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EDITORIAL:
THE CHRIST OF SCRIPTURE

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No question is more important than the question Jesus asked His disciples: "But who do you say that I am?" (Matt 16:15). The answer to this question determines the eternal state of the person; therefore, it is of utmost importance to answer this question correctly.

Erroneous views about Jesus prevailed in Jesus' day. When Jesus asked His disciples "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" they answered that "Some *say* John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets" (16:13–14). The people were altogether confused by the Person of Jesus. Those from His hometown wondered, "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then *did* this man *get* all these things?" (13:55–56). Others asked Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us openly" (John 10:24). At the interrogation before the Sanhedrin, the rulers demanded, "If You are the Christ, tell us" (Luke 22:67). Similarly, Pilate questioned Jesus, "Are You the King of the Jews?" (Matt 27:11; Mark 15:2). Though seeing the power of God in Jesus, the people refused to acknowledge Jesus as the promised Messiah (cf. Matt 13:57; John 10:25; Luke 22:67).

Jesus, however, underscored the eternal significance of recognizing and acknowledging Him as the Son of God. He declared that He is the focus of all of Scripture: "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that bear witness about Me" (John 5:39). In John 14:6, He proclaimed that salvation is found in Him alone, saying, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me" (cf. John 3:18; Rom 10:9). For this reason, Peter's answer to Jesus' question was of utmost importance. Peter exclaimed, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt 16:16). To confess this truth is to have eternal life; to reject it is to be condemned to the eternal wrath of God (John 3:36; 17:3).

The focus of the current issue of *The Master's Seminary Journal* is the person of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New. In the first article, Abner Chou explores the title "Son of Man" in the book of Daniel and demonstrates its influence on New Testament Christology ("'All That Is in a Name: Daniel's Deliberate Christology and the Concept of the Son of Man"). Jamie Bissmeyer then unpacks the way in which the book of Job previews the work of Christ ("The Heavenly Third Party in Job: A Preview of the Work of Christ"). Jason Beals follows this with a study of the links between the first Adam and the Davidic king, and he argues that the second Adam must succeed where both previously failed ("The Second Adam and the Necessity for Eschatological Earthly Dominion"). Jared Moore provides clarity on the nature of Christ's temptations, studying how Jesus was tempted in comparison to how sinful mankind is tempted ("Are Your Temptations Like Jesus' Temptations? Yes and No!"). This is followed by a conversation between Corey Williams and Iosif J. Zhakevich about the John MacArthur Publishing Group, noting the need for good biblical literature ("An Interview with Iosif J. Zhakevich: The John MacArthur Publishing Group"). Mark Zhakevich explores remnant theology in the Gospel of John, showing that the remnant is comprised of the children of God and that Christ the Good Shepherd laid down His life for the remnant ("Jesus' Love for His Own: The Remnant in John"). Aaron Valdizan unveils the theological implications of translating "Yahweh" (יְהוָה) of the Old Testament as "Lord" (κύριος) in the New Testament ("The Significance of the Divine Name in Peter's Pentecost Sermon"). Austin Duncan examines how Jesus confronts Saul on the road to Damascus and then calls and commissions him to His service ("Conversations with Jesus: Jesus and Saul"). Finally, Jeffrey P. Tomkins considers Paul's contributions to Christology in Colossians with Christ as Creator and Sustainer ("Colossians 1:16–17 and the Theological Implications of Christ as Creator and Sustainer").

The ultimate intent of this collection of articles is to help the believer "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet 3:18).

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ALL THAT IS IN A NAME: DANIEL'S DELIBERATE CHRISTOLOGY AND THE CONCEPT OF THE SON OF MAN

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* * * * *

Given the substantial influence of the book of Daniel on New Testament Christology particularly through the phrase the "Son of Man," scholars have asked numerous questions about the nature and significance of the title, even inquiring why it is used in certain contexts and books and not others. While commentators have attempted numerous responses to these issues, a helpful approach is to go back to the very source of the concept of the Son of Man, Daniel himself. The contention of this article is that Daniel not only spoke of the Messiah but did so with the concept of the "Son of Man" as the unifying center of his Christology. Analyzing Daniel's Christology in this manner fleshes out the complete nature of the "Son of Man," which gives answers to questions posed by scholarship. Even more, such analysis explains the very reason why this title is Christ's favorite, as it expresses the totality of His mission and destiny.

* * * * *

Introduction

The book of Daniel exerts tremendous influence upon New Testament Christology. One can certainly observe this at the end of the New Testament as the book of Revelation explicitly quotes from Daniel 7:13 to describe the grandeur of Christ (Rev 1:7). Revelation also presents Christ having hair "white like white wool, like snow" (Rev 1:14), a characteristic Daniel ascribed to the Ancient of Days (Dan 7:9). Because the Lord shares this description with the Ancient of Days, they share

the same timeless essence, a demonstration of the Son's deity and equality with His Father.[1]

Daniel's influence is not only seen at the end of the New Testament but in the midst of the canon. Paul is case in point. On the Damascus Road, Paul beheld the glorified Christ but his companions "did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking" to him (Acts 22:9), a detail that mirrors Daniel's own experience (Dan 10:7). Scholars observe that this is but one of quite a few parallels between Daniel's visions and Paul's calling.[2] Scholars also note that such a calling and conversion had an effect on Paul's theology. Throughout his writings, the apostle used terminology from Daniel to allude back to his time on the Damascus Road (cf. 2 Cor 4:4–6),[3] refer to God's people as the saints (1 Cor 6:2; cf. Dan 7:18),[4] speak of Christ as the image of God (Rom 8:29; Col 1:15; 2 Cor 4;4; cf. Dan 7:13), and recount Christ's final kingship (Phil 3:20–21; 1 Thess 4:17; 2 Thess 1:9–10; Dan 7:1–13).[5] Daniel shaped the contours of Pauline theology.[6]

Of course, the book of Daniel poses great influence upon the beginning of the New Testament. The Gospels contain numerous allusions to that book. The Synoptics explicitly quote from Daniel (Matt 24:30; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27). In addition, Schreiner argues that the Lord's mention of the "rock" in Matthew 16 might allude to the stone in Daniel that crushed the statue (Dan 2:35).[7] The gospel of Mark also describes Christ's glory at the transfiguration (Mark 9:1–13) in terms found in Daniel 7 and 10.[8] Further support for this connection is seen in that those who beheld the transfigured Christ behaved the same way as those who saw His glory in Daniel 10

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[1] Bogdan G. Bucur, "The Son of Man and the Ancient of Days: Observations on the Early Christian Reception of Daniel 7," *Phronema* 32, no. 1 (2017): 4.

[2] Abner Chou, *I Saw the Lord: A Biblical Theology of Vision* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2013), 151–52; Seyoon Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Tübingen, Germany: J. C. B. Mohr, 1981), 260–62.

[3] Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel*, 260–62; Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2005), 336; Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 207; Scott J. Hafemann, "The Glory and Veil of Moses in 2 Corinthians 3:7–14," in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Text?: Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 295–312; Chou, *I Saw the Lord*, 154–55.

[4] James D. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 44–45; Craig A. Evans, "Daniel in the New Testament: Visions of God's Kingdom," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 525.

[5] Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel*, 260–68; Thomas Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 157–59; Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 214; Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1998), 80.

[6] Chou, *I Saw the Lord*, 186–87.

[7] Patrick Schreiner, "Peter, the Rock: Matthew 16 in Light of Daniel 2," *Criswell Theological Review* 2 (2016): 99. Controversy surrounds the Lord's statement about whether the "rock" refers to Peter or his confession. However, the Lord's declaration may partially refer back to Daniel, where the Messiah is the stone that crushes all other nations (Dan 2:35). This is supported by the fact that Peter already alluded to Daniel in confessing Jesus as the "Son of the living God," phraseology found in Daniel (cf. Dan 3:25; 7:13). Daniel may serve as an inter-textual anchor point that helps to argue that the "rock" refers more to Christ and His work (and thereby Peter's confession) than Peter himself.

[8] Stephen J. Hultgren, "'A Vision for the End of Days': Deferral of Revelation in Daniel and at the End of Mark," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 109, no. 2 (2018): 159.

(v. 7; cf. Mark 9:6).[9] Interestingly enough, the wording in Mark's account of the transfiguration (ἔκφοβοι γὰρ ἐγένοντο, 9:6) matches the wording of the conclusion to his gospel (ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ). This has led some to conclude that the ending of Mark connects with the transfiguration and by extension the book of Daniel. Such an observation is justified. Both Mark (16:5) and Daniel (10:6) discussed an individual dressed in bright clothing. The individual mentioned in both Mark and Daniel brought news about the resurrection (Dan 12:1–2; Mark 16:6). And the people who beheld this figure in both Mark (16:8) and Daniel (10:7) were left speechless by his appearance.[10] Christ revealed His hidden glory at the transfiguration in Mark, the gospel concludes that the resurrection unveils and reflects this hidden glory, and Mark maintained that such glory was none other than the supreme majesty found in Daniel.

Having made these very kinds of observations, Bauckham argues that Daniel participates in shaping the entire message of Mark:

> The narrative of Jesus's ministry begins with his baptism, marked by the citation of Ps 2:7, and ends with his death, also marked by an allusion to Ps 2:7. The Gospel's narrative concludes with the account of the burial of Jesus and the discovery of the empty tomb. But the story is not complete: it continues with the resurrection (14:28; 16:7) and exaltation of Jesus to the throne of God (12:36; 14:62), includes the worldwide preaching of the gospel (13:10; 14:9), and ends with Jesus's coming to reign. These events are summed up in God the Father's promise to his Son in the words of Ps 110:1 and Dan 7:13 (12:36; 13:26; 14:62). Thus, the three scriptural texts in which God the Father addresses his Son serve to frame the narrative of Jesus's ministry and to frame the whole story.[11]

Overall, from the beginning to the end of the New Testament, the book of Daniel helps to formulate details and even entire books about Christ.

Such influence revolves around the notion that Christ is the Son of Man. Each of the above examples pertain to Christ as Son of Man.[12] Even more, this is the Lord's favorite title for Himself, and it is noteworthy that in the synoptic gospels, Christ alone attributes this title to Himself.[13] While in the Old Testament, such a phrase can be used to describe a finite human being, the usage in the gospels seems to refer to something far more technical.[14] The phrase "Son of Man" is articular (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) and found in explicit reference to Daniel 7:9 (cf. Matt 26:64; Mark 14:62). Such technical use accords with early Jewish literature and is set up for by

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[9] Hultgren, "A Vision for the End of Days," 155.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Richard Bauckham, "Markan Christology According to Richard Hays: Some Addenda," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 11, no. 1 (2017): 36.

[12] Rev 1:14 alludes back to the Ancient of Days, which is in the vision of Christ as the Son of Man (cf. Dan 7:9). Paul's Damascus road experience also does this (Acts 22:6; Dan 7:9; 10:6). Even the discussion of Jesus as the rock or stone in Matt 16 connects to Daniel via Peter's confession of Jesus as the Son (cf. Dan 7:9). These examples illustrate that the inner-textuality of NT Christology to Daniel comes via the conception of the Son of Man.

[13] José Enrique Aguilar Chiu, "The 'Son of Man' in the Gospel of Mark," *The Dunwoodie Review* 42 (2020): 59.

[14] Chiu, 60.

Daniel 7 itself. In Daniel 7, the figure is not called the son of man, but "one *like* a son of man" (כְּבַר אֱנָשׁ, Dan 7:13).[15] By such language, Daniel distinguished the person in his vision from any other son of man, setting the foundation for the Lord to be *the* Son of Man.

Scholars have wrestled with the concept of "Son of Man." Ehrman has argued that this title depicts Jesus as a legendary figure, a historical individual that His followers embellished later. Ehrman contends that while Jesus simply used the phrase as an apocalyptic prophet (cf. Ezek 2:1), His disciples later utilized it to argue for His divinity.[16] Quarles rightly counters that because Jesus claimed to be the Son of Man, recognized His messiahship, and declared His divinity, the title Son of Man was not imbued with divine reference later on but intended to be as such from the beginning.[17] Boyarin, a Jewish scholar, also makes the case that "Son of Man" is most certainly a divine title from its inception.[18] Ehrman's notion of "legend" is not the impetus behind the concept of the Son of Man.

Some scholars contend that while a reference to the divine was always meant, the Lord used this title because such meaning was opaque. These commentators suggest that since the Old Testament does not explicitly utilize this appellation and it is not found in Greek literature, Christ's use of the term might not have been readily clear to His original audience. While He did use it in instances of His divine power and authority (cf. Mark 2:10, 28) even early on in His ministry (John 1:51), it only was made known in its full eschatological quality later on in His ministry (cf. Matt 16:13–16).[19] For these scholars, the significance of Christ's usage of the title is in its obscurity, a contributing factor to the notion of *Messiasgeheimnis* or the secret of Jesus's identity.

