer and Jesus (18).

Chapter 2 addresses the significance of John's usage of a theologically potent term: "one." According to Bauckham, the word "one" can signify uniqueness (21) or unity (22). In the Hebrew Bible, however, an interesting phenomenon occurs as the two senses connect together when the prophets mention the "uniting" of God's people under their "unique" ruler in the future (28). John takes this idea and extends it further by claiming that it will not only be the Jews who will be united as God's people, but the Gentiles also (30). Furthermore, John remarkably attributes a new dimension regarding the "oneness" of God, one that has no precedence in Hebrew usage, namely the "oneness" between God and Jesus (32).

In chapter 3, Bauckham discusses the well-known theme of glory found in the Gospel. The highlight of this chapter, in my mind, is Bauckham's treatment on why John would have seen the humiliation and the exaltation of Jesus not as a two-step process, but as one whole sequence of glorification. According to Bauckham, John even sees Jesus being lifted up on the cross as part of his glorification, for he seems to have taken Isaiah 52:13, which describes the Suffering Servant's glorification, as a heading for the subsequent passage, which includes all of Isaiah 53 (54, 58–60). By reading Isaiah 52–53 this way, John was able to see the entire process of Jesus' humiliation and resurrection as glorification.

In chapter 4, Bauckham connects the topic of the death and resurrection/exaltation of Jesus with four big theological terms of the Gospel: "love," "life," "glory," and "truth." While the approach might be fresh, the content has little to offer in terms of new ideas. Chapter 5 contains the treatment of the controversial issue, namely the Gospel's stance on sacraments. After succinctly describing the range of opinions in scholarship regarding sacraments in the Gospel, Bauckham brings the readers up to date: the contemporary scholarly majority sees minimal reference to sacraments (79). Bauckham seems to agree as he sees little sacramental overtone in three key passages (John 3:5; 6:31–59; 19:34), but nonetheless correctly argues that John is neither opposing sacraments nor overemphasizing them (107).

Johannine dualism is the topic for chapter 6. Here, Bauckham helpfully simplifies the kinds of dualisms found in the Gospel into two major types: forms that divide reality into two opposing categories, which he terms "dualism," and forms that divide reality into two contrasting, not opposed, categories, which he terms "duality" (123). Remarkably, Bauckham claims that John's soteriology is what holds together both the dualisms and the dualities (126). As Christ who is the light invaded the world of darkness, he set the dualistic categories in motion: "Light dispels darkness, requiring decision, while the world that rejects Jesus is conquered and saved by him through its very rejection of him" (129).

Chapter 7 concerns the dimensions of meaning in the Gospel's first week. Not only does Bauckham treat the narratives' literal meanings, he posits that there are further meanings, and proves this quite effectively by linking the Gospel's first week with the last week. For instance, on the fifth day of the first week, Nathanael is the first person to ask a question about Jesus' origins, a question which Pilate also asks on the fifth day of the last week (164–65). Thus Bauckham argues that John deliberately

narrated the first week to be in parallel with the last week, in order to make the beginning of his narrative prefigure or anticipate its end (184). Finally, in chapter 8, Bauckham compares the Johannine Jesus with the Synoptic Jesus, maintaining the position that the Synoptics and John complement and enrich one another, not contradict, in portraying the living Jesus (194, 197, 201).

In terms of the book's strengths, I can readily identify three points. First is the use of charts. Bauckham's charts are not redundant in that they are simply used in giving some additional information as an aside. Rather, his charts are interactive in that they bring clarity and support to his arguments. Second is language. While Bauckham's topics and arguments are top-notch, he is able to communicate them in simple, non-technical terms. Indeed, the writings are done in a way that even readers with little theological background are able to comprehend.

Third, and most important, is Bauckham's scholarly input and sophistication. As one engages his arguments, one can readily appreciate his depth of research and the intricate details he provides. Bauckham is also able to make original contributions while dialoguing with a variety of scholars, a mark of someone who has clearly mastered the field. Yet, his mastery of the field can also be his weakness. There are instances where he does not substantiate his points, perhaps because he is familiar with them. But those who are not familiar with the field of Johannine scholarship will simply have to take his word for it and do further research afterwards. Nevertheless, as an introductory book on Johannine theology, Bauckham brings amazing insights in a succinct fashion, and for this reason, this book should be recommended for anyone who is interested in studying the Gospel of John.

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***Coming Out Christian in the Roman World: How the Followers of Jesus Made a Place in Caesar's Empire.* By Douglas Boin. New York: Bloomsbury, 2015. 206 pages. Hardback, \$28.00.**

Douglas Boin is an assistant professor of ancient and late antique history at Saint Louis University. As a classical historian, Boin reconstructs the past not only with literary evidence but also with material artifacts. Accordingly, his volume contains eight pages of colored photographs of relevant archeological and artistic evidence. An appendix discusses pertinent Latin and Greek texts as well as selected archaeological sources (153–59). Substantive endnotes (161–96) and an index (197–206) nicely round out the volume. Minor errors within the work include “soldier” for “soldier” (48), “Over next fourteen years” (95), and “Sixty millions Romans” (142).

Early Christianity is often portrayed as “inflexible” (2) and as “obstinately different” (1) in clear-cut contradistinction to its cultural context. In this traditional paradigm, the Roman “pagans” and “Christians” formed “two cultures incapable of mixing, like oil and water” (3). Boin's engaging study exchanges the sharp lines of this “us vs. them” depiction for the blurred boundaries of an impressionist montage. Although the title of the book borrows from the contemporary “coming out” metaphor, the focus of the work does not hinge on this illustrative yet connotation-laden metaphor. The central theme of cultural negotiation vs. cultural resistance makes a thought-provoking study of identity formation. Boin's brushstrokes paint a Christianity more involved in conversation than confrontation. Rather than engaging in a

“cultural clash” (3), the early believers went about “conversing with their neighbors and tearing down walls” (74).

Boin emphasizes that “what people believe—and what people are taught to believe—can and does inform the way they engage the world” (149). He posits an empathetic reading of “insider” beliefs in a manner that dissects and scrutinizes without criticizing (12). “The internal dynamics of a group are always much messier than they seem from the outside” (48). As a narrative focused upon historical details (4), the book seeks to draw from the “subtle stories” of “quieter” co-existence (4, 14). This bottom-up reading of the evidence focuses on “so many overlooked men and women who fought battles for acceptance every day in Rome” (57).

How does Boin seek to shift our understanding of early Christianity? First, he emphasizes the early Christian skill and art of cultural negotiation. The early Christians lived “hyphenated lives” (5, 66) inhabiting the “middle ground” (22), and they became “skilled jugglers” (30) and experts at “building bridges” (33). “Many of these men and women juggled their identities in highly creative ways” (5).

Second, the early Christians were not persecuted “everywhere and always throughout the Roman Empire” (18), as is often assumed. Of course, this comes as no surprise to historians who have spoken of life-threatening persecution as only local and sporadic. But Boin goes further—although the early Christians may have “felt” persecuted (23, 29), he believes the evidence for any systematic persecution is negligible.

Third, Boin maintains that pre-Constantinian Christians did not overtake the empire through a rapid growth that accompanied mass evangelism (6). Moreover, there was no religious “vacuum” of pagan dissatisfaction waiting to be filled by Christianity. According to Boin, “the majority” of pagans “were doing just fine” with the status quo (cf. 90).

Fourth, the “Constantinian turn” was not a “radical break with centuries of tradition” (98), since “the continuing debate over what it meant to be Roman and Christian would continue” (35). Rather than ending the debate, the Constantinian shift elevated it to a whole new level. “The long-running debate over what it meant to be a follower of Jesus had morphed into an empire-wide debate about the nature of being Roman” (128).

Among New Testament documents, the Gospel of John already discussed being in the world but not of it (17:14–15). Was such a two-pronged approach inherently contradictory? According to Boin, “Jesus’s followers were tied up in social contradictions from the earliest age” (18). Yet the Apostle Paul’s advice steered a middle course (1 Cor 5:9–13; 8–10)—even though many Corinthians lamentably capitulated to culture.

On page 46, Boin quotes the *Epistle to Diognetus* 5.1–2: “People who call themselves ‘Christians’ aren’t any different from anyone else, either in where they come from or the language they speak or in their way of life. They don’t separate themselves by living in their own cities; they don’t talk some strange language; and they don’t have an overly distinct way of life.” Yet Boin’s overall work seems to lack a sustained focus similar to the *subsequent* sentiments in *Diognetus* 5.4–12: “They dwell in their own countries, but only as sojourners; they bear their share in all things as citizens, and they endure all hardships as strangers. Every foreign country is a fatherland to them, and every fatherland is foreign. . . . They find themselves in the flesh, and yet they live not after the flesh. Their existence is on earth, but their citizenship

is in heaven. . . . They love all men, and they are persecuted by all. They are ignored, and yet they are condemned" (Lightfoot translation).

Granted, idealistic texts such as the *Epistle of Diognetus* were immersed in rhetorical overstatement ("they are persecuted by all"). Boin privileges a mirror-reading realism (what various churchgoers were actually doing) over a moral idealism (what they were being told to do by their church leaders). One wonders if Boin's emphatic reversal loses the early Christian theme of "pilgrim" living in a complex and fallen world. His early Christians are a conversational and conceding lot of master negotiators, readily participating in the vast bulk of their socio-cultural milieu. Boin's "when in Rome do as the Romans do" interpretation of the evidence, while an opportune corrective to simplistic portrayals of early Christian distinctiveness, seems to tilt to the point of teetering in the other direction. Surely sundry early Christians heeded the intractable calls of the Tertullians and Novatians of their world.

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***Paul and the Trinity.* By Wesley Hill. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. 224 pages. Paperback, \$26.00.**

In *Paul and the Trinity*, Wesley Hill's premise centers around two interpretive questions. First, can the conceptual, Trinitarian language recognized by pro-Nicene theologians of the fourth and fifth centuries be utilized as a hermeneutical key for interpreting Paul? Second, was Trinitarianism thought inherent in the earliest days of Jewish Christianity instead of developing as a result of Hellenization? Besides answering these questions in the affirmative, Wesley Hill, assistant professor of biblical studies at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, contends that his Trinitarian method of interpretation is not merely the preferred method, but the sole method.