Scholars not only observe that the title "Son of Man" was used throughout the entirety of Christ's ministry but also with great variety. Turner represents the evangelical consensus well. He comments that the title Son of Man, relating to Christ's humanity, first stresses Jesus' "suffering and humility" (Matt 8:20; 11:19; 12:40). A second emphasis of the title pertains to the Lord's "present power and authority" as the One over the Sabbath (12:8) and the One who sows the seed of the gospel (13:37). The third usage deals with Christ in His coming eschatological glory as the sovereign and judge over the world (16:27–28; 24:27; 26:64).[20] Though some

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[15] Chiu, "The 'Son of Man,'" 69–70; Thomas Francis Glasson, "Son of Man Imagery : Enoch XIV and Daniel VII," *New Testament Studies* 23, no. 1 (Oct 1976): 82–90; Alinda Damsma, "From Son of Man to Son of Adam --- the Prophet Ezekiel in Targum Jonathan," *Aramaic Studies* 15, no. 1 (2017): 23–43; Kyle Quinn, "The Son of Man in 1 Enoch and Its Implications for the Christology of the Synoptic Gospels," *Journal of Biblical Theology* 6, no. 3 (July 2023): 166.

[16] Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (and Why We Don't Know about Them)*, 1st ed. (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 231–32; Bart D. Ehrman, *How Jesus Became God: The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2014), 86–87.

[17] Charles L. Quarles, "Lord or Legend: Jesus as the Messianic Son of Man," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 62, no. 1 (March 2019): 124.

[18] Daniel Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ* (New York: New Press, 2012).

[19] Bill J Tackmier, "Jesus' Use of the Term 'the Son of Man,'" *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 121, no. 1 (2024): 24; Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 97.

[20] David L. Turner, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 36.

see a more unified concept to the title,[21] it is undeniable that the phrase "Son of Man" has had a staggering influence on the breadth of the Lord's ministry and various situations therein.

In light of scholarly discussion, the prevalence of the title "Son of Man" raises several questions. First, what exactly is the meaning of the Son of Man? Does it refer to Christ's humanity, deity, or both and in what manner (suffering, present power, eschatological dominion, or all of the above)? Second, is there a unifying principle in the idea that accounts for the diversity of contexts in which it is found? Third, why does the Son of Man only appear in the gospels and Revelation and not in any other part of the New Testament? All of these questions point to the need to go to the origins of the phrase in Daniel and ask one further question: What did Daniel exactly conceptualize about the Son of Man in his writing and did he do so deliberately?

This article seeks to demonstrate that Daniel's influence upon New Testament Christology is hardly incidental. Instead, Daniel, under the inspiration of the Spirit, consciously spoke of the Messiah and constructed a unified Christology, one drawing numerous Christological strands of the Old Testament into the concept of the Son of Man. Every presentation of Christology in the book of Daniel establishes the concept of the Son of Man in its identity, veracity, nature, and certainty. Ultimately, Daniel revealed that the Son of Man refers to the role of the final Adam, the destiny and ruler over the entire created order. Such a role can only be fulfilled by God's Son, who alone is in control of all history as it climaxes in Him. By going back to Daniel, one can not only answer the questions posed above, but more importantly, discover the very reason this is the Lord's favored title: it uniquely declares Christ's climactic glory over all.

Daniel's Deliberate Christology

Fundamental to constructing Daniel's concept of the Son of Man is to establish that he actually had one. After all, some contend that in Daniel 7, the "one like a son of man" refers not to an individual Messiah but to the saints (cf. Dan 7:13–14, 18).[22] Thus, it is necessary to prove that Daniel spoke of Christ in his prophecy. Moreover, to show that Daniel had an intentionally unified Christology, one must also demonstrate that Daniel designed those messianic passages to come together in the concept of the Son of Man. To do all of this, this discussion will first survey certain individual texts (cf. Dan 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10), making the case that they are indeed Messianic. Then, the discussion will turn to the structure of the book, to show that Daniel organized his material to coalesce in Daniel 7.

Daniel 2

The first reference to the Messiah in the book occurs in Nebuchadnezzar's dream where he beheld "a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the image on its

[21] Paul Twiss, "Who Is This Son of Man?: An Intertextual Consideration of the Phrase" (ThM thesis, The Master's Seminary, 2017).

[22] John J. Collins, "The Son of Man and the Saints of the Most High in the Book of Daniel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93, no. 1 (March 1, 1974): 50–66.

feet of iron and clay and crushed them" (Dan 2:34). Having done so, the stone "became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (Dan 2:35). Several observations argue that this is a messianic prophecy. First, the context is eschatological. In discussing a series of kingdoms that correspond to Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome (Dan 2:32–33, 37–39; cf. Dan 7:1–9; 8:20–21), Daniel described a linear flow of history that culminated in a final diabolical kingdom (cf. Dan 7:19–26). Daniel then stated that the stone struck the feet of the statue, emphasizing that the stone would strike that final human kingdom of iron and clay.[23] Daniel did not depict the figure in this prophecy as any historical king, archetypal individual, or cyclical figure. Rather, this One is climactic, appearing at the end of world history.

Second, the reference to the "stone" identifies this individual as the Messiah. The term is inter-textual, referencing other passages where the Messiah is distinctively described as such. The title "stone" actually is one of the most ancient descriptions of God and Christ, going back to Genesis. Jacob discussed the Shepherd of Israel and the Stone and identified such an individual with the Mighty One of Jacob, God Himself (Gen 49:24).[24] Later revelation confirms that this is indeed messianic. David prophesied about the "stone which was rejected" (cf. Ps 118:22). In context, such an individual is not just any king but the One who brings salvation to Israel (Ps 118:10–21) and is welcomed after His rejection, as prophesied by other Psalms.[25] The psalm spoke of the One who would fulfill the Davidic promise and Israel's destiny. Isaiah continued such a discussion, speaking of the Stone (Isa 8:13–14) and a "costly cornerstone" (יְקָרַת פִּנַּת, Isa 28:16), using similar distinctive terminology to Ps 118:22 (פִּנָּה). In so doing, the prophet ascribed that the Stone was Yahweh (Isa 8:13–14), just as previous revelation had done. Isaiah also declared that Yahweh would present this Stone as the security for Israel and the Davidic dynasty (Isa 28:16). The title "Stone" is consistently divine and messianic in progressive revelation, and Daniel was not disconnected from such inter-textuality. Even in Daniel 2, Daniel made a number of allusions to Old Testament texts. He discussed the wicked becoming "like chaff" as in Psalm 1, a "great mountain" found in Isaiah

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[23] See Kenneth L. Barker, "Premillennialism in the Book of Daniel," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 4, no. 1 (1993): 26–29. See also James M. Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven: The Book of Daniel in Biblical Theology*, ed. D. A. Carson, 1st ed., New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 85–104.

[24] K. A. Matthews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2005), 906; Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 18–50*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 684. Interestingly enough, Sarna, a Jewish commentary, contends that the term "stone" is nowhere else used of God, but that is because he does not view the Messiah as God (otherwise this supposed anomaly is no anomaly at all). See Nahum Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 343.

[25] Ps 118 itself has quite a few inter-textual connections with other Davidic psalms. For example, the psalmist declared that Yahweh did not give him over to death (וְלַמָּוֶת לֹא נְתָנָנִי), which is quite similar to Pss 16:10 which uses the terms "give" (נתן) with synonym for death (לֹא־תַעֲזֹב נַפְשִׁי לִשְׁאוֹל לֹא־תִתֵּן חֲסִידְךָ לִרְאוֹת שָׁחַת). Psalm 16 discusses the "holy one" (חָסִיד), a title used in parallel with Messiah in 1 Sam 2:9–10 (see *kethiv* reading of חֲסִידָו in v. 9).With the mention of entering the gates (פִּתְחוּ־לִי שַׁעֲרֵי־צֶדֶק אָבֹא־בָם), there is a connection with Ps 24 (שְׂאֵרִים רָאשֵׁיכֶם וְהִנָּשְׂאוּ פִּתְחֵי עוֹלָם) which welcomes the King of glory (מֶלֶךְ הַכָּבוֹד).

2:1 and Ezekiel 40:2, and that this mountain would "fill the earth" just as Isaiah 6:3 and Ezekiel 43:2 describe. Daniel demonstrated awareness of the very prophetic contexts which described the Messiah as the stone. Having made such allusions, it is unlikely that he jettisoned those texts and simply chose the imagery of the stone at random. Instead, the usage of the word "stone," especially given Daniel's inter-textual awareness, points to his conscious reference to the Messiah.

Third, the activity of the stone argues for a messianic referent. Daniel recorded that the stone became a "great mountain" and "filled the earth" (cf. Dan 2:35). Throughout the Old Testament, Jerusalem was known as a mountain and was prophesied to become the highest peak in the region when the Messiah reigned from Zion (Isa 2:2; Ezek 17:23; Mic 4:1; Zech 14:10). Likewise, the language of filling the earth was used to describe the eschatological state of the Messiah's reign (cf. Isa 11:9; Hab 2:14). Daniel not only used a familiar title to indicate he was speaking of the Messiah but also familiar descriptions of His rule. These strong indicators establish a firm foundation that Daniel indeed deliberately prophesied about the Messiah in his book.

Daniel 3

Gazing into the fiery furnace, Nebuchadnezzar noticed a fourth figure in addition to Daniel's three friends. A major question is whether this individual is the Messiah. Nebuchadnezzar at first stated that this one was like a "son of the gods" (לְבַר־אֱלָהִין) and later declared that this was God's angel (מַלְאֲכֵהּ). Because of the latter description, some contend that this was simply an angelic being as opposed to a manifestation of the second person of the Trinity. However, several considerations argue that this was indeed the Messiah. For one, given that Nebuchadnezzar described the situation from his view, the title "son" is quite significant. The notion of "son" does not refer to a mere supernatural messenger but one of royal status in the divine pantheon.[26] The Babylonian king instinctively recognized that the figure in the fire was divine and a royal inheritor.

Furthermore, the term "angel" does not contradict such an assertion of divinity either from Nebuchadnezzar's perspective or from Daniel's intention. In Nebuchadnezzar's pantheistic worldview, gods can frequently send other gods to represent them. That was what Nebuchadnezzar most likely meant in this situation.[27] Relative to Daniel's own intent, the mention of angel accords with the Angel of Yahweh, who is revealed to be Yahweh Himself in numerous contexts (cf. Gen 16:7–10; 22:11–15; Num 22:35; Judg 2:1; 2 Kgs 19:35). The term "angel" seems to indicate that the One in the fiery furnace was the perfect representative of God because He was God.

Third, in Scripture, while angels are collectively called "sons of God" (בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים, plural, cf. Gen 6:2; Job 1:6; 2:1), an angel is never described as a "son of God/gods." That this angel is called a "son of God" then in Daniel 3 is quite

[26] Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 123; Joe M. Sprinkle, *Daniel*, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), 105.

[27] J. E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 2002), 235.

significant and distinctive. One may argue that since Nebuchadnezzar is the one who said this from his pagan perspective, the wording does not have to conform to biblical norms. However, it must be noted that Daniel chose to preserve the king's words and would most likely not employ phraseology that would confuse his audience. What Daniel did write down, he did so not merely for historical accuracy but also for his inspired purpose. This observation pushes back against the notion that Nebuchadnezzar simply saw an angel. Daniel's selectivity did not describe the figure in the fire that way. Instead, under inspiration, Daniel wrote down Nebuchadnezzar's exact quote to indicate the identity of the fourth person in the fire.

Fourth, given Daniel's choice to preserve the term "son" in Daniel 3, the context of the book of Daniel argues for a messianic understanding of this text. Within the book, the language of "son of the gods" in Daniel 3 distinctively parallels "one like a son of man" in Daniel 7 (כְּבַר אֱנָשׁ, v. 13). The term "son" (בַּר) is not used often in Daniel, and within this, being used in the singular and in construct with another noun is even rarer, only happening in Daniel 3:25 and 7:13. That the usages of "son" in both contexts refer to One who is divine further support such a correlation.[28] These parallels argue that if Daniel 7 speaks of the Messiah (Dan 7:13; cf. Rev 1:7), then Daniel 3 does as well.

Fifth, that the fourth person in the furnace is Messiah fits into a larger framework of Daniel 2 and 3. In Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of an image (צֶלֶם) composed of multiple materials (2:32–33). In Daniel 3, Nebuchadnezzar constructed an image of gold (צֶלֶם דִּי־דְהַב). Nebuchadnezzar's act intentionally challenged God's earlier revelation in the king's dream, putting Daniel 2 and 3 in parallel. As such, just as Nebuchadnezzar's dream of an image ends with a divine stone crushing it, it is fitting that the saga of Nebuchadnezzar's image ends with a divine Son overcoming his plot.[29]

Though debate exists about the identity of the fourth figure in the fire, that He is readily recognized as divine, that His description accords with Scripture and Daniel's own terminology for God's Son, and that it fits multiple layers of parallelism within the book, all argue that this figure is the Messiah. The above argumentation also begins to indicate the interconnectivity of messianic passages with each other within Daniel's prophecy.

Daniel 6

The episode of Daniel in the lion's den only makes a single statement that is potentially messianic. Daniel declared, "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths" (Dan 6:22). With such a simple mention of an angel, one might wonder whether this could really refer to the Messiah. Two factors suggest an affirmative answer. First, in context, Darius had declared to Daniel that, "Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself save you" (Dan 6:16). While some could argue that this was true in the sense that God was the ultimate cause and the angel was the intermediary, Darius was quite explicit that God was personally involved. Darius pronounced that God "will Himself save you" (הֽוּא יְשֵׁיזְבִנָּךְ), using an emphatic

[28] See Daniel Boyarin, "Daniel 7, Intertextuality, and the History of Israel's Cult," *Harvard Theological Review* 105, no. 2 (March 30, 2012): 147.

[29] See Chou, *I Saw the Lord*, 132–34.

pronoun. The verb "save" (שֵׁיזַב) has been used to refer to a unique work that God alone does (cf. Dan 3:15–17). Hence, the context anticipates that Daniel's deliverance could only be accomplished by God personally. This sets up that the angel is God Himself, which accords with the usage of the terminology of the Angel of Yahweh in Scripture and the usage of angel so far in Daniel (מַלְאָךְ, cf. Dan 3:28).

Speaking of which, in the broader context of the book, Daniel 6 has unique parallels with earlier passages in Daniel, particularly chapter 3. The officials of Persia sought to condemn Daniel (בָּעַיִן) just as Arioch sought to kill Daniel in Daniel 2 (וּבְעָו, 2:13). Daniel served Yahweh in Daniel 6 (פֻּלְחָ, 6:17) just as his friends did in chapter 3 (פָּלְחִין, 3:14, 17, 28). Likewise, the term "save" is also uniquely shared between these chapters (שֵׁיזַב, cf. 3:15, 17, 28; 6:15, 17, 21, 28). Furthermore, the term "cast" is uniquely used between chapters 3 and 6 in discussing casting people into the fiery furnace or Daniel into the lion's den (cf. 3:6, 11, 15, 20, 21, 24; 6:8, 13, 17, 25).[30] Both of these chapters also alone employ the Aramaic term for angel (מַלְאָךְ, cf. Dan 3:28; 6:16). Given that quite a few of these words are only found in between chapters 3 and 6, it stands that these chapters are parallel.[31] Daniel's point is whether over Babylon or Medo-Persia, Yahweh still rules. Given the parallel, if the angel of Daniel 3 was the pre-incarnate Christ, then the angel of Daniel 6 was also the same individual.

Because of these factors, Miller concludes:

> Who was the "angel" who spent the night in the den with Daniel? He may have been a member of the angelic host, but it is more likely that this heavenly being was the divine angelic messenger, the angel of the Lord (cf. Gen 16:11–14; 22:15–16; Exod 3:2–4; Judg 6:11–26; 13:13–23; 1 Chr 21:16–18). Although the LXX interpreted the text to mean that "God" saved Daniel from the lions, Lacocque comments, "It is nothing other than the very presence of God, as the LXX has well understood." The angel was evidently visible to Daniel, and it is comforting to think of the faithful old prophet spending the night in fellowship with the Lord during this trying ordeal (cf. comments on 3:24–27).[32]

Daniel 7

Scholars have variously identified the "one like a son of man" (כְּבַר אֱנָשׁ) found at the climax of the vision of Daniel 7. Some have contended that this one is a symbolic figure representing the saints or the nation of Israel.[33] They argue that the very text of Daniel 7 interprets the character that way. In response to Daniel's question of what the vision meant (Dan 7:16), the angel informed him that the horn waged war against the saints who in the end would receive the kingdom and glory (cf. Dan 7:27). Because such language was used uniquely for

[30] The only exception to this is Dan 7:9, which probably uses the term in incorporating all that was happening earlier in the book. The irony is that while God's people were cast in seeming defeat and persecution into life threatening situations, in the end, God casts thrones to support them in ultimate triumph in His Son.

[31] See Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven*, 71.

[32] Miller, *Daniel*, 187.

[33] Collins, "The Son of Man and the Saints," 51–55.

the "one like a son of man," commentators observe that the individual must be one and the same with the saints.[34]

Others posit that the "one like a son of man" is an angel. Considering that angels were involved in numerous deliverances leading up to Daniel 7, scholars argue that it makes sense this final deliverance belongs to such a being.[35] Likewise, Daniel 7 seems to connect to later passages in the book that refer to angelic messengers such as Gabriel (cf. Dan 8:16) and Michael (cf. 10:13). In addition to these parallel descriptions of glory, Gabriel is described as one "who had an appearance of a man" (כְּמַרְאֵה־גָבֶר, Dan 8:15), highly similar language to Daniel 7:13. Based upon these interconnections, scholars contend that Daniel's own interpretation clarifies that the figure in Daniel 7 is an angel.

However, identifying the "one like a son of man" either as Israel or as an angel has problems. For one, the "one like a son of man" has different experiences and arises in history at a different time than the saints. The "one like a son of man," unlike the saints, does not suffer under the reign of the horn in Daniel 7:8, 11. Similarly, the son of man does not appear on scene until after the horn has been defeated (Dan 7:13) whereas the saints live under his dominion (v. 21). In addition, while the word "man" (אֱנָשׁ) can be collective in the book of Daniel (Dan 3:10; 4:17, 22) the term "son" in the singular is not (cf. Dan 3:25; 5:22). Linguistically, it is difficult then to view the phrase "one like a son of man" as symbolic of a corporate entity. These factors argue that while there may be parallels between the "one like a son of man" and the saints, they are not identical.

Likewise, relegating the "one like a son of man" to a mere angel is unlikely. In Scripture, no angel is destined to reign over all kingdoms of the world (cf. Heb 2:5) and to receive worship (cf. Rev 22:9). Moreover, the supposed parallel between later parts of Daniel and Daniel 7 are not as tight as they may initially seem. Though both the "one like a son of man" (כְּבַר אֱנָשׁ) and Gabriel in Daniel 8 (כְּמַרְאֵה־גָבֶר) are compared with a human being, their descriptions are quite different. The description of the "one like a son of man" stresses His transcendent glory (Dan 7:13–14) whereas the emphasis of Gabriel's description is on his humanlike appearance. The terms for "man" in both passages (אֱנָשׁ vs. גֶבֶר) also do not correspond. Moreover, the language of "appearance" (כְּמַרְאֵה) in Daniel is used to distinguish Gabriel, who appears like a man (כְּמַרְאֵה־גָבֶר; cf. Dan 10:18), from the figure in Daniel 10:6, who appears like lightning (כְּמַרְאֵה בָרָק). In the book of Daniel, the language of appearance is not meant to connect Gabriel with the individual in Daniel 7 but to show that the figure in Daniel 10:18 is not to be confused with Gabriel.[36] In addition to all these differences, that Gabriel is named and the figure in Daniel 7 is unnamed is yet another distinction between the two. The anonymity of the "one like a son of man" distinguishes Him from any angel and even unites Him with the unnamed angels earlier in Daniel (cf. Dan 3:28; 6:22).[37] Similar to the saints in Daniel 7, Gabriel may share some resemblance to the "one like a son of man" (cf. Dan 8:15–16), but they are distinct.

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[34] J. Montgomery, *The Book of Daniel*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 310.

[35] Goldingay, *Daniel*, 171.

[36] This argues that the figure in 10:18 is more aligned with Daniel 7, see below.

[37] This is further evidence that the supernatural beings in Daniel 3:28 and 6:22 are actually Christ pre-incarnate. See above.

The resemblance may pertain to the fact that Gabriel is one who expounds upon the vision that discloses the glory of the Messiah.[38]

Having demonstrated the problems with identifying the "one like a son of man" with Israel or an angel, a case can be made for a messianic interpretation. First, the inner-textuality within Daniel argues for this. The similarities between the four materials of the image in Daniel 2 and the four creatures in Daniel 7 suggest that the two visions are parallel.[39] As such, the stone that crushes the feet of the statue in Daniel 2 parallels the "one like a son of man" that has victory over the final creature in Daniel 7:13. Since the stone, by title and description, is identified with the Messiah (see above), so the "one like a son of man" is the Messiah as well. The clarity of the stone anchors the interpretation of the Messiah. Likewise, the description of the angel in Daniel 3 and 6 also supports a messianic interpretation of Daniel 7. While the view that identifies the "one like a son of man" as Gabriel or Michael has problems, the view rightly observes a connection between the "one like a son of man" and the angels mentioned in Daniel 3 and 6. All three passages have an angelic figure involved in deliverance. All three instances do not name the supernatural agent involved (unlike Gabriel and Michael later on in the book). If the being in all these passages is the same, that Nebuchadnezzar recognizes the angel in the fiery furnace as divine (cf. Dan 3:25) suggests that this is the case with the "one like a son of man" in Daniel 7. This is further supported by the fact that the "one like a son of man" can approach the Ancient of Days and receives dominion and worship. Accordingly, the one in the vision in Daniel 7 is no mere angel but divine, climactic, and thereby a messianic figure.

Second, in addition to inner-textual considerations, inter-textual factors also support a messianic reading of Daniel 7. Of course, later revelation confirms such a perspective (cf. Matt 24:30; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27); however, previous revelation also grounds this. For one, Vries observes that the imagery of the psalms is in the background of Daniel 7. The enthronement of the "one like a son of man" matches Pss 2 and 110, both of which pertain to the eschatological Davidic ruler.[40] Vries, citing Haag, also points out the background of Psalm 89 in Daniel 7. Both passages discuss clouds (Ps 89:7; Dan 7:13), thrones (Ps 89:5; Dan 7:9), and eternal reign (Ps 89:38; Dan 7:14).[41] Just as Psalm 89 discusses the Davidic covenant and its ultimate fulfillment (cf. Ps 89:3), so Daniel 7 envisions it. Even more, the presentation of "one like a son of man" in Daniel 7 heavily alludes to Ezekiel. Vries provides a list of comparisons:

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[38] Note that Miller argues the being in Dan 8:15 is actually different than Gabriel and is Christ Himself. See Miller, *Daniel*, 231. However, this is unlikely since the term "man" (גֶּבֶר) is a word-play off of the name Gabriel. See E. Lucas, *Daniel*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 219.

[39] Parallels include that the first beast was made to stand like a man and have a heart of a man (7:4), depicting Nebuchadnezzar who was identified as the head of gold (cf. 2:38). That the bear was raised up on one side connects with the emphasis of a binary pairing of two arms found in the image (cf. 2:32). The fourth beast had iron teeth (7:7), just like the iron of the statue (2:33). The fourth beast also had ten horns (7:7) even as the statue had ten toes in its feet (2:34).

[40] Pieter de Vries, "The Identity of Him Who Is like a Son of Man in Daniel 7:13–14," *Journal for the Evangelical Study of the Old Testament* 6, no. 1 (2020): 17.

[41] de Vries, 19.

> Likewise, we read in Ezek 1 and 10 about a throne (כֶּרֶסֵא/כִּסֵּא) Dan 7:9c; Ezek. 1:26; 10:1) and about wheels (גַּלְגַּל) (Dan 7:9c–10; Ezek 1:16; 10:2, 6,13). In both cases, images related to light and fire are used (Dan 7:9c; Ezek 1:4, 13, 14, 27, 28; 8:2). What is more important, the glory of YHWH is described as having a human form (דְּמוּת כְּמַרְאֵה אָדָם) (the likeness of the appearance of a man) (Ezek 1:26). I would also point to the fact that in Ezek 8:2, the Septuagint did not read דְּמוּת כְּמַרְאֵה־אֵשׁ (likeness as the appearance of fire) but כְּמַרְאֵה־אִישׁ. However, we can see the portrait of the glory of YHWH in Ezek 1–3; 8–11 not only as the outline behind the description of the Ancient of Days in Dan 7:9–10 but also behind that of him who is like the son of man in Dan 7:13–14. The likeness of the appearance of a man of the glory of YHWH in Ezek 1–3; 8–11 is reflected not only in the figure of Ancient of Days in Dan 7 but also in the figure of the one who is like a son of man. In particular, Ezek 8 must be mentioned in this connection because there the human figure is described without any mention of the throne on which he sits. In that passage the human figure occurs separately from the throne. What is of special importance is that we can postulate a relationship between the glory (כָּבוֹד) of YHWH that is portrayed in the appearance of a man in Ezek 1:26 (דְּמוּת כְּמַרְאֵה אָדָם) and the one who is like a son of man (כְּבַר אֱנָשׁ) in Dan 7:13, that he who is like a son of man is given dominion, glory (יְקָר), and the kingship that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him.[42]

The connection between Daniel 7 and Ezekiel demonstrates that the one discussed in Daniel is the one in Ezekiel who has the very glory of Yahweh yet approaches the throne of Yahweh. Such a figure is the second person of the Triune godhead, the Messiah. Daniel 7 ties itself with Ezekiel's vision and identifies the "one like a son of man" with Christ.