James Dunn, James McGrath, and Maurice Casey represent a larger, modern perspective on Paul, which posits Paul's Christology on a sliding, vertical scale ranging between a low and high-Christology. For these theologians, Paul's staunch Jewish monotheism restrained his Christology, and since any Trinitarian development originated later after Hellenization, a low Christology is warranted. Interestingly, although Larry Hurtado and Richard Bauckham maintained that Trinitarianism existed at Christianity's origin and posited a high-Christology, Hill nevertheless regards them alongside the first group, i.e. outside the bounds of proper Pauline interpretation.

For Hill, Christ and the Holy Spirit are realized only by determining their relationality. Thus, Hill exchanges the vertical axis of Christology for a horizontal axis of relational Trinitarianism, thereby avoiding the "static conceptuality" plaguing the modern perspective. Using a "web of multiple intersecting sectors," Hill not only identifies the relational character of Christianity, but also preserves Paul's commitment to monotheism, albeit completely re-working his concept of one God to include the relational Trinity. Ultimately, this "anachronistic" interpretation of Paul, to quote Dunn, is the major source of contention between Hill and the modern perspective (19).

In chapters two through five, Hill offers an exegetical analysis of key Pauline passages to contend that the external relations (*ad extra*) within the Godhead determine its ontological identity (*ad intra*). Using passages such as Galatians 1:1, Ro-

mans 4:24 and 8:11, Hill maintains that God's identity is specified by means of Jesus' work, even prior to the historical Christ event. To maintain the necessary distinction between the Father and the Son, Hill proposes a bi-directional dimension, whereby the asymmetrical relations of the Father and the Son are maintained.

Devoting ample space to Philippians 2:6–11, a proof-text for the modern perspective, Hill advances the need for an interpretive concept known as *redoublement*. Undergirded by this interpretive method, particularly useful for Philippians 2:6–11 and 1 Corinthians 8:6, Hill asserts that the unity and relationality of the Father and the Son “operate in concert, as descriptions of the same reality from two vantage points” (119).

By affirming the Spirit's activity in the action of the risen $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\acute{o}\varsigma$ in 1 Corinthians 12:3, Galatians 4:4–6, and 2 Corinthians 3:17, Hill's final chapter proves the Spirit's divinity. Ultimately, Hill's premise of the Holy Spirit's divinity, which allows him to avoid the Binitarian tendency of the high-Christology proponents, is dependent on a minority reading of Romans 8:11 by which the Spirit is portrayed as the means of Jesus' resurrection.

In *Paul and the Trinity*, Wesley Hill has entered a charged debate within the field of Pauline theology and, in so doing, has implicated many premier Pauline scholars in the guilt of having *missed the boat* by failing to recognize Paul's inherent Trinitarianism. However, Hill apparently believes he has managed to publish a work that focuses exclusively on Pauline Trinitarian theology without interacting with other aspects of Paul's theology. Even though Hill's volume is not a treatment of Paul's entire theology, he has nevertheless treated many facets of Pauline theology. For this reason, his omissions of Pauline anthropology and Jewish messianic expectation are unjustified and inexcusable.

Hill's lengthy consideration of Philippians 2:6–11, in light of the Septuagint translation of Isaiah 45:21–23, is undoubtedly the climax of his entire argument. After demonstrating Paul's intentional inclusion of Jesus into the divine name $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\acute{o}\varsigma$, Hill's proficiency in clarifying why $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\acute{o}\varsigma$ should be understood as a reference to identity, instead of to role, is central to his overall thesis.

While Hill's effort to expose the dangers of a purely Christological view of Paul is helpful, his method of argumentation, in at least two areas, is equally hazardous. First, His relaxed allocation of fourth- and fifth-century Trinitarian concepts to Paul is alarming. At various points, Hill remarks that these Trinitarian concepts will “serve as exegetical prompts and heuristic aids,” and also, at points, are “foreign to the texts themselves” (88, 46). In an apparent contradiction, he affirms his final effort is not to “find a Trinitarian theology in Paul,” but instead only to “read Paul afresh,” which is noteworthy considering this *freshness* seems to posit a Trinitarian understanding within Paul (104–05).

Second, Hill's association of Hurtado and Bauckham, both proponents of a high-Christology, with Dunn, McGrath, and Casey, proponents of a low-Christology is surprising. While Hill excuses such association by claiming that both factions ultimately result in heretical teaching, it seems Bauckham and Hurtado, outside of focusing exclusively on Trinitarian relationality, stand near to Hill. For example, Bauckham affirms that Jesus is not added to the monotheistic God as merely an agent, but instead “included within the unique divinity as inseparable from God” (17). Additionally, Hurtado and Bauckham identify the climax of Christology at the earliest point in Christian existence, prior to the period of increased Hellenization.

Resisting the trend of modern perspectives on Paul, Wesley Hill's *Paul and*

the Trinity is as a necessary contribution to Pauline theology and biblical exegesis, two fields which Hill rightly contends are ontologically inseparable. Although many readers might disagree with the fundamentals of Hill's interpretation of Trinitarian theology, one must affirm the usefulness of Hill's thesis for Pauline studies.

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Theological Studies

***Going Public: Why Baptism Is Required for Church Membership.* By Bobby Jamieson. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015. 243 pages. Paperback, \$24.99.**

Bobby Jamieson's *Going Public: Why Baptism Is Required for Church Membership* is one of 9Marks's contributions to the ecclesiological discussion. 9Marks is committed to restoring theological discussion of ecclesiology, especially among Baptist churches, and Jamieson's volume presents a welcome and cogent argument. Jamieson explains his task up front: "This whole book aims toward the conclusion that churches should require prospective members to be baptized—which is to say, baptized as believers—in order to join" (1).

Jamieson's task is "a distinctly baptistic burden," in that while Baptists are in agreement with believers from other denominations that baptism is "a necessary prerequisite to the Lord's Supper and church membership," they (Baptists and those Jamieson labels "baptistic," referring to those who regard believer's baptism as the only true baptism, even if not Baptist denominationally) maintain that paedobaptists have not been baptized biblically (8). As such, according to Jamieson, they should be excluded from participation in church membership and the Lord's Supper. This position has been accused of being ungracious because paedobaptists do not declare those baptized by immersion upon profession of faith to be unbaptized, nor would paedobaptists bar them from participation in the Lord's Supper. Indeed, Jamieson acknowledges that "Baptists draw a tighter line around church fellowship than anyone else" (31). Jamieson is aware that his volume enters into a debate that has historical roots and contemporary ramifications.

Going Public is concerned with baptism, but more importantly, with the relationship of baptism to church membership. Jamieson traces baptism through the book of Acts and notes that baptism is "where faith goes public," that is, "Baptism renders faith visible; it gives the believer, the church, and the world something to look at" (36, 41). Moreover, the author argues that "baptism is the initiating oath-sign of the new covenant, and this makes baptism necessary for church membership" (56). As such, baptism exists as the oath-sign, or declaration of faith, that testifies that the baptized person is a believer and a participant in the kingdom of God. As baptism is the initial sign of faith, the Lord's Supper is the perpetual sign—"a corporate, covenantal oath-sign" that "constitutes many Christians as one church" (110). Thus, one must first be baptized biblically before participating in the Lord's Supper which exists as an "effective sign of the local church's unity" (109).

Going Public could have been stronger had Jamieson spent more time developing the Christological nature of the church. The author spends considerable time building a definition of the church upon a covenantal foundation showing how the gathered believers covenanting together transitions a cluster into a congregation, but offers little regarding the church existing as the body of Christ. This omission

does not appear to be intentional and the argument of the book does not necessarily demand that side of the discussion, but any description of the church mandates that it be defined by more than social and political observations. It is not enough to state, "A church is born when gospel people form a gospel polity" (144). More is implied in Jamieson's volume, but it remains in need of exploration.

Jamieson's argument is well-constructed and written in such a way as to be accessible to a general audience. The topic is critical for every Baptist church to consider and this book provides a substantial and cogent presentation of the argument for restricting church membership and participation in the Lord's Supper to those who have been baptized by immersion upon profession of faith. Ecclesiological confusion, according to Jamieson, stands as the reason so many discussions regarding church polity regress into accusations of acrimony and ungraciousness. Jamieson and 9Marks have contributed another strong volume demonstrating that ecclesiology is not a mere academic exercise, but rather, "church polity matters" (11).

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***The Church: God's Pilgrim People.* By David Zac Niringiye. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015. viii + 200 pages. Paperback, \$24.00.**

David Zac Niringiye (Ph.D. Edinburgh) is an African theologian and churchman. Born and raised in Uganda, Niringiye later became a bishop in the diocese of the Anglican Church of Uganda. With a passion for theology along with social activism, Niringiye has been involved in issues like the HIV and AIDS epidemic. Niringiye now serves as a fellow in the Faculty of Social Sciences at Uganda Christian University.

From the outset of *The Church*, Niringiye sets his ecclesiology within his Ugandan context. Niringiye demonstrates that the church in Uganda is fractured, with churches from all denominations in close proximity to one another yet with little cooperation. This situation leads Niringiye to ask this guiding question: "Who, then is the church? What distinguishes and authenticates a particular community as the 'people of God?'" (6). While many groups in Uganda, and the world for that matter, might be classified as a church, Niringiye seeks to define who the church is in order to differentiate between true and false churches.

Niringiye begins *The Church* by reminding his readers that all churches claim their authenticity through two primary elements: Jesus and the Bible, two elements which converge in one story, humanity's story (28). Because story is the organizing theme in Niringiye's ecclesiology, he chooses to utilize narrative as his methodology, retelling the one story of the people of God.

For Niringiye, the story begins in Genesis with the creation of humanity. From there, Niringiye retells the story of Abraham's call, the Exodus, and God's covenant with Israel. From these stages of the story, one point becomes abundantly clear: God desires to covenant with his people. From this stage of the story, Niringiye highlights the motifs of gathering and pilgrimage, noting that the people of God were and are "being and becoming' the people of God" (55). The story continues with the retelling of the monarchy and exile of Israel. If the people of God had gained their identity with the Exodus and entrance into the Promised Land, they lost their identity through their request for kings and their ultimate exile. Niringiye notes that as Israel desired to be like the surrounding nations, they were losing their

corporate consciousness as the people of God, on a pilgrimage with a purpose” (66). While they had lost their identity, in exile, a promise emerged of a new covenant forming a renewed community through a suffering servant.

Beginning with chapter four, Niringiye enters the New Testament. He writes, “The foundation of the New Testament is that the hope of the faith of ancient Israel was fulfilled in Jesus” (87). Most importantly, Jesus is the one who inaugurates the Kingdom of God and the church is to be the community of this Kingdom. While this new community began with the twelve apostles, the community expanded at Pentecost. This new community would be a community of love where both Jew and Gentile were to co-exist. Such community was and is only possible through the Holy Spirit. Today, as the church continues to develop and redevelop a mission strategy, the church “must first and foremost be about listening to the Holy Spirit to discover what he is doing, and then in obedience following” (144).

Niringiye continues by looking at the stories of four churches in Acts: (1) Antioch, (2) Philippi, (3) Corinth, and (4) Ephesus. Niringiye notes that these churches “serve as a mirror for us as communities of followers of Jesus in the twenty-first-century globalized world” (171). These churches demonstrate that “what matters most in exemplifying Spirit-filled communities is not what characterizes many that we call churches of Christ today” (171). Niringiye concludes *The Church* by suggesting that faith, hope, and love do and should characterize the people of God (176). Returning to the central motif of pilgrimage, Niringiye concludes *The Church* by reminding his readers that “‘becoming church’ is authenticated by ‘being pilgrim people’” (198).

While more non-white and non-Western theologians are writing theology, the need for more diversity in theology today cannot be underestimated. Thus David Zac Niringiye’s *The Church* is a welcome addition to theology in general and ecclesiology in particular. He provides white, western readers with a look into ecclesiology from the perspective of an African theologian and churchman, a perspective many have not seen nor experienced.

Niringiye’s narrative methodology is refreshing in that it is thoroughly biblical, biblical in that he utilizes the Christian Scriptures and in that he traces the metanarrative found from Genesis to Revelation. He does an excellent job in interpreting the text as well as developing a biblical theology that speaks to ecclesiology. While some might find issue with the continuity he finds between the Old and New Testaments, he also rightly recognizes the discontinuity that exists. While strength lies in his narrative methodology, it also seems to be a methodology that is overplayed. Many in the biblical and theological studies have recently emphasized the biblical metanarrative and therefore Niringiye seems to be offering an ecclesiological picture many have already seen.

Still, Niringiye’s central motifs of pilgrimage and gathering—being and becoming—prove to be beneficial and useful. Ecclesiologists of all Christian traditions could learn much by studying and seeing their church through the lenses of pilgrimage and gathering. For that, Niringiye’s *The Church* is a valuable addition to the study of the church.

Dustin Turner
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***Systematic Theology.* By Anthony C. Thiselton. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. 432 pages. Hardcover, \$40.00.**

Systematic theology is the disciplined study of organizing a set of data and relating it to God, in this case the Christian God. In a sense, systematic theology covers everything as it relates to God, hence the complexity and overwhelming challenge of such an endeavour. Couple this with the attempt to bring all of the material into one volume, and one is confronted with a significant challenge. Very few one-volume systematics exist for these reasons. Anthony C. Thiselton successfully attempts just that by contributing a well-rounded one-volume systematic theology.

Thiselton begins his study with theological method. While trained in New Testament scholarship and hermeneutics, he synthesizes a swath of relevant theological data and authorities, making his method appealing to multiple theological disciplines. He lays out his approach to theological method by advancing a method that is at once interdisciplinary and affective in nature. By interdisciplinary, Thiselton intends the idea that systematic thinking about God and the world is tied to a wide set of issues and disciplines, an approach refreshingly unusual from a New Testament scholar (13). By affective, Thiselton describes theology as a task that is intimately related to prayer, contemplation and participating in God (6). What may be surprising to some, Thiselton does not include a section on the doctrine of revelation itself. Instead he integrates his understanding of revelation, as God's act of making himself known, to theological method. His methodological starting point includes both revelation and the "rule of faith" or the authority of church interpretation continuous with apostolic teaching. Indispensable to this task is philosophy both in terms of epistemic foundations (e.g., coherence) and "conceptual grammar" (15). Additionally, he takes it that sociology, literary theory and hermeneutics are necessary for a holistic systematic approach. Thiselton unites these disciplines in such a way as to naturally move from systematic to practical theology.

Like so many systematics, he proceeds naturally from prolegomena to Theology proper. From Theology proper he proceeds to anthropology, the person of Christ, Christ's work, the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of the Church, and, finally, eschatology (i.e., the last things and the afterlife). The reader will be surprised that after all of this, Thiselton still manages to interact with modern and postmodern theology. He is especially attuned to the insights of Barth and Brunner as he interacts with their understandings of Christ and revelation. Drawing insights from both modern Reformation scholars (e.g., Pannenberg and Moltmann) and Roman scholars (e.g., Balthasar, Rahner, Kung and Pope John Paul II), he is able to use modern theology as a sounding board for theologically addressing modern concerns.

Naturally with an interdisciplinary work that is this far reaching and wide in scope, specialists may have concerns. They may find themselves disagreeing with Thiselton's use of evidence or conclusions. His mastery of New Testament studies, hermeneutics along with philosophy, church history, and sociology is quite impressive but it lends itself to the possibility of imprecision and generality. Philosophers and theologians may disagree over his ascribing to God the notion of "suprapersonal" as sufficiently fuzzy (see Chapter II) or his interpretation of Augustine (10) or his waving aside mind-body dualism (140–44), to name just a few. Given the scope and overwhelming amount of data involved, these concerns are surely forgivable.

In the end, Thiselton contributes one of the finest one-volume systematic theologies on the market. His manuscript will be especially helpful to professors

teaching courses that cover all the major doctrines. I look forward to using this volume in the future.

Joshua Farris
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***Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory: A Protestant View of the Cosmic Drama.* By Jerry L. Walls. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2015. 240 pages. Paperback, \$19.99.**

Jerry Walls is one of the foremost exponents of the doctrine of the afterlife having published a significant series on Hell, Heaven, and Purgatory. In the present volume, *Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory*, Walls disseminates his wealth of knowledge in a readable and digestible fashion in one volume rather than treating each topic individually (e.g., the trilogy which includes Hell, Heaven, and Purgatory). Whilst trained in analytic philosophy, Walls creatively draws from his skills for the purpose of crafting a treatment on death intended for a wider audience. He offers the general Christian a unique and thoughtful contribution relevant to the big questions of life.

Walls situates his discussion on Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory in a larger framework on the meaning of life. Charmingly, he motivates the need for an afterlife, by arguing that all of life only makes sense if there is an afterlife and if God is at the center. As a contribution to the wider discussion on the meaning of life, Walls's work is on par with other significant discussions, namely, *The Golden Cord* by Charles Taliaferro, *The Soul of the World* by Roger Scruton, and other exceptional treatments.

Walls is interested in the central questions concerning the afterlife: where do I go when I die? What happens in the afterlife? Why does it matter now in the present? He approaches this set of interrelated questions from a broadly ecumenical Christian perspective, and, more specifically, from a Protestant perspective. In keeping with his trilogy, Walls is interested in offering a critical and coherent case in favor of these doctrines all the while making slight distinction from a Catholic view on the afterlife. He argues that morality is wrapped up in a view of the afterlife. Hell, Heaven, and Purgatory refer to places relevant to an individual's stance before God.

Interestingly, however, Purgatory is not closer to Hell but closer to Heaven as the place for additional sanctification. In this way, Walls is explicit that Purgatory is not the place we go to earn additional merit (i.e., what he calls the "satisfaction model"), but, instead, it is a place where believers/Christians go to continue in the process of spiritual growth and holiness. Importantly, Walls is not interested in an older Catholic doctrine that articulates Purgatory is a place where one must earn his place in Heaven, nor is it a place where one goes to continue paying for sins. Christ has paid for the objective requirements of what our sins owe to God, which is in keeping with a Protestant view of salvation. Appropriately, he calls the view he is defending a "sanctification model", which he argues is consistent with Protestant theology. He defends the doctrine of Purgatory on the basis that most Christians have not fully arrived, or attained the fullness of sanctification in this life. And, to suggest that those who are still *in process* would go straight to heaven to be in the presence of God would seem, well, counter-intuitive to how we grow in spiritual maturity. Additionally, it would seem to undermine the work we have done while on earth. Finally, it would require that God somehow zap us and make us immediately holy upon death, which seems to be the standard Protestant view (112). You might call this the immediate-perfection-upon death view. The difficulty for this view, as Walls explicitly points out, is its non-intuitive nature. Our common sense tells us that growth in maturity takes time and unless we are close to maturity at death, then

it seems unlikely that we would simply become holy as soon as we experience physical death. Some comments are in order.

While Walls is right to point out the ad-hoc nature of the immediate-perfection-upon death view, one could conceivably tell a story that circumvents a literal purgatory in the afterlife and motivates a reasonable picture of the immediate view. In keeping with a common sense view of moral and spiritual formation, it seems right to claim that some events might speed up the process of formation for better or for worse. Some actions and events ignite a chain of events, not necessarily, but naturally. For example, both fornication and killing seem to impact people's moral fiber immediately and in significant ways. One might argue that these actions were a result of a long line of previous choices. This may be true in some cases, but it hardly seems true in all cases. Some actions or events seem to have an immediate and deep effect. An analogy may help to conceive of this possibility. We might think of events like taste aversion. For example, if I were to consume an avocado (something I love) that had been injected with a toxin that caused me to become ill, then I would immediately develop an aversion for avocados because of the associations I have gained from the experience. Positive experiences at times work in a similar fashion. Is it possible then that a direct encounter with God could have an immediate and deep transformation? As Ezekiel 36:27 may indicate, "I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols." There are several other highlights worth a mention, but, for the sake of space, I will mention one.

Walls addresses the salvation of souls and bodies in Chapter 5, one of the many noteworthy chapters. Walls practically motivates the discussion by raising the question of whether or not we will know one another in the afterlife. Academics regard this as a question about personal identity. The challenge with the Christian afterlife is accounting for radical change, the foremost of which is physical death and physical resurrection. He points out that if humans have souls (or are souls), then this would provide the pre-conditions for continuity between physical death and physical resurrection (123–24). Additionally, He notes the significant challenge materialism (the view that humans are wholly material/physical in nature) has in accounting for purgatory, but he remains open to the possibility of a solution (124–26).

As with any scholarly work intended for a general audience, one might dispute certain finely grained details, but, in this case, very few infelicities present themselves. Walls has written an exceptional, the finest to date, introductory treatment of the afterlife that is accessible, careful and clear. The scholar, the student, and the lay Christian will benefit from reading and digesting *Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory*.