Though Daniel 7 definitely associates the "one like a son of man" with the saints (cf. Dan 7:18), the vision does not equate the two but presents them in distinction. This is seen in that the "one like a son of man" is already identified by inner-textual and inter-textual allusion as His own person who is the ultimate Davidic king and divine deliverer. The reason then that the saints and the "one like a son of man" have their own distinct experiences in Daniel's vision is because the vision always portrayed them as distinct. The "one like a son of man" is the Messiah and the saints are the people joined with Him.

Daniel 9

At the heart of the famous seventy weeks prophecy, Daniel foretold the coming of Messiah the Prince (מָשִׁיחַ נָגִיד, Dan 9:25). Some have contended that this could refer to a historical ruler, perhaps even a non-Israelite as the Hebrew term נָגִיד has referred to such individuals (cf. Isa 45:1; Ezek 28:2).[43] However, given that the term מָשִׁיחַ does refer to the Messiah in the Old Testament (cf. 1 Sam 2:10; Ps 2:2), that the term "prince" can be used of Israelite royalty (cf. 1 Sam 9:16; 13:14), and that Daniel

[42] de Vries, "Son of Man," 26. See also, Chou, *I Saw the Lord*, 118–19.
[43] Goldingay, *Daniel*, 260; Montgomery, *The Book of Daniel*, 378.

has spoken of the Messiah elsewhere, the phrase arguably refers to the Messiah. This corresponds with the context of the seventy weeks prophecy, which foretells the climax of Israel's history in its salvation from sin and fulfillment of vision and prophecy (Dan 9:24). Such an eschatological context fits with a messianic individual as opposed to a historical one. The eschatological and even messianic character of the seventy weeks prophecy is recognized not only by a host of commentators, but even by the earliest Jewish interpreters.[44] In fact, even certain manuscripts of the Greek Old Testament render מָשִׁיחַ נָגִיד as κυρίῳ (Lord), a title picked up in the New Testament for the Messiah.[45] Such agreement illustrates the clarity of messianic intention in Daniel 9, both with the phrase מָשִׁיחַ נָגִיד in Daniel 9:25 and the repetition of the term מָשִׁיחַ in the next verse.

However, the question is whether in verse 26 the "prince who is to come" (נָגִיד הַבָּא) refers to Christ. Since the word "prince" (נָגִיד) is found in verse 25, discussing the Messiah, Gentry contends that the prince in verse 26 must refer to the same individual.[46] In response, several factors of consideration argue against such a view. First, as mentioned, the term "prince" by itself does not necessarily refer to the Messiah. By itself, it can even refer to Gentile rulers and historical individuals, and later in Daniel, this is the case. In Daniel 11:22, the "prince" referred to is most likely Onias III, who lived during the reign of Antiochus IV.[47] So "prince" does not automatically have to refer to the Messiah, not even in the book of Daniel. Second, the language of "one who is to come" distinguishes the prince in Daniel 9:26 from the prince of Daniel 9:25. Since, in the context of the prophecy, the Messiah had already arrived on scene, it is odd to claim that He is still coming. Instead, saying the "prince to come" creates a distinction between the messianic prince who has been cut off for His people and the prince who is yet to come. Third, the "prince who is to come" is described as one who brings abominations (שִׁקּוּצִים) and makes desolate (שֹׁמֵם; 9:27). Such language is used not with Christ but with the Antichrist (cf. Dan 12:11; Matt 24:15). This accounts for why the term "prince" is used in verse 26. The Antichrist will attempt to deceive many to think he is the Christ even though he is anything but. The repetition of the term "prince" foretells this confusion. This too demonstrates the necessity of a distinction between "Messiah the prince" and the "prince who is to come."[48] That being said, the Messiah is present in Daniel 9 in determining the critical moments and climax of Israel's history and even defines the eschatological archnemesis of God's people.

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[44] Robert C. Newman, "Daniel's Seventy Weeks and the Old Testament Sabbath-Year Cycle," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 16, no. 4 (1973): 229–34; Dean R. Ulrich, "How Early Judaism Read Daniel 9:24–27," *Old Testament Essays (New Series)* 27, no. 3 (2014): 1062–83; Ron (Ronald) Haydon, "The 'Seventy Sevens' (Daniel 9:24) in Light of Heptadic Themes in Qumran," *Journal for the Evangelical Study of the Old Testament* 3, no. 2 (2014): 203–14.

[45] Especially as other Old Greek translations have χριστῷ κυρίῳ, this could partially explain the prevalence of this title in the New Testament. See Montgomery, *The Book of Daniel*, 378, 401.

[46] Peter J. Gentry, "Daniel's Seventy Weeks and the New Exodus," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 14 (2010): 32–35.

[47] Lucas, *Daniel*, 284.

[48] There are additional times that Daniel in this passage took previous messianic prophecies and revealed that the Antichrist will imitate them in a perverse way. For example, Isaiah recorded that Christ will justify the many (Isa 53:11) but the Antichrist would make a false covenant with the many (Dan 9:28).

Daniel 10

The question of the identity of the figure in Daniel 10:4–9 is difficult. Some have argued that this is not the Messiah but perhaps Gabriel or another interpreting angel found in other visions (cf. Dan 9:21). That the angel raises his hands and swears by God (as opposed to Himself) may argue that he is not deity (compare with Gen 22:16 and Heb 6:13). Furthermore, some of his descriptions match the living creatures in Ezekiel's vision.[49] People are hesitant to identify this one as God the Son, especially given the fact that it appears he requires assistance later on in the passage (Dan 10:13). The similarities the messenger has with God's glory in Ezekiel, Daniel, or the book of Revelation may be due to his association with that glory as opposed to possessing it.[50]

Nevertheless, a case can be made that the individual in Daniel 10:4–9 is Christ. Daniel's description deliberately distinguishes between this character and Gabriel. Daniel earlier described Gabriel's appearance as that of a man (כְּמַרְאֵה־גָבֶר, 8:15), but the angel in Daniel 10 had an appearance quite different, one of lightning (כְּמַרְאֵה בָרָק; Dan 10:6). The repetition of the term appearance (מַרְאֶה) with two quite divergent descriptions argues that Daniel deliberately differentiated Gabriel from the person in Daniel 10. Daniel set the two in contrast as opposed to comparison. The figure in Daniel 10 is also distinguished from Gabriel in that he is never named but Gabriel is (cf. Dan 8:16). Counter to some who contend that this person must be the same one who requires help in Daniel 10:13, the discourse structure in Daniel 10 suggests a change of scene after verse 9, making it very possible that individual in Daniel 10:4–9 is different than the one later on in the chapter.[51] Initially, nothing definitively anchors this individual to being an angel, Gabriel or otherwise. In fact, there is some effort to differentiate this figure from any known angel, adding to His mystique, which is why there is a question of His identity to begin with.

There are characteristics of the person in Daniel 10 that do inter-textually connect with the Messiah. Most definitively, He is described as "a certain man dressed in linen" (אִישׁ־אֶחָד לָבוּשׁ בַּדִּים), wording that is distinctively only found in Ezekiel 9:2 (וְאִישׁ־אֶחָד בְּתוֹכָם לָבֻשׁ בַּדִּים). The figure in Ezekiel 9:2 cannot be any ordinary angel as He approached God's very throne and is able to behold and bear His glory (Ezek 10:2–6). Given that the One in Ezekiel was also the agent of God's salvation of Israel (Ezek 9:11), His identity is arguably the Messiah, God the Son. If the figure in Ezekiel 9:2 is Christ and the one in Daniel 10 is uniquely identified as the same individual, the one in Daniel 10 is also Christ. Moreover, while there are initial similarities between the one in Daniel 10 with the angelic living creatures in Ezekiel's vision, there are marked differences.[52] The differences demonstrate that the

[49] Both the living creatures and this individual are described with beryl or Tarshish stone, lightning, and bronze.

[50] Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven*, 147–48.

[51] The phrase וְהִנֵּה is not only disjunctive, potentially marking a new section, but with the deictic marker, points the audience's attention to a specific focal point or new entity on scene. Cf. IBHS, §16.3.5.b, 300. §

[52] Fundamentally, the living creatures take the form of animals whereas the being in Dan 10 is in the form of a man. As a result, while both are described with bronze, different parts of their form have this

individual in Daniel 10 is not identical with the living creatures of Ezekiel's vision but associated with them. Specifically, He is the glory they reflect and per Ezekiel's vision, such glory belongs to the One seated on the divine chariot who, while being God, is like a man (cf. Ezek 1:26). Such a description tightly corresponds with Daniel's discussion of "one like a son of man" (Dan 7:13). Considering that Daniel alludes to Ezekiel frequently, even in Daniel 7 (Dan 7:9; cf. Ezek 1:15),[53] Daniel depicts the one in Daniel 10 as the very figure of Ezekiel's vision. The center of Ezekiel's vision is the center of Daniel's vision. He is the Christ, God the Son, the One who bears divine glory and authority. This is affirmed by the book of Revelation which describes Christ in identical terms (cf. Rev 1:14–15).[54]

Structure

The above discussion surveyed chapter by chapter through Daniel, proving Daniel's deliberateness in foretelling the Messiah. In so doing, Daniel pulled on various messianic threads in the Old Testament, from Genesis to Ezekiel. The final factor that remains concerns Daniel's deliberateness in piecing all of this together. Put differently, did Daniel just have a series of disparate portraits of the Messiah or did he intend for his readers to put them together into a cohesive whole?

In response, the above discussion initially noted linkages between certain passages. Daniel 2 and 7 are parallel in that four nations are presented culminating in the Messiah. Daniel 2 and 3 are connected in that the imagery of the statue and stone of Daniel 2 is taken up in Daniel 3. Daniel 3 and 6 share many parallels, which is part of the argument of why the one who rescued Daniel from the lion's den is the same that rescued his friends from the fiery furnace.[55] These interconnections already argue that though Daniel spoke of the Messiah in individual passages, they were meant to provide a compounding picture.

The structure of Daniel solidifies these preliminary observations. The book of Daniel is not organized chronologically. For example, Daniel 7 occurs in the first year of Belshazzar and Daniel 8 in his third year even though Daniel 5 already recounted his final days. Daniel 9 occurs in the first year of Darius even though Daniel 6 already discussed events in that time period. In light of this, Daniel did not structure his book chronologically but topically. Specifically, scholars readily observe that the book is chiastic. For example, Vries proposes the following double chiasm:[56]

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character. Likewise, while the being in Daniel 10 has the appearance of lightning, it appears that lightning flashes around the living creatures. The being in Daniel 10 had eyes that were torches of fire but the living creatures had flashing torches among them. These distinctions distinguish what was happening around and associated with the living creatures with the living creatures themselves. This supports the notion that the living creatures reflect the glory of God, but the person in Daniel 10 is that very glory.

[53] For example, both discuss the chariot throne of God (Dan 7:9; cf. Ezek 1:15).

[54] Both have eyes that are flaming fire, feet of burnished bronze, and a golden sash.

[55] See above. See also, Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven*, 71.

[56] Notice that the structure gives heed to parallels already established. Chapter 2 and 7 are parallel even as chapters 3 and 6 are parallel.

A – The dream of Nebuchadnezzar: four empires and God's future kingdom (ch. 2)
B – The friends of Daniel tried by fire and delivered (ch. 3)
C Nebuchadnezzar warned, chastised, and delivered (ch. 4)
C' Belshazzar warned, defiant, and deposed (ch. 5)
B' – Daniel tried in the lions' den and delivered (ch. 6)
A' – The vision of Daniel: four empires and the everlasting kingdom of him who is like a son of man (ch. 7)
A – The destiny of the world is revealed to Daniel, with its final outcome being the everlasting kingdom of him who is like a son of man (ch. 7)
B –Daniel's vision of the triumph and end of the empire of Alexander the Great and its explanation by Gabriel (ch. 8)
B' – Daniel's prayer for the end of his people's exile and the answer to his prayer by Gabriel (ch. 9)
A' – A celestial figure reveals to Daniel what will happen to his people at the end of history (ch. 10–12)

With this structure, the center of the double chiasm is chapter 7. This coincides with the observation of other scholars that Daniel 7 is a hinge chapter for the book.[57] Daniel 7 concludes the Aramaic portion of Daniel, yet its themes of the horns and creatures representing nations are carried on into the latter half of Daniel (cf. 8:3–8; 11:1–45). Indeed, Daniel 7 is the central chapter of the book by position and by design.

Scholars often contemplate if there is a center in the theology of Peter or Paul.[58] For Daniel, there is little doubt. The parallelisms between chapters initially observed are indicative of a greater organization of the entire book. Such structure demonstrates that Daniel arranged all of his messianic discussions (and thereby significant strands of Old Testament Christology that Daniel alluded to) to come together in the central depiction of Daniel 7 and the "one like a son of man." That is the unifying center of Daniel's Christology.