Joshua Farris
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Historical Studies

***The Works of John Newton.* By John Newton. New Edition. 4 Vols. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2015. 3,032 pages. Hardcover, \$150.00.**

John Newton (1725–1807) was reared by a devout mother who taught him the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* and the responses to Isaac Watts' *A Short View of the Whole of Scripture History* before his sixth birthday. She was overwhelmed by tuberculosis, and Newton joined his father (a ship's captain) on the sea at the early age of ten. Newton's life upon the sea culminated in his becoming a captain of his

own slave-trading vessel. His experiences as a first mate and as a ship captain on these ships eventually became his testimony before Parliament in the abolition effort. Early in his sea-faring career, Newton was known to be a vociferous atheist and blasphemer; however, his spiritual trajectory had been altered during a storm that threatened his life. Though he did not view this as his moment of conversion, Newton often reflected on his deliverance from death and the marvelous grace of God from the storm. He applied for ordination in the Church of England, but was rejected for six years due to his relationship with George Whitfield and his “enthusiasm.” Eventually, he pastored in Olney for fifteen years where he befriended the tortured William Cowper who became an unofficial assistant to Newton in his pastoral duties. One of the areas of Newton’s ministry that was most helped by Cowper was in the writing of hymns in order to help illustrate Newton’s sermons and to cement their lessons into the lives of his parishioners. One of those hymns, written by Newton, has become the most recognized and recorded song in history: *Amazing Grace*. Newton would go on to influence William Wilberforce and assist him in bringing an end to the slave trade in England. He would pastor in London for thirty years before entering into his eternal reward.

In *The Works of John Newton*, New Edition, the Banner of Truth Trust has published Newton’s works in a new typeset with an increased size making it easier to read and condensed what was six volumes in the previous release into four. In doing so, the publisher has made Newton’s complete works more affordable. Apart from the type, the publisher notes, “A small number of words, which have radically altered their meaning over the years since Newton wrote, have been changed to avoid misunderstanding” (1:ix). Each of these changes were made in such a way as to make Newton’s writings more accessible than ever before.

Whereas in previous editions of Newton’s *Works*, the author’s autobiography, *An Authentic Narrative*, was incorporated into Richard Cecil’s introductory life of Newton, it is printed in whole in the new edition. This autobiography was published at the time of his appointment to Olney and drew congregants from as far as London to hear the famed Newton preach. As such, it is fitting that it be included in his works.

Interest in John Newton’s experience of God’s grace and the pastoral insight in his application of that grace to those in his charge has been revived in light of Tony Reinke’s *Newton on the Christian Life* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015). In light of this renewed interest, and the great contribution of Newton’s personal testimony, this new edition of his *Works* provides a complete resource for those interested in studying him further and will serve them well whether it be for academic, pastoral, or devotional purposes.

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***Newton on the Christian Life: To Live is Christ.* By Tony Reinke. Wheaton: Crossway, 2015. 285 pages, \$19.99.**

In the Theologians on the Christian Life series (edited by Stephen J. Nichols and Justin Taylor), Crossway challenges readers to look beyond the abundance of modern resources and towards the wisdom of those who have walked before them. The purpose of the series is “to help us in the present listen to the past” (13). This volume, written by Tony Reinke, staff writer and researcher at desiringGod.org,

focuses on the eighteenth-century Anglican pastor, hymn-writer, and abolitionist, John Newton.

The book begins with a brief summary of the life of John Newton, yet this volume is not intended to be a biography. Reinke's goal, instead, is to present the "cohesive theology" and "pastoral counsel" woven throughout Newton's letters (30). Reinke provides his thesis-in-full in the introduction:

John Newton's vision for the Christian life centers on the all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ. Awakened to Christ by the new birth, and united to Christ by faith, the Christian passes through various stages of maturity in this life as he/she beholds and delights in Christ's glory in Scripture. All along the pilgrimage of the Christian life—through the darkest personal trials, and despite indwelling sin and various character flaws—Christ's glory is beheld and treasured, resulting in tastes of eternal joy, in growing security, and in progressive victory over the self, the world, and the devil—a victory manifested in self-emptying and other-loving obedience, and ultimately in a life aimed to please God alone (30).

According to Reinke, Newton perceived the entirety of the Christian life to center on the person and work of Jesus Christ. He writes, "Christ is the motto of the Christian life because Christ is the substance of the Christian life" (51). Therefore, Christ exists not only as the source, but is himself the "center, goal, and aim—the motto—of the Christian life" (65). In light of the centrality of Christ, "*looking to him* is the great duty of the Christian life" (69). Reinke explores Newton's emphasis on looking to Christ in every aspect of the Christian life, from the reading of Scripture, to growing in holiness and walking through suffering.

Newton's insight specifically toward those walking through trials and suffering is the great gift of this book. Many readers know of Newton as the writer of *Amazing Grace* or as the slave-boat captain turned abolitionist. Few have taken the initiative to study Newton's pastoral counsel in-depth and to marvel at the manner in which he walked alongside those struggling with illness and depression while calling them to trust in the sovereign hand of God. Newton assures those walking through trials that "All shall work together for good: everything is needful that *he sends*; nothing can be needful that *he withholds*" (194–95).

Reinke's sole criticism of Newton's pastoral care is that he "fails to stress the atonement as proof of God's particular love for each of his children" (262). He lists this as two separate criticisms: a failure to emphasize God's "*delight* over his redeemed children" and "Christ's definite atonement on their behalf," yet they are connected inseparably (261–62). Reinke's objection is that in Newton's failure to emphasize the doctrine of definite atonement, he has failed to assure those under his care that God has not only forgiven them, but has set his love upon them as well.

Reinke acknowledges that "while he appears to be a five-point Calvinist in creed," Newton emphasizes the general nature of the atonement (262). Though Reinke can see the evangelistic benefit of this emphasis, he writes, "In his desire to see many sinners come to Christ, and possibly his desire to avoid becoming the center-piece in theological debate, Newton's ministry remains vague on definite atonement" (262).

This objection regarding definite atonement is valid. One will pore over Newton's works in vain looking for a treatise on this aspect of the atonement. Newton is not, however, vague on the assurance of God's love. Newton's counsel to those seeking

evidence of God's love is to "[l]ook unto the Lord Jesus Christ . . . and compare your sins with his blood, your wants with his fullness, your unbelief with his faithfulness, your weakness with his strength, your inconstancy with his everlasting love" (65). For Newton, God's love is evident in the face of Christ. No other assurance is necessary.

Reinke's exploration of Newton's letters is a wonderful introduction to Newton's theology and pastoral wisdom. Newton has a wealth of insight and Reinke's description and distillation of Newton's pastoral wisdom is exceptionally written. He succeeds in allowing Newton's pastoral counsel to shine through the text. Reinke successfully leaves the reader considering that which John Newton has written more than that which he has written of John Newton.

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***The Ecumenical Edwards: Jonathan Edwards and the Theologians.* Edited by Kyle C. Strobel. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2015. 257 pages. Hardcover, \$112.**

The field of Jonathan Edwards-studies has become something of an academic industry. Kyle Strobel's *The Ecumenical Edwards: Jonathan Edwards and the Theologians* is the most recent evidence of such. As Strobel's second major academic work on Edwards in two years—the first being, *Jonathan Edwards' Theology: A Reinterpretation* (New York: Bloomsbury, T&T Clark, 2014)—*The Ecumenical Edwards* is a collection of thirteen artfully written and thought-provoking essays that recommends Edwards' "distinctly Reformed genius" to traditions beyond Protestant evangelicalism (3). A rather unique move on Strobel's part, the book brings together Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and other Protestants authors to write about Edwards in relation to the tradition. Far from making Edwards out to be a spokesman for these other traditions, as is sometimes the fate of theologians whose writings are as rich and varied as are Edwards', Strobel and his fellow contributors display the great theological and philosophical treasures still to be discovered in what is a veritable treasure trove of Edwards' seventy-three volumes of work.

Contributors to Strobel's volume are not all the usual suspects, as one might not expect to find for a technical collection of essays of this sort. The Edwards fraternity, as it were, is comprised of a relatively small group of scholars. Smaller still is the group of Edwards scholars whose interest is the more constructive and speculative side of Edwards' philosophical theology. That not all the usual suspects are present in Strobel's volume is part of the reason that it sheds so much light on Edwards' philosophical theology. This is certainly one of this volume's strengths. In some cases, it also may be regarded as one of its weaknesses, and that, simply because some of its contributors appear less familiar with the highly nuanced secondary literature that so often accompanies Edwards' more speculative theological endeavors. That said, this is at best a minor deficiency and does not detract from the cumulative value of the collection.

Strobel divides the work in two parts. Part one, entitled, "Comparison and Assessment," contains a series of fascinating essays that puts Edwards in conversation with variety of theologians from differing traditions. The essays in part two, entitled, 'Constructive Engagement for Current Conversations', unfold much the same fashion as part one, with one important twist, namely, a clear focus on theological dividends that are to be cashed in on for contemporary constructive theologians.

Since this review cannot address all the essays, the value of Strobel's work is perhaps best made clear by a consideration of two chapters in some detail. Consider first, Roman Catholic theologian, Matthew Levering's, "Jonathan Edwards and Thomas Aquinas on Original Sin," wherein he argues that the theological findings of both Edwards and Aquinas ought to bear persuasively on contemporary discussions of human origins, human solidarity, human sin, and redemption (147). In the case of Edwards, whom he uses as a sort of conceptual bridge to Aquinas, Levering draws attention to Edwards' affirmation of two Christian dogmas: first, the sobering reality that mortality is God's punitive assignment for human moral corruption, and second, that human freedom is the reason for Adam's (and his progeny's) culpability for moral corruption and sin: "What Adam's sin does is to produce this propensity to sin in all humans; this propensity to sin is what Edwards means by an inherited or imputed condition of 'original sin'" (140). It is at this point, that Levering's argument pivots toward Aquinas' account of human solidarity—the place where the bulk of what remains of the essay develops. With both precision and brevity, Levering unpacks some of the contours of Aquinas' thought regarding both the nature and transmission of original sin, in the context of Christ's redemption. According to Levering, Edwards and Aquinas are representatives of the theological continuities shared by two different traditions that confirm, in Levering's thinking, important truths about the status of human relations to God in light of contemporary and contestable, scientific and historical research about human origins. Despite the appearance of his passing by a mountain of secondary literature related to Edwards' doctrine of original sin—something I suspect was excised in order to keep the volume to a prescribed length—the most important of which has appeared in the last decade, Levering's contribution goes a ways toward supporting the notion that Edwards ought to be regarded, with Aquinas, as among the most significant theologians in the history of the church, his traditional allegiances notwithstanding.

Next, consider Baptist theologian, Myk Habets' "The Surprising Third Article Theology of Jonathan Edwards," wherein Habets makes the case for Edwards being what he calls a 'proto-Third article theologian'. So-called 'Third article theology' is a way of categorizing Trinitarian theology (First article theology having to do with theology that starts with the Father and Second article theology having to do with theology that starts with the Son) from a pneumatological perspective, a subject of recent focused interest in some quarters of Christendom. Habets' argument rests on a strong footing on both primary and secondary support—his essay being among the strongest, most suggestive, and most Edwards-interactive essays in Strobel's collection. Following a brief, insightful and helpful synthesis of what it means to do theology in a pneumatic posture, Habets takes up two underdeveloped elements of recent and exciting interest in Edwards-studies, his doctrine of Spirit-Christology and his doctrine of Theosis, in order to show Edwards' unique qualification for being counted among Third article theologians. Habets' conclusions leave the reader wanting more, suggesting that much more work is to be done in this area of Edwards' thought.

These two essays are representative of a strong, technical, and nevertheless accessible volume of similar essays. There is no doubt that Strobel's work belongs on the top shelf of the more recent and useful consultant works on Edwards, and for this reason ought to be no further from the reach than from Edwards' works themselves. Similarly doubtless is that Strobel's future contributions will continue to provoke as much interest in Edwards-studies as has *The Ecumenical Edwards*. Finally,

and with hope, the team at Ashgate publishing will continue being the go-to vehicle for some of the highest quality and most interesting printed works in theology on the market.

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***The Oxford Inklings: Lewis, Tolkien and their Circle.* By Colin Duriez. Oxford, UK: Lion Books, 2015. 288 pages. Paperback, \$16.95.**

In Colin Duriez's latest book, he explores the inner-workings of the Inklings, especially "their lives, their writings, their ideas, and most crucially the influence they had on each other" (11). The mid-twentieth century Oxford writer's group is not new terrain for Duriez, whose works include *The C.S. Lewis Encyclopedia* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2000), *The Inklings Handbook* (Saint Louis: Chalice, 2001), *J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis: The Gift of Friendship* (Mahwah, NJ: Hiddenspring, 2003), *Tolkien and The Lord of the Rings* (Mahwah, NJ: Hiddenspring, 2001), and *A Field Guide to Narnia* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004).

The Inklings were an informal gathering who, according to their founder, C.S. Lewis, had two things in common: "a tendency to write, and Christianity"; yet there was no established agenda, mission, or membership (25). Duriez writes, "It is equally mistaken to see the literary club simply as a group of friends, or as a doctrinaire group driven by a highly defined common purpose" (217). Lewis stood at the center of this gathering, alongside J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams, and Owen Barfield; however, the number of members would wax and wane over the course of the years. This open and informal group "existed in times of great change in Oxford, through the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, and petered out only with Lewis's death in 1963" (12). They would gather in residences and pubs across Oxford, where they would spur one another on to write by having someone read "from a work in progress," after which they "received extemporary criticism from the group" (225). When one considers the literary output of those who were in attendance, one can only consider in high esteem the critique that would have been offered.

Duriez provides an overview of the Inklings' history, but is interested primarily in exploring "how this eclectic group of friends, without formal membership, agenda, or minutes, came to have a purpose that shaped the ideas and publications of the leading participants" (11). The main task taken up by the author is to describe the group's influence upon the works of the individual Inklings. In some ways, this influence is obvious in that the authors were constantly encouraging one another to take up a particular effort, and discouraging other efforts. They critiqued one another's works, made suggestions and edits, and at times, called for entire rewrites. However, for Duriez, this influence extends far deeper than merely offering friendly criticism.

Duriez posits that a special bond between the Inklings had the greatest effect on the individual authors' works. He writes, "For Lewis and his friends, friendship itself was a rich and complex relationship, with roots in an older world, and with the power to enable what is best in our humanity" (229). This older world was that of the pre-Christian and Christian past, which for Lewis, stood in opposition to the post-Christian modern age governed by science (20). These values, then, were encouraged among the Inklings, and they provided the basis upon which the Inklings were established. Thus, according to the author, the Inklings greatest effect upon their own works was by way of a shared passion for faith, an appreciation for good literature, and a common worldview that drove them to charge each other to

“point to a different kind of contemporary world, rooted in old virtues and values” (16). This conclusion that the shared worldview of the group influenced their works most profoundly provides a deeply-considered answer to one of the most common questions asked by readers of Lewis, Tolkien, and the other Oxford Inklings.

The author’s forty years of studying the Inklings is evident in each page. Those beginning to take interest in the Inklings will find this to be a friendly introduction to the Oxford writers group and long-time readers of the Inklings will take advantage of the insight, research, and documentation of the author.

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Ethics and Philosophical Studies

***What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?* By Kevin DeYoung. Wheaton: Crossway, 2015. 158 pages. Softcover, \$12.99.**

Despite the fact that the Supreme Court of the United States declared a 14th Amendment right to same-sex marriage in the 2015 decision of *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the debate over homosexuality and same-sex marriage is not ending anytime soon. In fact, the rhetoric is most likely going to increase even if the lines of argumentation change in light of the high court’s ruling.

The pressure for Christians to affirm homosexuality as a biblically viable expression of sexuality will increase in years to come. For that reason, Kevin DeYoung’s *What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?* is a helpful resource for the Christian in the pew and the pastor in the pulpit. This book contains fewer than 150 pages of actual text, but it is packed with solid biblical content written with a pastor’s perspective. The answer to the question posed in the title is given in the introduction as DeYoung writes, “I believe same-sex sexual intimacy is a sin. Along with most Christians around the globe and virtually every Christian in the first nineteen-and-a-half centuries of church history, I believe the Bible places homosexual behavior—no matter the level of commitment or mutual affection—in the category of sexual immorality” (17).

After stating his thesis, DeYoung then walks through the six major passages related to sexuality—Genesis 1–2, Genesis 19, Leviticus 18 and 20, Romans 1, 1 Corinthians 6, and 1 Timothy 1. The first five chapters of the book contain the discussion of these passages. The exegetical portion of the book is easy to understand and written for an audience without any formal theological training. That does not mean that DeYoung’s arguments are superficial; instead, he stays with the basics and avoids technical language.

Throughout the first part of the book, consisting of five chapters, DeYoung argues for a traditional understanding of marriage and sexuality. He describes the biblical teaching as affirming the complementary nature of men and women, the expression of sexuality within a monogamous marriage between a man and a woman, and the intended procreative aspect of sexuality. These characteristics of sexuality then serve as the foundation for his discussion of homosexuality as a sin.

In the second part of the book, DeYoung explores numerous objections to his thesis, including the church’s supposed *laissez faire* attitude toward divorce and gluttony and the argument that proponents of traditional attitudes on sexuality are on the wrong side of history. In these chapters, DeYoung skillfully crafts responses

to the arguments of some of his most common detractors. For example, chapter six addresses the objection that “the Bible hardly ever mentions homosexuality.” In response, the author offers six straightforward answers. One of the key answers is succinctly stated, “The reason the Bible says comparatively little about homosexuality is because it was a comparatively uncontroversial sin among ancient Jews and Christians. There is no evidence that ancient Judaism or early Christianity tolerated any expression of homosexual activity” (72). The chapters of the second part follow a similar formula of offering simple yet substantial answers to these objections.

The biggest flaw of DeYoung’s work is also its greatest strength. There are other more comprehensive treatments of the Bible’s teaching on homosexual behavior (e.g., Robert A.J. Gagnon’s *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*). However, DeYoung never set out to write such an exhaustive work. By contrast, he attempted to offer a straightforward, simple book that faithfully handles the biblical text and can be a resource to its readers no matter their level of formal theological training. As a result, DeYoung glosses over a number of technical issues related to the biblical languages, history, and the law, but this aids in accomplishing his purpose of providing a useful tool for all people.

What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality? is a necessary resource for every pastor’s library and the interested layperson who wants to know how the church has historically interpreted the passages of Scripture regarding homosexuality. Its brief chapters make it an easy read and a helpful resource to which its readers will often return.

Evan Lenow

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Why Christian Faith Still Makes Sense: A Response to Contemporary Challenges.
By C. Stephen Evans. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015. 145 + ix pages.
Paperback, \$20.00.

In keeping with the aim of the Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology series, *Why Christian Faith Still Makes Sense* provides readers a helpful, concise treatment of the challenge presented to Christian faith by the “New Atheists.” Rather than systematically addressing their arguments, which author C. Stephen Evans, University Professor of Philosophy and Humanities at Baylor University, understandably does “not find...worthy of serious refutation” (vii), the book focuses on the charge that faith is intellectually baseless.

The opening chapter introduces the “Four Horsemen” of the New Atheism—Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, and Daniel Dennett—as well as their claims against Christian faith. Noting their lack of “any real competence in the philosophy of religion” (6), Evans observes that beyond deriding Christian faith as baseless and harmful to society the New Atheism really has no new claim; their newness, rather, is the “brash confidence” and “shrillness” (8–9) characteristic of their writings. In view of this, Evans sets out to “clearly articulate why reasonable people can believe that Christian faith is true” (11).

Although a defender of “Reformed epistemology,” beginning in chapter two Evans turns to natural theology as a source of reasons for theistic belief. On Evans’s view natural theology is best taken “not as providing us with an adequate, positive knowledge of God but as supporting...‘anti-naturalism’” (20). This construal tasks natural theology with pointing out “aspects of the natural world that naturalism cannot fully explain,” that is, with identifying “natural signs” (20). The chapter rounds

out with a discussion of the kind of evidence one ought to expect if, indeed, God exists. In considering the plausibility of Christianity's claim that God desires a genuine relationship with human persons, Evans offers two principles regarding such evidence: the "Wide Accessibility Principle," according to which evidence for God will be "fairly pervasive and easy to recognize" (24) and the "Easy Resistibility Principle," according to which the evidence is such that "a person who wished to do so could dismiss or reject" it (25).

The third and shortest chapter of the book develops the notion of a "natural sign" of God. Appealing to both Blaise Pascal and Thomas Reid, Evans explains that to qualify as a "sign" evidence must satisfy both principles laid out in chapter two. More specifically, signs pointing to God—"theistic natural signs"—require three conditions: "a connection between the sign and what the sign signifies," the sign "must have the purpose or function of being a sign," and "there must be a native tendency on the part of those who receive the signs to respond appropriately by 'reading' the sign correctly" (32). There are, Evans maintains, numerous ways God might meet these conditions leading to propositional evidence of Himself.