The Christology of the Son of Man

Having identified that Daniel has a cohesive Christology, one that fleshes out the notion of the Son of Man, it is appropriate to trace each part as they come together in the whole.

Daniel 2: The Son of Man Identified

The events described in Daniel 2 introduce both Nebuchadnezzar and the readers of the book of Daniel to the revelation of Messiah in Daniel's ministry. God, in His design, revealed Christ in terms familiar to Daniel and his audience in order to develop

[57] Richard D. Patterson, "The Key Role of Daniel 7," *Grace Theological Journal* 12, no. 2 (1991): 250; J. G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 137; Goldingay, *Daniel*, 151–52.

[58] See Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 16–18; Ernst Kasemann, "God's Righteousness in Paul," *Journal of Theology and Church* 1 (1965): 100–10.

that which was less defined, the concept of the Son of Man. Because of this, it is significant that the Messiah is first introduced with the term "stone" (אֶבֶן, 2:34). As noted, the word is one of the most ancient titles of the Messiah (cf. Gen 49:24), emphasizing His constancy and reliability. The Messiah is the One who would not waver but ensure Israel's destiny.[59] It is used particularly of the ultimate king of the Davidic dynasty, the unwavering One in whom Israel should put their trust (cf. Isa 28:16).

Nebuchadnezzar's dream reinforced these very characteristics of the stone. Fundamentally, that the Stone crushed the statue accords with the fact that the stone metaphor emphasizes the Messiah's great strength and resilience. Even more, the Babylonian king's dream affirms that the Stone is divine as the stone is one "cut out without hands" (הִתְגְּזָרַת אֶבֶן דִּי־לָא בִידַיִן). The language "without hands" is used consistently to refer to divine intervention through Scripture (cf. Mark 14:58; Col 2:11) and particularly within Daniel (cf. Dan 8:25).[60] Finally, Daniel emphasized the royalty of the stone. He paralleled the Stone with other kings and emphasized that He will crush them and their kingdoms such that "not a trace of them was found" (וְכָל־אֲתַר לָא־הִשְׁתְּכַח, 2:35b). Daniel further declared that the kingdom of the messianic king will be like a mountain that fills the earth (לְטָוּר רַב וּמְלֵת כָּל־אַרְעָא, 2:35c). The language of "fill the earth" alludes to a variety of texts which describe the glory of Yahweh filling the earth (cf. Isa 6:3; Ezek 43:2).[61] It describes the eschatological moment that the majesty of God's light alone reigns over all the earth with no competitor, not even the sun, moon, and stars (cf. Isa 24:23), banishing all night, sin, and evil (cf. Isa 60:19–20).[62] Such an emphasis on king and kingdom affirms the Messiah as the culmination of the Davidic dynasty and as such, the ultimate ruler of the world (cf. Ps 72:8). The title of "stone" introduces Daniel's discussion of the Messiah and brings forth the key characteristics of resilience, divinity, and royalty that are foundational for concept of the Son of Man.

Daniel 3 and 6: The Son of Man Proven

Having announced that the Stone will overtake all kingdoms and possess the ultimate kingdom of the world, Daniel recounted that the Lord proved this truth. In Daniel 3, King Nebuchadnezzar defied the dream God revealed by constructing his own image out of gold (Dan 3:1). The Babylonian king contended that he was the sum of man's strength and that he, not the Stone, was the final ruler of this world. However, the ruler discovered that his plans, as mighty as they were (cf. Dan 3:6, 19), could not oppose the power of God. In gazing into the fiery furnace, the king was confronted not only with the survival of Daniel's three friends but a fourth figure, one whom he immediately recognized as divine and the very emissary of God (Dan 3:25, 28).[63] Nebuchadnezzar attempted to stop God's plan for the Stone but in the end was confronted by that very Stone. Daniel 3 demonstrated that the Stone was

[59] Matthews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 905; Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 18–50*, 684.
[60] Matthews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 905; Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 18–50*, 684.
[61] See Chou, *I Saw the Lord*, 118.
[62] John Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 887; John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40–66*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 557. See also Chou, *I Saw the Lord*, 70–72.
[63] See earlier discussion.

indeed divine, cannot be resisted, and is the final ruler over all, just as Daniel 2 established. Even more, that the Messiah was not touched by the flame alludes back to Isaiah 43:2, which prophesies as much for Israel's final deliverance from exile.[64] Daniel 3 exhibits the person and the eschatological capability of Christ.

In paralleling Daniel 3, Daniel 6 continues the proof that the Stone truly is who Nebuchadnezzar's dream said He is. As the kingdom of Medo-Persia arises, the question is whether God and His plan advances unhindered in these new conditions or will be stopped by a more powerful king and kingdom than Babylon.[65] The parallels between the chapters demonstrate that though new circumstances arise, nothing in essence has changed. To be sure, Daniel was thrown (רמה, Dan 6:17, 25) in the lion's den just as his friends were thrown (רמה) in the fiery furnace earlier (Dan 3:6, 11, 15, 20, 21). However, just as Daniel's friends were protected by the pre-incarnate Christ, so that One shut the lions' mouths (Dan 6:22). Christ's divinity and resilience are on display again, proving that the Stone triumphs over not just one kingdom but any and all. He is the final king that Daniel 2 prophesied.

Within Daniel 6, just as the Messiah's control over the flame in Daniel 3 is significant, so the Messiah's control over the lions also carries theological weight. Fundamentally, it is noteworthy that the only other time the lion's mouth is used in the Old Testament is in Psalm 22 where it speaks of the deliverance of the psalmist from the lion's mouth (מִפִּי אַרְיֵה, Ps 22:21 [Heb., v. 22]; compare with אַרְיָוָתָא פֻּם, Dan 6:23). Given Daniel's inter-textuality throughout his book, such linguistic distinctiveness suggests that this may be a proleptic assurance of the Messiah's deliverance prophesied in Psalm 22.[66] The Messiah will be delivered from the lion like strength of His foes for He has the power to overcome actual lions as seen in Daniel's life. Furthermore, the assurance of such might contributes to the ongoing development of the Son of Man in the book of Daniel. The Messiah's control over the lions sets up for the beasts (חֵינָן, Greek OT: θηρία) He will overcome in Daniel 7.[67] It is a reminder that Christ's dominion is not merely over kingdoms but even creation, a truth that carries ramifications into His earthly ministry (cf. Mark 1:13, καὶ ἦν μετὰ τῶν θηρίων).[68]

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[64] Miller, *Daniel*, 142; Goldingay, *Daniel*, 68; Baldwin, *Daniel*, 112; Lucas, *Daniel*, 95.

[65] Lucas, *Daniel*, 145.

[66] For example, Daniel refers to the Psalms in Daniel 2, with the mention of the Stone (Ps 118:22), the wicked being like chaff (Ps 1:4), and the mention of a great mountain (Pss 2:6; 48:1–2; 68:16). Given Daniel's familiarity with the psalms and their influence, it is not unreasonable that other psalms, like Ps 22, would be involved as well.

[67] Lucas, *Daniel*, 147.

[68] To be clear, the presence of the beasts is not necessarily one of pure Edenic imagery, but rather one of struggle. Their presence highlights His suffering yet demonstrates He came to have ultimate dominion over all creation. See Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, vol. 34A (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 38. However, France is correct (over Guelich) that Christ's presence with the animals does not necessarily denote one of peace but of conflict and conquest. R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 86. Along that line, Lane argues that the wild animals testify to the victory of the New Adam against Satan, which is valid but Lane fails to cite an anchor text for such an assertion. However, the entire notion of the Son of Man/final Adam and beasts are found in Daniel 6–7, which serves as a proper grounding for such an interpretation. William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 60. See France, *Gospel of Mark*, 60. In being an alluded text, Daniel 6–7 helps to establish the right baseline of interpretation for this passage.

In ramping up for Daniel 7, Daniel assured his readers that the Stone is entirely what Daniel 2 prophesied Him to be. Daniel also began to acquaint his readers with the full context of the role of the Son of Man as He is tied to the fulfillment of Israel's destiny and end of exile, the One who would overcome suffering and enemies, and the One who has dominion not only over people but even the world. While the stories of the fiery furnace and the lions' den intend crucial lessons about the unchallengeable sovereignty of God, the infallibility of His plan, the effectiveness of His power to save, and the nature of true faithfulness to God, they simultaneously develop a Christology that will blossom in Daniel 7.

Daniel 7: The Son of Man as the Final Adam

As the center of the book, Daniel 7 incorporates what had already been revealed. After all, Daniel 7 is a recapitulation of Daniel 2. That the final beast is killed and the Messiah will take dominion (Dan 7:12–14) reenacts that the Messiah will be the Stone that crushes all the nations (cf. Dan 2:35). That the Messiah can approach the Ancient of Days and is served (פלח) by all men (Dan 7:13) affirms His divinity and that He is not made by human hands (cf. Dan 2:34). That Daniel 7 focuses upon kings (cf. vv. 17, 24) upholds the idea that the Stone is royalty (cf. Dan 2:37). Such rule becomes even more poignant given the inner-textuality of Daniel 7 with the rest of the book. The Ancient of Days grants the Son "dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and *men of every* tongue might serve Him" (Dan 7:14). Throughout the book of Daniel, kings sought and claimed dominion (שׁלט, cf. Dan 6:27), glory (יקר, Dan 2:6; 4:27), and a kingdom (מַלְכוּ, 2:37, 5:7) only to acknowledge that they do not possess these things (cf. 2:37; 3:33; 4:34; 5:18, 21). Likewise, throughout the book, kings also sought the recognition of "all the peoples, nations, and *men of every* tongue" (cf. Dan 3:4; 5:19) only to acknowledge that God was over these peoples (cf. 4:1; 6:26). The inability of the kings to seize such majesty is because such dominion, glory, kingdom, and worship belongs to one and only one: the Lord Jesus Christ. God has reserved this global power for His Son, and all history attests that fact as no one can possess such might. All this to say, Daniel 7 certainly reinforces and expounds upon the key characteristics of the Messiah presented in Daniel 2.

Daniel 7 also reinforces what was presented in Daniel 3 and 6. The One whom the flames cannot touch (cf. 3:25) stands in the midst of the throne and river of fire (Dan 7:9–10). His victory secures the triumph of the saints from their time in exile (Dan 7:16–27), which affirms the point of Daniel's allusion to Isaiah 43:2 in Daniel 3. Daniel 7 also presents that Christ reigns over creatures (cf. Dan 7:1–8), which accords with the Messiah's power over lions in Daniel 6 (cf. v. 22). The Messiah is king not only over the nations but the world. With that, Daniel 7 reiterates the strands of Christology laid throughout the book.

Daniel though does not merely repeat what was said before but adds a new element onto these descriptions. After all, even though Daniel 7 recapitulates Daniel 2, Daniel 7 does not repeat the metaphor of a statue found in Daniel 2. Instead, Daniel 7 depicts the nations as different beasts (Dan 7:1–9) in the context of the winds of heaven stirring a great sea. Lacocque rightly observes that these elements mirror the

creation account of Genesis 1.[69] This explains the title "one like a son of man" (כְּבַר אֱנָשׁ) in Daniel 7:13. Just as creation starts with the spirit (רוּחַ, Gen 1:2) hovering over the waters, then the making of heaven (הַשָּׁמַיִם, Gen 1:8), the waters and the sea (יַמִּים, Gen 1:10), the beasts (Gen 1:25) and then the creation of Adam (Gen 1:26–28), so Daniel 7 discusses the wind (רוּחַ, Dan 7:2a), the heavens (שְׁמַיָּא; Dan 7:2b), the sea (יַם, Dan 7:2c), the beasts (Dan 7:3–9), and "one like a son of man" (Dan 7:13). In light of these parallels, the "one like a son of man" parallels Adam, which explains why the one in Daniel 7 bears the title "one like a son of man." Christ is "*like* a son of man" in that He shares some similarity with Adam even while there are differences. While being truly man and of Adam's line, the Messiah is still distinct from man because He is equal to the Ancient of Days (see above). He is *like* Adam because He is everything Adam failed to be and should have been. The "one like a son of man" then is the final Adam, and Daniel 7 adds that truth to Daniel's Christology.

However, the Son of Man is not merely an element in Daniel's Christology but its unifying principle. Fundamentally, as mentioned, the structure of the book centers on Daniel 7, making it centrifugal. Even more, all Christological elements found previously in the book are not merely found in Daniel 7 but seamlessly incorporated in the creation motif of the chapter. They are presented as part of the cohesive whole of the final Adam's work and destiny. In Genesis, the first Adam functioned as a ruler, as he was to have dominion (Gen 1:26–28). His rule extended not only over people but over the very created order (Gen 1:28). To this end, he was made in the image of God (בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים) and functioned as the representative head of humanity (cf. Gen 5:1–3) with the name "Adam" (אָדָם) being a term to refer to mankind (cf. Gen 1:27; 5:2). Daniel 7 systematically depicts the Son of Man in such terms. For one, Daniel 7 establishes the Messiah as ruler and king (cf. 7:13, 17; see above), possessing final dominion. It is fascinating that some Greek translations of the Old Testament use the same Greek root to render the dominion that Adam was to have (ἀρχέτωσαν) and the dominion that the Messiah will have (ἡ ἀρχὴ, Dan 7:14). There was even an ancient recognition of the connection between the two. Furthermore, just as Adam was to rule over the entire created order (cf. Gen 1:26–28), so the Son of Man will, which is precisely why Daniel 7 uses creation imagery. That Adam was made in God's image explains why the term "like" is used for the Son of Man in Daniel 7 (כְּבַר אֱנָשׁ).

As discussed, the Son of Man is "like" Adam because He is not only man but God. However, that makes the Son of Man the true image of God. This notion is supported by Ezekiel's vision, a vision incorporated in the dream of Daniel 7 (Dan 7:9; cf. Ezek 1:15).[70] In Ezekiel's vision, the prophet used comparative language to describe God's glory (דְּמוּת, 1:10, 13, 16, 26, 28), even while alluding to the image language of Genesis 1 (cf. Gen 1:26, כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ בְּצַלְמֵנוּ אָדָם).[71] In so doing, Ezekiel

[69] André Lacocque, "Allusions to Creation in Daniel 7," in *Book of Daniel Volume One*, ed. John Joseph Collins, Peter W. Flint, and Cameron VanEpps (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 114–31.

[70] See previous discussion. See also, Chou, *I Saw the Lord*, 118.

[71] In fact, the tie between Ezekiel and Daniel is strengthened as Ezekiel is the originator of the language of "appearance" or "like the appearance" (כְּמַרְאֶה) found so often in Daniel (Ezek 1:28; Dan 8:15; 10:6, 18). This further ties Daniel with Ezekiel in the specific line of comparison, image, and likeness language.

declared that Christ is not merely *in* the image of God but the image of God Himself because He is divine.[72] By using the same language and logic in this passage, Daniel upholds the same idea. The "one like a son of man" is meant to show that while the Messiah has some similarity to Adam, He has gone beyond him. The technical title of the "one like a son of man" is intended to show the fulfillment of the Adamic role. It is precisely as Kim observed, "when Ezekiel says he saw God in the form or likeness of man he is describing the reverse side of the great statement in Gen 1.26f that man was made בצלם כדמות of God."[73]

Moreover, just as Adam was the head of humanity, so the "one like a son of man" has corporate solidarity with the saints. That is why God's people receive the same reward as the Son of Man. It is not because they are one and the same but because of His perfect representation of them. Just as His resilience in the fire in Daniel 3 testifies that Israel will be delivered from the fire of exile (Isa 43:2), so His reward in Daniel 7 will be theirs as well. Even more, just as the name Adam correlates with the very word for humanity, so the title "one like a son of man" (כְּבַר אֱנָשׁ) uses the very word in Aramaic for mankind in Daniel (אֱנָשׁ, cf. Dan 2:10, 38, 43, 3:10; 4:16; 17, 25, 32). The Son of Man's title shows not only His humanity and connection with Adam, but even more functions the same way the name "Adam" did in Genesis. Christ is the final Adam, the final ruler over the entire created order and the head of God's people.

With that, the concepts found in Daniel of divinity, humanity, royalty, dominion, representation and headship may seem quite disparate; however, they all cohere together in a singular concept. The different elements God revealed and Daniel recorded were not scattered descriptions of Christ. Rather, they were introduced (Daniel 2) and proven (Daniel 3 and 6) to demonstrate that the Messiah truly is the fulfillment of Adam in all that he originally was to be. In the historical context of the fall of Jerusalem, the defeat of Judah, and the collapse of the Davidic dynasty, Daniel proclaims the true triumph of the ultimate Davidic king. He will not merely be ruler of Israel. He will not merely rule over various events or even every nation. Rather, He will be the One who reigns over the entire created order—every place on the earth and all that fills them. He will have dominion, glory, and a kingdom that every human king vied for but could never possess. To those who thought Babylon or any other nation might rival their God, Daniel declared that these nations are no rival to God's Son. He is the final Adam, the ultimate man, one unmatched and unparalleled by any man, and the very destiny of this world and its history. All of that is because the Son of Man is not merely a man but the very image of God as God Himself.

Daniel 9: The Means to Being the Son of Man

Having disclosed the central idea of the Son of Man, the question is whether the rest of the book carries this idea forward. This is particularly at issue in Daniel 9. While

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[72] Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels*, 83–87; Julian Morgenstern, "'Son of Man' of Daniel 7:13f: A New Interpretation," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 80, no. 1 (Mar 1961): 76–77; Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel*, 207; Gordon H. Johnston, "Messianic Trajectories in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel," in *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of Israel's King*, ed. Herbert W. Bateman IV, Darrell L. Bock, and Gordon H. Johnston (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012), 187; Chou, *I Saw the Lord*, 143.

[73] Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel*, 207.

Daniel 9 explicitly discusses the Messiah (מָשִׁיחַ נָגִיד, Dan 9:25; see above discussion), does Daniel 9 connect with Daniel 7 especially since Daniel 9 does not call Christ the Son of Man? Several factors argue that there is a fundamental connection between the two passages. First, the famous seventy weeks prophecy marks the fulfillment of vision and prophecy (וְלַחְתֹּם חָזוֹן וְנָבִיא), which would include Daniel 7. Second, the seventy weeks prophecy also describes the fulfillment of an *everlasting* (עֹלָמִים) righteousness, a term used consistently in the book to refer to the culmination of God's kingdom on earth (cf. Dan 4:3, 34; 7:14, 27; 9:24; 12:2). In speaking of an everlasting righteousness, Daniel 9 looks to the same outcome as the everlasting kingdom of Daniel 7:14 and 7:27. Finally, Daniel 9 inner-textually overlaps with Daniel 7. Daniel 7 speaks of a horn that wages war against the saints (Dan 7:21). Daniel 8 connects with Daniel 7 by also describing a horn who causes desolation (שמם) to God's people (cf. Dan 8:13). Though the horn in Daniel 8 describes a different ruler than the one in Daniel 7, the common imagery unifies both. The horn in Daniel 8 prefigures the eschatological horn prophesied in Daniel 7. Daniel 9 connects with Daniel 8 and 7 by prophesying about that very individual, the eschatological figure who makes desolate (מְשֹׁמֵם, Dan 9:27). Hence, as opposed to being disconnected from Daniel 7, Daniel 9 connects with and expounds upon Daniel 7.

What then is the nature of the connection between the two passages and why does Daniel 9 not use the title of "one like a son of man"? The seventy weeks prophecy lays out the major landmarks of Israel's future. Instead of Israel's exile being over in seventy years (Dan 9:2; cf. Jer 25:11–12; 29:10), its conclusion will revolve around a much longer set of time, seventy times seven years.[74] Because this timeline involves the most major events of Israel's history, the central figure of Israel's history, the Messiah, must be involved. So the events presented in Daniel 9 lay out the path for vision and prophecy to be fulfilled as the Messiah attains everlasting righteousness for His people in His kingdom.[75] These seventy weeks are the means for the Messiah to reach the end of being the Son of Man.

Daniel 9 prophesies that the Messiah will come after the reconstruction of Jerusalem and be "cut off and have nothing" (יִכָּרֵת מָשִׁיחַ וְאֵין לוֹ, Dan 9:26). The language of "cut off" not only refers to execution but the most shameful and wrathful death. It is a death of covenantal proportions as one who is cut off is separated from the blessings of God's people and put under God's curse (cf. Exod 30:33, 38; 31:14; Lev 7:25, 27; 17:4).[76] Scholars rightly recognize that this refers to the crucifixion, and Isaiah 53:8 uses a synonym (גזר) to foretell of the same event.[77] With such a death, the Messiah would have nothing. It will appear He does not have any possession, allies, success, or reward for His efforts, a reality that was certainly true

[74] See Dean R. Ulrich, "The Need for More Attention to Jubilee in Daniel 9:24–27," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 26, no. 4 (2016): 481–500; Newman, "Daniel's Seventy Weeks and the Old Testament Sabbath-Year Cycle"; Gentry, "Daniel's Seventy Weeks"; G Geoffrey Harper, "The Theological and Exegetical Significance of Leviticus as Intertext in Daniel 9," *Journal for the Evangelical Study of the Old Testament* 4, no. 1 (2015): 39–61; Ulrich, "The Need for More Attention to Jubilee in Daniel 9."

[75] See above discussion about how the terms "everlasting" and "vision and prophecy" link Daniel 9 with Daniel 7.

[76] Miller, *Daniel*, 267; Lucas, *Daniel*, 266; Baldwin, *Daniel*, 190.

[77] Miller, *Daniel*, 267. Isaiah's use of גזר is unique, only occurring in Isa 53, though Isaiah always uses כרת of either the covenant or those who are genuinely wicked, so his use of גזר demonstrates both violence done to Jesus and that Jesus is not deserving of such wickedness.

at the crucifixion (cf. Matt 27:35) and also prophesied by Isaiah (cf. Isa 53:1–10). According to Daniel, the means to the eschatological glory and honor of the Son of Man is through the sacrificial suffering of Messiah the prince.

This explains the distinction of titles between Daniel 7 and 9. The title "one like a son of man" is associated with the eschatological outcome described in Daniel 7. The title "Messiah" is associated with the means to that outcome described in Daniel 9. Technically in the seventy weeks prophecy, the Messiah is entitled "Messiah the prince" (מָשִׁיחַ נָגִיד), where "prince" (נָגִיד) not only refers to the royalty in the Davidic line (2 Sam 7:8) but also the priestly leaders of Israel (cf. 2 Chron 35:8). Such a title is fitting for the priestly work of dying for His people described in Daniel 9:26. Nevertheless, though the titles refer to distinctive realities about Christ, they are connected. The idea of "one like a son of man" entails such suffering as it does include the Messiah's humanity, a reality that is necessary for Him to be cut off for His people. Accordingly, at least in Daniel's theology, Son of Man emphasizes eschatological glory but not to the absolute exclusion of suffering and sacrifice. Rather, such sacrifice is presumed and facilitated by Christ being the "one like a son of man."

Daniel 10–12: The Certainty of the Son of Man

The above discussion already made a case that the individual in Daniel 10:1–9 is messianic. The case should also be made that Daniel 10 connects with Daniel 7. Initially, the descriptions of the figure in Daniel 10 do not linguistically correspond with Daniel 7. However, they do heavily correspond with Ezekiel's visions. As mentioned, the phrase "certain man dressed in linen" (אִישׁ־אֶחָד לָבוּשׁ בַּדִּים, 10:5) distinctively matches Ezekiel 9:2. The figure in Daniel 10 also is described as having a body of beryl or Tarshish stone (כְּתַרְשִׁישׁ), language used in Ezekiel 10:9 concerning the man dressed in linen.[78] The being in Daniel 10 also has the appearance of lightning (כְּמַרְאֵה בָרָק), a description of the glory of God in the midst of the living creatures in Ezekiel's first vision (Ezek 1:13).[79] These parallels support that Daniel recognized the figure in Daniel 10 as the one in Ezekiel's vision.

That said, the vision of Daniel 7 is tied with Ezekiel's vision. Of particular note, a distinctive item in Ezekiel's vision is God's chariot throne, a throne that has fiery wheels (cf. Ezek 10:6). Daniel 7:9 explicitly describes a throne with wheels of burning fire (כָּרְסָיֵהּ...גַּלְגְּלוֹהִי נְוּר דְּלַק). While the divine thrones of the ANE may have been depicted with wheels, the imagery is far less common in Scripture. God's throne is mentioned numerous times (cf. Pss 45:6; 47:8; 103:19; Isa 66:1) but without wheels. In Scripture, the only times that a wheeled throne is mentioned are in Ezekiel and Daniel, linking the two together. For this reason, Miller states, "'Wheels' on a throne may at first seem strange, but the image of God sitting upon a chariot-throne with wheels is set forth in other passages, particularly Ezek 1 and 10, where the

[78] In Ezekiel 10, the man in linen is invited to commune in the very glory of the divine chariot throne and execute judgment from that throne. As such, He shares in the very glory of God which is reflected through beryl or Tarshish stone.

[79] Lamar E. Cooper, *Ezekiel*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 67.

chariot-throne is more fully described."[80] Goldingay agrees, "The vision of God enthroned especially parallels Ezek 1: the stormy wind, the cloud, the four animal-like creatures with four faces and four wings emerging from them alongside the wheels with rims full of eyes, a mighty sound (see also Deut 33:2; 1 Kgs 22:19; Isa 6; Jer 49:38; Ps 50)"[81] Sprinkle asserts, "Daniel may be alluding to Ezekiel's imagery of a chariot-throne with fiery wheels that allow it to move rapidly as required."[82] Such consensus that the imagery of the chariot throne is striking, forming a connection between the vision of Daniel 7 and Ezekiel.