Chapter four surveys five natural signs for God: the experience of cosmic wonder, the experience of purposive order, the sense of being morally accountable, the sense of human dignity and worth, and the longing for transcendent joy. Throughout, Evans emphasizes that although an argument for God developed on the basis of a sign may be rejected, the sign itself is nonetheless detected. Even before developing any such argument, Evans observes that, "contrary to what the New Atheists say, there is evidence for God's existence, evidence that is precisely the sort we should expect to find" (56).

In chapter five Evans turns to evaluate the quality of this evidence, beginning with a consideration (in terms of contemporary epistemology) of how knowledge is conceived. What becomes clear is that, skeptic or no, belief in God is anything but a "blind leap of faith" lacking supporting evidence (64). Be that as it may, evidence for God is subject to potential "defeaters" (i.e., countervailing evidence). Two commonly suggested defeaters to belief in God are the claim that science (somehow) is incompatible with theistic belief and that the presence of evil in the world is incompatible with theistic belief. Evans carefully discusses each in turn, concluding neither tarnishes the evidence for God. At most, this evidence yields "uncertain" knowledge. What is needed, says Evans, is knowledge of "what God is really like and how we should develop a relationship with him" (73).

Given the multiplicity of disparate revelation claims, "how could we recognize a revelation from God if God gave us one" (81)? This is the central question addressed in chapters six and seven. Christians, of course, recognize the Bible as God's self-revelation, and so Evans briefly discusses how correctly to interpret the Bible. Beyond believing the content of a genuine divine revelation, says Evans, is "the process by which a person comes to believe what God has revealed" (83) because "the contents of a divine revelation should be believed because they have been revealed" by God (85). After considering the shortcomings of several attempts to handle revelation apart from this principle, Evans addresses the possibility of recognizing a genuine revelation apart from the contents of that revelation (93). The seventh and longest chapter develops three criteria for such recognition: miracles, paradoxicality, and existential power.

The concluding chapter helpfully reviews the book's argument thus far, before arguing the Bible fulfills all three criteria thus solidifying the reasonableness

of believing it to be God's revelation. *Why Christian Faith Still Makes Sense* makes an accessible, valuable contribution to a growing literature responding to the New Atheism.

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***Finding Truth: 5 Principles for Unmasking Atheism, Secularism, and Other God Substitutes.* By Nancy Pearcey. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2015. 384 pages. Hardcover, \$22.99.**

Nancy Pearcey is Professor and Scholar in Residence at Houston Baptist University, the Founder and Director of the Francis Schaeffer Institute and a fellow with the Seattle-based Discovery Institute. She teaches and writes as an apologist—affirming a biblical worldview. The main theme contained within *Finding Truth* is that mankind cannot suppress general revelation, with the implication being that a Christian worldview is proper because God's image means man is both rational and responsible (1 Cor 2:16). Pearcey's purpose is to claim that tough-minded realism, rationality, and a careful weighing of the evidence proves that the Christian worldview is robust enough to withstand all challenges and illuminates every area of life that is worthy of captivating both mankind's heart and mind. She concludes that all non-Christian worldviews are deficient and amount to nothing more than idol worship (Rom 1:18–32).

Pearcey identifies five principles in which to deal with non-biblical worldviews, those which she classifies as idolatry. These principles are as follows: 1) identify the idol, 2) identify the idol's reductionism, 3) test the idol in order to see whether it contradicts what we know about the world, 4) test the idol in order to ascertain if it contradicts itself, and 5) replace the idol by making a case for Christianity.

Pearcey states that God is divine; the self-existent, eternal reality, reality that is the origin of everything (66). Those who reject God as the first principle of being end up making an idol of matter and material (70). Human nature is always defined by its relationship to the ultimate reality, so whether one believes it is a transcendent God or matter makes all the difference.

Believing only in inductive empiricism (science) makes an idol of the human senses, expresses Pearcey. The resurrection, factual evidence of the claims of the New Testament, manuscript evidence, and archeology are all evidence that support a biblical worldview (John 1:1). Human consciousness is not an illusion and is the Achilles heel of Darwinism. Reducing mankind to a machine is reductionistic and has negative ethical implications.

Pearcey declares that any rejection of the personal and divine God, leading people to believe that they are now free of God, leads one to deny human freedom. Any rejection of human free will dehumanizes humanity and is a claim that in their essence humans are simply robots (142). This statement cannot be accepted as true based upon human experience across time. The Bible teaches that human beings exercise moral responsibility (Duet 30:15, 19).

Human rationality is adequate for understanding reality because the universe is a reflection of the mind of God, in whose image man was made (Gen 1:26–28) (189). If man is simply an evolutionary animal, his rationality cannot be trusted since it would not be guaranteed to align with the truth. Inductive empirical investigation

(science) requires God; otherwise, there is no way to ascertain truth or meaning. The truth of Christianity best accounts for the reality that we observe in the world.

Pearcey is a student of Francis Schaeffer (1912–1984). Emphasizing Schaeffer's recognition that the world and the church has largely lost its way in being committed to the reality of objective truth, Pearcey properly argues against the divorce of faith and reason. Rejecting any two-tracked approach to truth, she believes truth is best understood as unified based upon a biblical worldview. She argues persuasively that Christian truth can take on any secular and non-religious truth claims. She maintains that God's communication to man via the words of Scripture provides an essential connection between the truth of history, the natural realm, and the Creator God.

Pearcey astutely points out that materialists fail logically to come to grips with the implications of their worldview. Pearcey recognizes that evolutionary materialists are guilty of compartmentalized thinking and must admit that their own worldview fails. Accusing materialists of Orwellian doublethink, Pearcey rightly diagnoses that atheists, secularists, and materialists suppress the truth (Rom 1:18). Pearcey is troubled that society has lost its conception of a total and unified truth—one that provides a foundation for morality, freedom, and human dignity.

This book is a fantastic work for the lay audience who wishes to take advantage of Schaeffer's engaging approach to apologetics. I recommend this book for college and seminary students and interested lay apologetists that desire to defend the biblical worldview.

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Preaching

***Paul's Theology of Preaching: The Apostle's Challenge to the Art of Persuasion in Ancient Corinth.* By Duane Litfin. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2015. 400 pages. Paperback, \$32.00.**

Duane Litfin is the president emeritus of Wheaton College where he served for seventeen years, having previously served as senior pastor of First Evangelical Church in Memphis, TN. Litfin has for many years written and lectured on Paul's theology of preaching. This latest effort is a popularization of his more technical *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation* (1994). The structure of the book is straightforward. The first part discusses the content and form of Greco-Roman rhetoric. The second part elucidates Paul's theology (philosophy) of rhetoric and this theology's relationship to Paul's preaching. The third part concludes with application to preaching and contemporary ministry.

Litfin's thesis is that Paul repudiates the use of the traditional (rhetorical) means of persuasion common in the Greco-Roman tradition, a tradition that was influential and popular in Corinth. Paul rejects it because of the presuppositions associated with this tradition, namely, that it was based on a natural (and not supernatural) paradigm. To be clear, Litfin argues that this rejection is primarily referring to what is best described as "evangelistic preaching," that is, preaching to unbelievers. Nevertheless, in preaching the gospel, Paul wanted to ensure that initial conversion, or "persuasion," was of the Holy Spirit, and therefore Paul rejected Greco-Roman means of persuasion.

Litfin begins in Part One by surveying the general rhetorical milieu of Greco-Roman culture. Chapter 1 gives an excellent introduction to the history of rhetoric for readers who may not be familiar with the traditions and canons of rhetoric. In Chapter 2, Litfin identifies persuasion as the goal of ancient rhetoric; persuasion was the “persistent object of ancient rhetoric” (74). Chapters 3–4 are Litfin’s analysis of the power of rhetoric and reach of rhetoric. In Chapter 5, Litfin analyzes the genius of rhetoric, noting that ancient rhetoric “focused on how to adjust to the exigencies of the rhetorical situation so as to achieve a predetermined result. The key to this process was effective audience adaptation” (88).

Rhetoric’s power, reach, and genius led to the rewards of rhetoric (chapter 8) and the “potential rewards for eloquence were unrivaled” (109). In Litfin’s analysis, rhetoric in the Greco-Roman tradition was a prized and treasured pastime. This was no different in Corinth, a Hellenistic city which valued rhetoric. This, Litfin contends, is part of the controversy to which Paul refers in 1 Corinthians 1–4. Thus, Paul’s concern is not that they have abandoned the gospel, but that they are evaluating Paul’s preaching from a natural perspective. “Paul actually assumes a basic agreement with the Corinthians on theological matters and uses this agreement to explain and defend his *modus operandi* as a preacher” (160). It is also in this first part where Litfin introduces his “Great Equation of Rhetoric.” In this great equation, ancient rhetoric placed the focus on results. The “persuader’s efforts were inherently results driven” (114).

In the second part, Litfin turns his attention to Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 1–4, a pivotal passage in developing Paul’s theology of preaching. Litfin proceeds systematically through Paul’s argument in what amounts to an exegesis of 1 Corinthians 1–4. According to Litfin, Paul refuses to be results driven. In the language of rhetoric, Paul left the work of “persuading” or *pistis*—creating to the Holy Spirit. Litfin concludes that Paul assumed the role of a herald. The assumption of this role relieved the preacher from creating results. Litfin’s second part is an astute and balanced exegesis of 1 Corinthians 1–4.

Part of Litfin’s argument is that Paul uses language that he sees as purposefully not the technical language of rhetoric. Instead, according to Litfin, Paul uses common and everyday words. This is perhaps the weakest part of Litfin’s argument. He argues that Paul’s normal, non-technical language is the Apostle’s way of making a very serious point. It is worth quoting in full.

It is too seldom recognized, much less appreciated, that the verbs Paul uses to describe his public speaking . . . are decidedly non-rhetorical. No self-respecting orator used such verbs to describe his own *modus operandi*. Thus, even though they deal with the subject of human communication, such verbs play no significant role in the rhetorical literature. This is understandable because the essential form of communication they describe is very different from that of the orator; in fact, at its core it is the antithesis of rhetorical behavior (184).

Litfin makes much of the fact that Paul uses ordinary language (and strongly suggests other NT scholars should do the same). Were this Litfin’s only point, his argument would be very weak. Taken in concert with the rest of the context and Paul’s argument, at the very least it seems more likely that Paul made such a conscious decision. For Litfin, the decision supports the argument, but in reality the argument supports the likelihood of Paul’s decision.