Because Daniel 7 and Ezekiel's visions are connected and Daniel 10 is connected with Ezekiel's visions, then Daniel 7 and 10 are connected. Using the imagery of Ezekiel's visions, Daniel 10 offers a more in-depth description of the glory found in Daniel 7. This verifies that the "one like a son of man" is divine, sharing in the very glory of God as described in Ezekiel (cf. 1:26–28). Moreover, in context, this Christophany assures a weary Daniel that the full glory revealed to him and Ezekiel will take place. The Messiah's glorious presence comforted Daniel because it exuded the power to overcome any obstacle and demonstrated that the majesty found in Daniel's vision was not hyperbole. That the Messiah's glory served as a guarantee is confirmed at the end of the book when the one dressed in linen swears that the timing detailed in the prophecy is absolutely true and that the events of the prophecy will reach their completion (Dan 12:7). Such assurance is a fitting ending to Daniel's book of prophecy. It is equally an appropriate conclusion to Daniel's Christology. The book not only discloses the eschatological outcome of the Son of Man and the means to achieve this goal, but also that the Son of Man in all His might and glory is the guarantee of all of this (Dan 10–12). With that, Daniel established that all glory goes to Christ for He is the means, the end, and the One who is sovereign over all of this.

Conclusion

Though a small book, the impact of Daniel echoes throughout all of Scripture from the Gospels to Acts to Paul and Revelation. Even Peter's declaration that the prophets discovered "the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow" (1 Pet 1:11) is the very paradigm found in Daniel. All of this is because Daniel established the favorite title of Christ in His earthly ministry: the Son of Man.

The beginning of this article posed the following questions: What exactly is the meaning of the Son of Man? Does it refer to Christ's humanity, deity, or both and in what manner? Is there a unifying principle in the idea that accounts for the diversity of contexts in which it is found? Why does the Son of Man only appear in the gospels and Revelation and not in any other part of the New Testament?

The answer to these questions can be found in Daniel's unified Christology. Indeed, Daniel not only deliberately revealed Christ but also, under the inspiration of the Spirit, did so to expound a singular concept: the Son of Man. This pulls together all Daniel's descriptions about the Messiah, which can then give responses to the above issues.

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[80] Miller, *Daniel*, 205.
[81] Goldingay, *Daniel*, 149.
[82] Sprinkle, *Daniel*, 180.

Within this, to be sure, Daniel has a high Christology, demonstrating that Christ is God. He is the Stone, a divine title (cf. Gen 49:24), wields supernatural power (cf. Dan 3:25; 622), and bears the glory of the Ancient of Days and the One who sits on the divine chariot-throne (cf. Dan 7:9–10; 10:1–4). All of this is because Christ is One *like* a son of man, that is, while being truly man, He is more than a man. He is the very image of God and the Son of God (cf. Dan 3:25; 7:13), being God Himself. To those who are skeptical that the Old Testament ever conceptualized a divine Christology, Daniel's work debunks such a notion. As Boyarin, a Jewish scholar, recognizes, "The particle *ke* ('like') in the case of the One like a son of man is quite different in usage than the same particle with respect to the beasts. In the former case it means a real divine entity that has the form of a human being."[83]

That being said, the notion of the Son of Man includes true humanity. That is why He has solidarity with His people (Dan 7:13–14, 18) and even is cut off for them (cf. Dan 9:26). According to Daniel, while Christ is divine, taking on flesh is the means by which the Messiah achieves salvation for His people and eschatological destiny (cf. Dan 9:24). This accounts for why Son of Man can be used in contexts of glory and victory (Matt 24:27) as well as suffering (Matt 8:20). While irony is certainly a part of the intention in those latter texts, the title "Son of Man' can fundamentally relate to Christ's travail because it has always been linked with suffering and sacrifice since its origin in Daniel.

Speaking of which, Daniel's conceptualization of the Son of Man, while inclusive of His sacrifice and suffering, concentrates on His eschatological dominion. The title "Son of Man" is a reminder that He rules not only over every nation but over the entire created order. The title is a reminder that just as Adam was the progenitor of humanity's state, so Christ is determinative of the saints' destiny. The title "Son of Man" describes Christ as the destiny of the entire world and its history (cf. everlasting kingdom cf. Dan 7:27).

Understanding this concept explains the usage of the phrase in the New Testament and why it is found in some books but not others. Even in the book of Daniel, the language of "Son of Man" is used in Daniel 7 but in discussing Christ's incarnation and suffering, He is called Messiah or Christ (מָשִׁיחַ; Greek OT: Χριστός, 9:26) as well as Messiah the Prince (מָשִׁיחַ נָגִיד), which certain Greek translations render as Lord (κυρίῳ). Interestingly enough, the New Testament follows this very pattern. The phrase "Son of Man" is exclusively found in the Gospels and Revelation but not in the epistles. That is because while Christ introduced Himself and His complete mission in the Gospels, the title will not reemerge until the realization of that eschatological reality as prophesied by Revelation. Until that time, the New Testament calls Him "Christ" and "Lord" (cf. Rom 1:4; 1 Cor 1:10; 2 Cor 8:9; Jas 2:1; 2 Pet 1:8), the very titles Daniel associated with Christ's incarnational ministry. The Christology of Daniel seems to influence not only the titles the New Testament uses for Christ but in what contexts they are used in the New Testament.

Daniel's Christology illustrates the sophistication of theology in the Old Testament and that the prophets were theologians in their own right. They wrote theology and did so cohesively and with complexity, one that thoroughly shapes later revelation. That being said, one would be remiss to neglect the point of Daniel's

[83] Boyarin, "Daniel 7, Intertextuality, and the History of Israel's Cult," 151.

Christology and the very truth that drives the resolution to all the scholarly questions mentioned above. The reason that "Son of Man" is Christ's favorite title is because it introduces the fullest understanding of the Messiah, one that not only deals with the story of Israel and the Gentiles or even sin and salvation, but creation to its final creation, beginning and end. Christ is not ruler over part of this story and world, but the destiny of its entirety, and to anyone who is caught up in pride (cf. Dan 4:4–18) or downtrodden by those who possess power (cf. Dan 1:1–7; 7:23–27), Daniel declared that there is only One who then has glory, dominion, and a kingdom forever: the One who is the final Adam over this creation.

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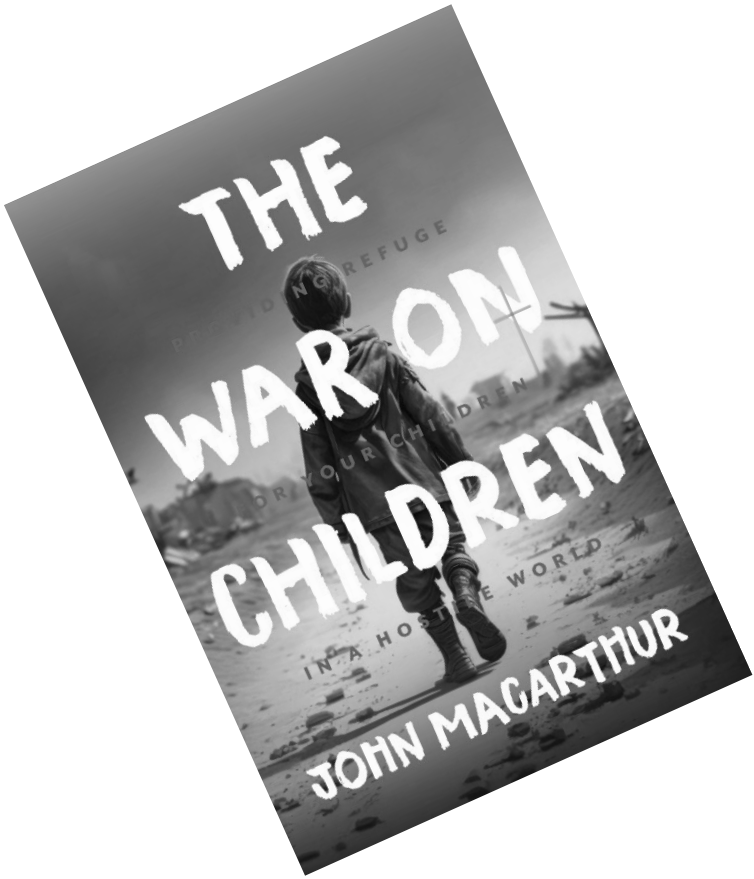

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THE HEAVENLY THIRD PARTY IN JOB: A PREVIEW OF THE WORK OF CHRIST

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* * * * *

Though the book of Job was written long before the days of Christ, it makes significant contributions to the believer's understanding of Christology. Job protests his case before God and man, observing the need for a heavenly third party to plead on his behalf. This third party is found in legal metaphor as a adjudicator between God and Job who would bring about Job's justification. Job realizes the need for this adjudicator because of God's holiness and righteousness. As this becomes clear to him, Job appeals to the heavenly third party to save him from sin, grant him a resurrection body, and reconcile him to God. This third party previews the work of Christ Jesus, who accomplishes salvation from sin, grants resurrection from the dead, and reconciliation to God for His redeemed.

* * * * *

Introduction

The book of Job has one of the most well-known passages traditionally interpreted by Christians as referring to Christ—Job 19:25 and Job's Redeemer. At the same time, much of the book's possible connections to Christ remain unexplored. Scholars sometimes assume that Job could not have had any messianic hope in his discussions with his friends. Others note the connection between Job's Redeemer or Mediator and Jesus Christ but simply conclude that Jesus fulfills Job's hope. However, this article will argue that the "heavenly third party"[1] occupies a central place in Job's arguments—especially in his desire to be reconciled to God. In fact, if there are parallels between the book of Job and Christ, they lay primarily not with Job, but with the Heavenly Third Party. This article will conclude by noting several parallels between this third party and the work of Christ.

[1] Job's Mediator/Adjudicator in Job 9:33–34; Job's Witness in 16:19–21; and Job's Redeemer in 19:25. Elihu's mediator in Job 33:23–24 deserved to be included but is outside the scope of this article. For further discussion see the above forthcoming monograph and William D. Barrick, "Messianic Implications in Elihu's 'Mediator Speech' (Job 33:23–28)" (ETS Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, 2003), 1–15.

The Heavenly Third Party and Legal Metaphor

The context of the heavenly third party is forensic. The book of Job frames the heavenly mediator as acting within a forensic framework, described in legal metaphor.[2] In fact, much of the book of Job is set within the context of a legal metaphor that depicts unfolding forensic scenarios.[3]

Job and his friends employ legal language because each speaker is attempting to understand the justice of God in the world. Job's friends are attempting to prove that God being just or righteous means He always punishes the wicked and blesses the upright in this life (Job 4:7–9; 8:3–7)—and therefore, Job's suffering (cf. 2:11–13) can only be explained by God's judgment upon him for a sin Job committed (4:5; 5:1, 17; 11:6). For his part, Job both defends his innocence to His friends and wishes he could meet God in His courtroom (9:19; 23:3–4).[4] Within a constructed courtroom

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[2] This article defines "metaphor" as a word or words that point to a larger concept or semantic domain. The dominating presence of legal metaphor and legal language in the book of Job is well-attested. A few of the better known resources for further discussion are: Rachel F. Magdalene, "Through a Glass Lawyerly: Reading the Legal Metaphors of Job 1–31," in *Law and Narrative in the Bible and in Neighboring Ancient Cultures*, ed. Klaus-Peter Adam et al., Forschungen Zum Alten Testament. 2. 54 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 123–38; Rachel F. Magdalene, *On the Scales of Righteousness: Neo-Babylonian Trial Law and the Book of Job*, Brown Judaic Studies 348 (Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2007); John Beresford Frye, "Legal Language in the Book of Job" (PhD diss., University of London, 1973); Sylvia Huberman Scholnick, "Lawsuit Drama in the Book of Job" (PhD diss., Brandeis University, 1976); Pierre Van Hecke and Avi Shveka, "The Metaphor of Criminal Charge as a Paradigm for the Conflict between Job and His Friends," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 90, no. 1 (2014): 99–119; Carol A. Newsom, "The Invention of the Divine Courtroom in the Book of Job," in *The Divine Courtroom in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Ari Mermelstein and Shalom E. Holtz, Biblical Interpretation Series 132 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2014), 246–59; Stephen Vicchio, *The Book of Job: A History of Interpretation and a Commentary* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2020), 399–401.

[3] Yair Hoffman argues that the trial motif is the dominant motif that is developed in the dialogue and structures the book (Yair Hoffman, *A Blemished Perfection: The Book of Job in Context*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 213 [Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996], 167–68). See also Shalom E. Holtz, "Praying as a Plaintiff," *VT* 61, no. 2 (2011): 262; and Samuel E. Balentine, *Have You Considered My Servant Job?: Understanding the Archetype of Biblical Patience* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2015), 138. Hoffman notes that Job plays out like a trial and has similarities to other ANE legal and wisdom texts, but also key differences. See Yair Hoffman, "The Book of Job as a Trial: A Perspective from a Comparison to Some Relevant Ancient Near Eastern Texts," in *Das Buch Hiob Und Seine Interpretationen: Beiträge Zum Hiob-Sympoisum Auf Dem Monte Veritá Vom 14.–19. August 2005*, ed. T. Krüger et al., ATANT 88 (Zürich, Switzerland: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2007), 27–28.