Central to Litfin's argument is that Paul not only was addressing the content of his preaching but also the form of his preaching. Litfin argues this from his understanding of the word *kerygma*. He writes, "In fact, it appears that this term was specifically chosen by the Apostle to keep both content *and* form before his readers, stressing not only *what* Paul proclaims (his message), but also what he simply *proclaims* (its form)" (198). Litfin therefore sees in this Paul's repudiation of rhetoric for the sake of persuading. In other words, Paul's theology of preaching determines, for him, not only what he says but how he says it. In the Great Equation of Rhetoric, the constant that never changes was Paul's proclamation of the gospel. Thus, the focus is not results driven but faithfulness driven. Paul seeks to be a faithful herald.

In the third part, Litfin synthesizes and applies Paul's argument against the backdrop of ancient rhetoric. His conclusion is that by "limiting himself to the role of the herald, Paul could be confident that the results he saw were not based on his own power as a persuader" but on the work of the Spirit (265). Litfin argues that Paul's theology of preaching is rooted in his presuppositions. Paul's "*modus operandi* as a herald was required by his theological presuppositions" (270). Litfin abstracts Paul's presupposition into a model for ministry. There are numerous appendices, and it is somewhat confusing that the "Implications for Preaching" are included in Appendix Four as well the broader implications for ministry in Appendix 5.

Litfin's work is designed to be less technical and therefore reach a broader audience. He accomplishes this by keeping technical notes boxes that are clearly marked off. This allows one to read the larger text for the main argument. Litfin's work is a gentle introduction to the field and history of rhetoric, even if it risks being greatly over-simplified. Overall, Litfin's argument is comprehensive and convincing. For any pastor or student seeking to develop their theology of preaching, and theology of ministry in general, Litfin's work is requisite reading.

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***A Vision for Preaching: Understanding the Heart of Pastoral Ministry.* By Abraham Kuruvilla. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015. 214 pages. Paperback, \$22.00.**

Professor and author Abraham Kuruvilla has a vision for preaching. His latest work, *A Vision for Preaching*, is his effort to elucidate his conception of preaching in an ideal sense. He outlines his vision with the following sentence:

Biblical preaching, by a leader of the church, in a gathering of Christians for worship, is the communication of the thrust of a pericope of Scripture discerned by theological exegesis, and of its application to that specific body of believers, that they may be conformed to the image of Christ, for the glory of God— all in the power of the Holy Spirit (1).

Each chapter of the book is dedicated to unfolding one facet of this vision, phrase by phrase. One might say that this work presents Kuruvilla's answers to the who, what, where, why, and how of preaching.

For those who have read Kuruvilla's 2013 volume, *Privilege the Text*, much of this work will strike a familiar chord. These echoes strengthen the book. Kuruvilla calls once again for preachers to focus on authorial intent in the biblical text, to determine the thrust of a given pericope, and to communicate what the author is doing

in the text, while also offering concrete application in harmony with the thrust of the pericope. Through obeying the divine demand in the text, people are conformed to the image of Christ, fulfilling God's predestination program in Rom 8:29, and God is glorified in it. There is a significant distinction to be made between preaching that explains what the biblical author is doing with what he/she has written, and simply explaining what has been written. Kuruvilla rightly emphasizes the former over the latter.

In spite of this significant strength, the book suffers from some weaknesses. Kuruvilla asserts that he has purposefully avoided branding his work as a definition (10), yet his vision statement is phrased in terms of a definition. Kuruvilla's statement "More proximally, my aim is to give future pastors . . . a better conception of what it means to preach" only further obfuscates his purpose (12). Moreover, each chapter title predicates something of preaching. Each chapter title begins "Preaching is . . ." If Kuruvilla does not intend his work to be a definition, his vision statement, commentary, and chapter titles are rather confusing.

In the first chapter, Kuruvilla argues rightly that preaching should be biblical, based on the authoritative nature of Scripture. Yet, his definition of what it means to be biblical goes too far, leaving little to no room for preaching larger swaths of text (25). On the other hand, his definition does not go far enough. He contends for letting the biblical text mold a sermon's "content and purpose," but stops short of saying that it should also form its structure (26).

While chapters 4 and 5 are the strongest of the book, chapter 3 is arguably the weakest. Simply, it seems unnecessary. Here Kuruvilla argues that preaching is a sacrament like baptism and the Lord's Supper and, as such, it belongs primarily in the "assembly of God's people" (58–59, 66). Regardless of whether one agrees with his position on preaching as a sacrament, including this as part of a proposed "vision" for preaching seems superfluous. Does anyone allege that preaching primarily belongs elsewhere? It seems odd to include this as part of a goal for preaching when the goal has already been reached (11).

Chapter 7 raises some questions and potential problems. Kuruvilla argues that each biblical pericope presents a facet of the image of Christ and a divine demand (136). Yet, this claim is problematic when scrutinized. For example, what would be the image of Christ presented in a genealogy? What would be the divine demand? Perhaps Kuruvilla would argue that a genealogy does not constitute a pericope, but the term is not well defined.

The deficiency in this theory is heightened when viewed through the lens of a New Testament epistle. Saying that there is a divine demand in every text, when some texts contain only indicative statements, may undermine other texts containing explicit imperatives. The semantic weight of the imperative seems to drop a bit when the indicative nearby may be considered its equal.

In the end, despite some weaknesses, Kuruvilla's vision for preaching is a vision worth catching. His vision is to move preachers closer to the text, to honor and communicate what the biblical author is doing with what he/she has written in order to help people become more like Christ and thereby glorify God. Kuruvilla is right. This is what preaching should do.

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**Abstracts of Recently Completed Dissertations in the School of
Theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary**

“Valency of the Niphal and the Hithpael: The Contribution of Valency to Lexicography.” By Ethan Christopher Jones. Supervised by George Klein.

The lexicography of Biblical Hebrew verbs necessitates improvement. Current lexica remain undecided on what linguistic syntactical and semantic features are important for the study and presentation of lexicographical entries of Biblical Hebrew. Some lexica only occasionally include syntactical and semantic information within an entry (e.g., the LORD serves as the subject or the frequent use of a particular preposition). At least one lexicon, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, presents nearly every subject, object, and preposition that occurs with a verb. Both kinds of lexica fail to present the syntactical and semantic features that a verb requires to produce a specific nuance. The first kind of lexicon presents these features sporadically. The second kind of lexicon provides only an exhaustive list of these features.

This dissertation seeks to demonstrate that valency contributes to the lexicography of Biblical Hebrew. Simply put, valency counts the number of syntactical participants that a verb requires. Valency also highlights what kind of participants that verb uses. For example, the verb “to speak” could require three participants: Emily₁ speaks kind words₂ to him₃. Grammatically, valency notes that “to speak” necessitates one subject (Emily₁) and two objects (words₂ and him₃). Semantically, valency notes a human serves as the speaker (Emily₁) and as the addressee (him₃), whereas that which is spoken is non-human (words₂). Valency also observes syntactical and semantic details of these required participants so that one can better understand the behavior of verbs. For lexicography of Biblical Hebrew, valency gives significantly more attention to the subject and prepositional phrases than previous study that relies primarily on transitivity.

This dissertation demonstrates that valency contributes to the lexicography of Biblical Hebrew in three ways. First, valency shows which syntactical features must be present in order for a specific nuance to appear in the target language of English. Second, valency helps show the syntactical patterns of verbs and the frequency of those patterns. Third, valency allows lexical entries to be structured from Biblical Hebrew—not translation equivalents.

“Jesus as Faithful in Testing: A Key to the Rhetorical Connection Between Hebrews 3:1-6 and 3:7-4:13.” By John Michael McKay Jr. Supervised by Terry Wilder.

This dissertation argues that, in Hebrews 3:1-4:16, Jesus’ entrance into rest, as a result of his successful testing, demonstrates why Auctor (i.e., the author) views him as a faithful High Priest. A corollary to this thesis is that

as a result of Jesus' faithfulness, believers are exhorted to enter into "that" (Heb 4:11) rest (i.e., Jesus' rest) via faithful obedience. This does not deny the evident exhortation in Auctor's argument; however, the exhortation is subsumed under, and only made possible by the theological point of Jesus as faithful High Priest.

Chapter 1 introduces five areas of tension in current exegetical explanations of Hebrews 3 and 4. Significant authors are discussed who have written on Hebrew 3 and 4. Chapter 2 argues that "testing" is a significant connecting theme between Hebrews 3:1-6 and 3:7-4:13. This is demonstrated by lexical and thematic connections, an inclusio in 2:17-3:1 and 4:14-16, and a narrative substructure based on Numbers 12 and 14.

Chapter 3 examines Psalm 94:11b LXX/OG as it is used by the author in Hebrews 3:11, 4:3, and 4:5 in order to determine whether it should be translated into English as an emphatic negative statement (which is the current scholarly consensus), or as an open-ended conditional statement. The conclusion is that reading the verse as an emphatic negative is problematic, and, therefore, an open-ended conditional better fits the evidence. Chapter 4 examines Hebrews 4:8 and 4:10 in order to determine whether they should be read christologically, or whether they refer to Joshua (Heb 4:8) and believers (Heb 4:10) respectively. The conclusion is that both verses should be read as referring to Jesus. Based on the conclusions of chapters 2-4, chapter 5 provides an abridged commentary on Hebrews 2:17-4:16 which focuses on how the author emphasizes Jesus' faithful completion of testing and what that means for believers.

"The Ethics of Superintelligent Design: A Christian View of the Theological and Moral Implications of Artificial Superintelligence." By Paul Andrew Golata. Supervised by Evan C. Lenow.

This dissertation argues that any technological enhancements to humankind's cognitive intelligence, whether achieved through biological or artificial manipulations of human nature or resulting from human creation, are subject to the commands, prescriptions, and principles revealed through God's unified revelation, taking into account that man is created as His image-bearer.

Chapter One introduces the statement of the problem and discusses the necessity of properly understanding man, intelligence and provides definitions and research methodology.

Chapter Two discusses human anthropology and discusses man's relationship to the cosmos in the context of him making technology for his use. It investigates the need for proper theological understandings in order to understand the ethics of his creation of ASI.

Chapter Three investigates the understanding of intelligence and provides insight to how it is viewed from the context of natural and artificial understandings.

Chapter Four looks at the technological singularity and its implications including extending human lifetimes. It acknowledges the power of potential of ASI while discussing its separation of purpose from biology and its existential risks to humanity.

Chapter Five tackles the issue of ASI ethics. It looks at ASI's ethical relationship to mankind as a human invention and examines from whence its motivations and values stem. The issue of functional autonomy is examined and deemed ethically unsatisfactory.

Chapter Six concludes by suggesting that all developments in AI/ASI be employed within a Christian ethical framework.

“The Social Trinitarian Doctrine of Stanley J. Grenz: A Unique, Albeit Questionable Result of his Theological Journey.” By Heinrich Kehler. Supervised by Malcolm B. Yarnell III.

The thesis has the intention of demonstrating that as a result of his theological journey, the outcome of Stanley J. Grenz's social trinitarian theology is unique on the one hand yet questionable on the other. Seeking to develop his trinitarian theology with unique arguments, Grenz was one of the first evangelical theologians who sought to engage creatively in the general contemporary trinitarian theological discussion.

Chapter two intends to sketch Grenz's epistemological development from the beginning of his scholarly career as a theologian at the end of the 1970s until his premature death in 2005. In order to avoid anachronistic assessments of his changing epistemological views, special attention is paid to the chronology of his career.

In synthesis with the observations made in chapter two, Grenz's theological career is revisited in chapters three through five, yet this time focusing especially on his trinitarian development. It turns out that he became gradually fascinated with social trinitarian ideas, incorporating many aspects into his own trinitarian development.

Chapters six and seven, then, highlight unique as well as questionable aspects of Grenz's social trinitarian viewpoints. Chapter six establishes that the two most unique aspects are his sexual and ecclesial definition of the self via the *imago dei* as well as his proposal of a relational theo-ontology via the act of naming. Chapter seven demonstrates that despite its uniqueness his social trinitarian theology reveals at least four serious weaknesses, namely experimentalism, reductionism, an oversimplified analogy between the Trinity and humans, and the disappearing ontological distinction between creature and Creator.

**Abstracts of Recently Completed Dissertations in the School of
Preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary**

“Preaching the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: Discipleship Formation in the Preaching of Herschel Hobbs.” By Rodney Masona. Supervised by David L. Allen.

This dissertation argues and defends the thesis that Herschel Harold Hobbs consistently modeled preaching on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit at First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City with intent to disciple his congregation for Christ. Hobbs’s preaching on biblical doctrines in general and on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit serve as an example of biblical preaching that communicates truth for eliciting change in his listeners.

Chapter 1 introduces the subject of doctrinal preaching and the thesis statement.

Chapter 2 looks at orientation influences in Hobbs’s background that shaped his theological, homiletical, and discipleship perspectives.

Chapter 3 discusses pastoral aspects in the doctrinal preaching of Hobbs to establish some distinctive elements and his view on discipleship and pastoral tenure.

Chapter 4 analyzes select sermons that Hobbs preached on the Holy Spirit as a demonstration of doctrinal preaching. Observations directly related to the analyzed sermons complete the chapter.

Chapter 5 presents theological, rhetorical, mentoring, disciple formation, scope, and tenure insights from Hobbs’s doctrinal preaching.

**Abstracts of Recently Completed Dissertations in the School of
Evangelism and Missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary**

“Man’s Dual Nature in Islam—Fitrah and Nafs—Building a Missional Methodology.” By Justin T. Hiester. Supervised by John David Massey.

Islam’s presiding stance on human nature states that man is solely good. This dissertation reveals from Islamic sources, however, that human nature is actually dual. The Qur’an not only attests that fitrah’s innate good compels man to believe in Allah, but also to a Commanding Soul which incites him to perpetrate evil.

This research offering fresh insight into man’s nature in Islam advances the Gospel in two ways. First, this dissertation’s conclusion provides Muslims with the opportunity to learn from their own Islamic texts about human nature’s sinful side. Second, this research regarding man’s dual nature in Islam liberates Muslim-Christian dialogue by enabling the construction of a missional methodology which aims to show Muslims their dire need for Christ’s salvation. More specifically, this missiological process produces six innovative biblical principles equipping Christians to better communicate about man’s sinful nature within a Muslim’s religious mindset.

Chapter 1 presents the dissertation's thesis along with a broad overview of each chapter.

Chapter 2 establishes that *fiṭrah's* innate goodness resides inside of man's disposition. This chapter comprises Islamic sources defining *fiṭrah's* meaning from etymology, the Qur'an, ḥadīth, and prominent Muslim scholars' works.

Chapter 3 examines the qur'anic meaning of *nafs*, primarily focusing on the Commanding Soul's innate evil. This chapter comprises Islamic sources defining the Commanding Soul's meaning from etymology, the Qur'an, ḥadīth, and prominent Muslim scholars' works.

Chapter 4 argues that the Islamic nature of man is dual by critiquing a respected book about *fiṭrah* from a distinguished twentieth century Islamic scholar named Yasien Mohamed. Yasien Mohamed's work teaches that man's nature is purely good due to *fiṭrah*, contending that it represents universal Islam.

Chapter 5 provides excerpts portraying Christians' missiological dilemma as they attempt to explain man's sinful nature to Muslims. This missiological dilemma illustrates Muslims outright rejecting Christ's salvation on the basis that human nature is solely good due to *fiṭrah*. Fortunately, Chapter 3's research regarding the Commanding Soul's evil provides a missiological solution that helps build a new missional methodology. This missiological process seeks to help Christians share about mankind's sinfulness within a Muslim's qur'anic mindset.

“World Christianity in Crisis: Globalization, Re-Transmission, and Boko Haram’s Challenge to Nigerian Baptists (2000-2012).” By Moses Audi. Supervised by Keith Eitel.

This dissertation argues that Boko Haram (BH) has affected the image of the Church, and hindered effective glocalization and retransmission of the gospel in Nigeria. This development has provoked Nigerian Baptists towards violent response, departing from biblical precedence of spirituality and abandonment of missions with far reaching implication locally and globally.

The study employed library and oral history techniques studying the subject from present to its historical roots. The entangled history of Nigeria, NBC, and insurgency has disclosed a long standing desire to Islamize Nigeria by establishing Sharia law and running a Caliphate in Nigeria.

Nigerian Christians need to accept BH challenge as persecution and see Muslims as in need of the gospel. This challenge is a clarion call for the Church to persevere, build character and await the hope that never fails (Romans 5:3-4) as the ultimate *raison d'être* of the Church after the example of the early Church. Apparently, persecution opens the door to the gospel and empowers the Church for missions as the church's ultimate response that can result in glocal impact through a revitalization of the Church's life and witness.

This study identifies seven areas for further studies. They are: the need to investigate causative factors for the drastic change in the response of the Nigerian Church from perceiving Islamic challenge as persecution to current tendency towards violence and political vindictiveness; identify the role of theological institutions and task them to provide effective theological education and pastoral leadership that can sustain Biblical Christianity in the midst of growing persecution along with any other available alternatives; the need to study the hindrances to gospel re-transmission in Muslim Context; the need to appraise missions as the church's greatest asset for appropriate response; the need for assessment of mission strategies; effective collaboration between theological institutions, pastors and mission boards; and the need to study the various forms of persecution that world Christianity faces today.

Search words for this research include: World Christianity in crisis, Christian response to Boko Haram, Glocalization, gospel retransmission, Persecution in Nigeria, and Baptists in Northern Nigeria.

Abstracts of Recently Completed Dissertations in the School of Church and Family Ministries at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

“The Signature Contribution of J. M. Price (1884-1976) to Southern Baptist Religious Education.” By Matthew Tyler Harrison. Supervised by Patricia Nason.

This dissertation asserts that the signature contribution of John Milburn (J. M.) Price to Southern Baptist religious education was his acceptance of progressive education which became the model for religious education and the standard against which religious education would be measured in the largest religious education school in the world; furthermore, the experiences of his life and primarily his training in secular schools and at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary provided the foundation, drive, and direction toward that contribution.

Chapter 1 introduces the research problem and the thesis for the dissertation.

Chapter 2 provides historical context in America after the Civil War to the early 1900's that led to the rise of progressivism and progressive education. Furthermore, the chapter covers Price's early years from his birth in 1884 to 1915 when he began his forty-one-year ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The chapter establishes that Price's rearing and early life experiences provided a foundation for the pursuit of an extensive education and an innovative ministry. Moreover, the chapter focuses on the progressive aspects of the education that he received as an undergraduate and master's student at various institutions.

Chapter 3 displays Price's acceptance of progressive education and how he made it the standard for education in the School of Religious Education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The first part of the chapter

shows his embrace of pragmatic philosophy which was a central root of progressive education. The second part of the chapter provides evidence that his writings, lecture notes, and the School of Religious Education curriculum exemplified progressive educational philosophy.

Chapter 4 chronicles his influence on religious education with particular focus on his impact in the Southern Baptist Convention. The chapter shows his influence through an examination of various historical artifacts.

Chapter 5 provides a conclusion to the dissertation. This includes several implications drawn from the research along with suggestions for further research.

“Freud’s Anthropological Perspective on the Sexual Child: A Modern Theoretical Construct that Ameliorates Guilt in Cases of Child Sexual Abuse.” By Cheryl Ann Bell. Supervised by John Babler.

During the course of his psychoanalytic work, Freud addressed the issue of child sexual abuse. He initially believed children were sexual innocents molested by more powerful adults. After discarding this traumatogenic theory of causation for hysterical neurosis, he committed himself to a biogenic theory of causation for hysteria, which minimized abuse and allowed abusers to blame victims for their own suffering.

Freud influenced others with his theories, and Abraham, Bender and Blau, Kinsey, and Spock adopted and propagated Freudian theories of the sexual child. Their influence on American culture created an environment where children bore the blame in cases of child sexual abuse, while adult abusers escaped the consequences of their actions.

In the mid-twentieth century, secular feminists, sociologists, and social workers began to address the problem of child sexual abuse once again. They argued for a child’s inability to consent to sexual interactions with adults, because they lacked knowledge and power in such interactions.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the sexual modernist perspective on the sexual child remained dominant. Certain secular feminists became deeply concerned about sexualizing forces in culture and linked this process with child sexual abuse, noting that when culture blurred the lines between childhood and adulthood, abusers would prey on children who had been portrayed as both sexually desiring and desirable.

The ultimate expression of sexualization existed in the unseen realms of child pornography, child sex trafficking, and child prostitution. Here abusers adopted patterns of thinking that justified their behavior, once again arguing that the sexual child desired sexual interaction with adults. The association between the sexual child and the problem of child sexual abuse had never disappeared, because Freud’s socially constructed sexual child still provided abusers with a way to eradicate their guilt by providing them with someone to blame. In this manner, sexual modernism spared the adult abuser by blaming the child victim in the early-to-mid-twentieth century and in the twenty-first century as well.

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