[4] The two primary terms Job uses to denote waging a legal dispute with God are (ריב; *rîb*) and (מִשְׁפָּט; *mišpāṭ*). If two disputing parties cannot reach agreement, a *rîb* can develop into a *mišpāṭ* —a formal trial scenario with a presiding judge who will listen to both sides and then hand down a binding verdict.

For extensive discussion of *rîb* in Job, see Bovati, *Re-Establishing Justice*, especially pages 3–167; B. Gemser, "The Rib- or Controversy-Pattern in Hebrew Mentality," in *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, ed. M. Noth and D. Winton Thomas, 2nd ed., VTSup 3 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1969), 122. Bovati notes that the *rîb* was a well-known legal concept in the ANE and references Julian Harvey as giving a survey of other ANE cultures who use the *rîb* as a legal institution. See Julien S. J. Harvey, *Le Plaidoyer Prophétique contre Israël après la Rupture de l'Alliance: Étude d'une Formule Littéraire de l'Ancien Testament*, Studia 22 (Paris: Bruges, 1967), 119–43. As cited in Bovati, *Re-Establishing Justice*, 182n192. For usage of *mišpāṭ* in Job, see Sylvia Huberman Scholnick, "The Meaning of Mišpaṭ in the Book of Job," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 101, no. 4 (1982): 522–23. For further discussion on the various uses of *mišpāṭ*, see Bovati, *Re-Establishing Justice*, 208–11.

scenario, Job will envisage his heavenly third party as obtaining for him justification before God and reconciliation with Him.

The Heavenly Third Party and Justification

The climax of any legal dispute or courtroom scenario is the verdict: When one side is declared to be "in the right" or justified while the other side is declared to be "in the wrong" or condemned. Because Job's desire for a day in court with God drives much of the argument of the book, it makes sense that justification language would be present as well.[5]

It is when Job desires to be justified before God that he first speaks of a heavenly third party coming to his aid. While Job wrestles with the goodness of God throughout the dialogues, at times he has remarkable moments of faith. It is a faith that, if God were truly gracious, He would provide a third party who can bring him and God together by removing the barrier of sin between them. The next sections will look at how Job envisages his third party obtaining reconciliation between him and God. Job's hope begins faintly in Job 9 but builds to a climax of bold faith in Job 19 with Job's Redeemer.

The Adjudicator in Job 9

In Job 9, Job will wrestle with the specific legal mechanisms of how a person might be in the right with God. He first thinks about the impossibility of winning a legal dispute against God and then develops a courtroom scene with a heavenly adjudicator as the legal mechanism which would allow him to be reconciled to God.

Job 9:2–3: Justification Is Impossible under Normal Circumstances

Job 9 is Job's first response to Bildad. Bildad's main argument was that since God in His justice punishes sinners through suffering and calamity, Job by default falls into the category of a judged sinner (Job 8:3–7, 11–13). Like Eliphaz though, Bildad holds out hope for Job to receive blessings from God if he admits his guilt and repents (8:5–7, 20–22). To Bildad, even though Job has sinned, he is still overall a pure, upright, and blameless person (8:6, 20).

Two-party and three-party legal disputes or trials were common throughout the history of the ANE. For a survey and examination of ANE law, see Raymond Westbrook, ed., *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*, 2 vols. (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2003). For a brief overview of ANE legal procedure like, see Raymond Westbrook, ed., "Introduction: The Character of Ancient Near Eastern Law," in *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 31–35.

[5] Job has almost half of all occurrences of the verb "to justify" (צדק; *ṣdq*) in the Old Testament (41 times in the Old Testament, 17 times in Job). See also J. A. Ziesler, who provides a breakdown of where the various forms of the verb occur in Job (J. A. Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Enquiry*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 20 [Cambridge: University Press, 1972], 20–28). He further notes that 14 out of the 22 occurrences of the Qal of *ṣdq* occur in Job and concludes that if one takes Job as a whole as forensic, then almost all occurrences of *ṣdq* in Job are forensic.

As he begins, Job responds to Bildad by drawing upon Eliphaz's words from Job 4:17: "In truth I know that this is so. How then[6] can a man be in the right with God?"[7] Job affirms Bildad's and Eliphaz's statements about the righteousness and justice of God (Job 4:17; 8:3) but views them as a negativity—Job feared God and yet because of his fallen nature, he can still be judged by God. Mankind cannot be in the right with God, then, regardless of what they do.[8] By connecting legal language to mankind's fallen nature, Eliphaz and Bildad contemplate a personal legal dispute with God that has mankind's fallen nature in mind (cf. Job 7:17–21).[9] In other words, Job cannot win a legal dispute with God because he, like all mankind, stands condemned before Him.[10]

Job 9:4–28: God's Transcendent Holiness Makes Justification Impossible

Job 9:4–28 expands on the dilemma Job faces. Because of the gap between his fallen nature and God's righteousness, Job knows that no legal dispute with God would be successful. There is not only a power and wisdom disparity between Job and God (Job 9:3–12) but a moral one as well (cf. 4:17–21; 9:2–3). Job sums up the impossibility of winning a legal dispute against God in verse 14, indicated by the repetition from verse 3 of the preposition *ʿim* and the conclusive phrase אַף כִּי־ (*ʾap kî*): "How then can I answer Him, *and* choose my words with Him (עִמּוֹ; *ʿimmōw*)?"[11]

Job then turns to his only hope in verse 15: "I would have to plead for the grace (חנן; *ḥnn*) of my judge."[12] Job's use of *ḥnn* in 9:15 is a reference to a section of Bildad's speech from Job 8:5–6: "If you would seek God earnestly and plead for the grace (*ḥnn*) of the Almighty, if you are pure and upright, indeed now He would rouse Himself for you." Bildad saw God's grace as something given in response to repentance. But Job references *ḥnn* to show that he is innocent and does not need to

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[6] Most translations take the *waw* as adversative (but) but taking it as connective/resultative (then) fits just as well. Bildad's verbatim reference in 25:4 to Job's words here also employ the *waw* in a connective/resultative sense, which most English translations bring out. For translations and commentators that interpret the *waw* in Job 9:2a in a connective/resultative sense, see: Schlachter 2000; Geneva Bible; LXX; Vulg.; Norman C. Habel, *The Book of Job: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 178; John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 166; and Samuel Rolles Driver and George Buchanan Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1921), 83–84.

[7] Author's translation.

[8] Translating the *waw* in Job 9:2b as "How then" also explains why Job changes Eliphaz's syntax from מֵאֱלֽוֹהַּ (*mēʾĕlōw*) in 4:17 to עִם־אֵל (*ʿim-ʾēl*) in 9:2b. Job is not just agreeing with Eliphaz that no man can be righteous in God's sight. He is also arguing that since no one can be justified before God, even winning a legal dispute against Him is impossible. The use of the preposition *ʿim* with ריב (*rîb*; Job 9:3) is common, since one party is disputing "with" another party. See James Limburg, "Root Rîb and the Prophetic Lawsuit Speeches," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88, no. 3 (September 1969): 296.

[9] Bildad in Job 25 quotes Job's words in 9:2 verbatim, but in a clearly moral/ontological context.

[10] Ash brings out this connection, in part, when he says that Job's suffering, "…is deeper than a present-tense suffering. It is a present-tense suffering that is the harbinger of a future condemnation" (Ash, *Job*, 146).

[11] Author's translation.

[12] The word "grace" translates the Hithpael form of חנן, which means, "To implore favor, compassion." The word is used in contexts where one party pleads for help or favor from another party (Gen 42:21; 1 Kgs 8:33; Esth 4:8).

repent of anything—so he cannot "earn" grace from God. Job's implication is that if, however, God unilaterally showed grace to Job, his predicament would be resolved.[13]

Job's problem is that God is not only Job's legal adversary—He is also his Judge: "Though I am righteous, my mouth will condemn me; though I am blameless, He will declare me perverse" (Job 9:20). Job believes he is in an impossible situation where even in a courtroom scenario—since God is both legal adversary and judge—God would condemn Job and cause him to suffer. Job knows he is not sinless, but he also does not know why God is treating him like a wicked person. He again connects his perceived treatment by God to how God relates to all mankind, regardless of their relative innocence or wickedness (9:22–24; cf. 7:1, 17–21). These statements underscore how Job does not want to simply win a legal dispute against God. He sees mankind's fallen nature as the reason why no one can truly be reconciled to Him.

Job 9:32–35: Only an Adjudicator Can Bring God and Man Together

In Job 9:32, Job sums up the preceding discourse on why he cannot be justified before God with *kî* (for): "For *He is* not a man as I am that I may answer Him, that we may go to court (*mišpāṭ*) *for judgment* together." Job believes if God were like man, then Job and God could go to a court of law and have a judge render a just verdict after hearing both sides.[14] But as seen earlier, in Job's courtroom scenario God is both his legal adversary and his judge who is set on punishing Job for his moral fallenness, despite his relative uprightness.

So, in Job 9:33–35, Job will turn to hoping that a heavenly third party would come to his aid: the adjudicator.[15] Job envisions this adjudicator as having a positive

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[13] Clines notes the wordplay with Bildad's use of grace in Job 8:5 but argues if Job pleaded for mercy he would be giving up on his integrity. See David J. A. Clines, *Job 1–20*, vol. 17, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1989), 234. The MT technically says "If I were righteous" in 9:15a, but the point is the same: Job knows he is innocent in his legal dispute against God but he also knows his moral fallenness prevents him from winning one. God as judge would need to condescend to him in a gracious act if Job is to be reconciled to Him. For a similar discussion see Francis I. Andersen, *Job: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 13 (London: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 158.

[14] Bovati argues that verbs of motion move a controversy into a formal trial procedure which contains two parties and a judge. See Gen 18:23; 44:18; Exod 18:16; 22:8; 24:14; Num 27:1; 36:1; Deut 17:8–9; 25:1, 7; 1 Sam 14:36, 38; 2 Sam 12:1; 15:2, 4, 6; Judg 4:5; 1 Kgs 3:16; 2 Chron 19:10; Isa 41:1 (Bovati, *Re-Establishing Justice*, 217–18). In Job 9:32, Job uses a verb of motion (נָבָוא; *nābōw'*) to indicate his desire to go to court (*mišpāṭ*) with God.

[15] The essential meaning of the root יכח (*ykḥ*) is, "to put in the right," although in legal contexts it can mean "to argue" ("יכח," *HALOT*, 410). The verb can represent any part of a lawsuit, including the potential of taking legal action, where it can be semantically parallel to *rîb* or *mišpāṭ* (*NIDOTTE*, 2:441–42).

This article follows the LSB's translation of מוֹכִיחַ (*mōwkîaḥ*) in verse 33 as "adjudicator" rather than the more common translation, "mediator." A mediator in ANE law is, generally, a third party who helps two opposing sides come to an agreeable conclusion, and he may or may not have binding authority over the disputants. Meanwhile, an adjudicator (or panel of judges acting as adjudicators) has vested authority to bring about a resolution to the legal procedure. Job 9:33 uses the substantive form (*mōwkîaḥ*), which elsewhere in the Scriptures in legal contexts has the basic sense of authoritative decision-making (Isa 29:21; Amos 5:10; Hab 1:12; cf. Gen 31:36). BDB notes that the Hiphil form of יכח means, "to decide." ("יָכַח," BDB, 406). In other words, a *mōwkîaḥ* is, in forensic contexts, someone vested with legal authority to argue the case and hand down a binding decision to prove one side right and the other wrong (cf. *NIDOTTE*, 2:442). *Mōwkîaḥ* occurs later in the book of Job in Elihu's speeches, where Elihu notes there

outcome in bringing Job and God together. The following sections will argue, that to Job, the heavenly third party is the person who enables forgiveness of sins and justification before God for man.

Job 9:33: The Adjudicator Is a Heavenly Third Party

Job 9:33 and his hope in an adjudicator is his recognition that he cannot, by himself, merit a justifying verdict before God (cf. Job 9:2). He knows that even his faithful and upright living means nothing considering the moral gap between God and man. So, Job turns to a legal mechanism—the adjudicator—that can enable Job to stand in God's court justified: "There is no adjudicator between us, who may lay his hand upon us both."

Various scholars argue that Job's adjudicator is not real, and that Job is painting a hypothetical scenario that he knows is not true.[16] They caution against reading a Christian bias backwards into Job 9:32–35.[17] However, while Job's hope in what the adjudicator might do for him is pessimistic, he still expresses belief that the adjudicator exists and can adjudicate between him and God.[18] And there is no need to read backwards into Job to see the unique function Job's adjudicator has.

Eliphaz is aware that there are other parties in heaven that could come to Job's aid (Job 5:1). But argues that no man, being a fallen sinner (Job 4:17–21), can appeal to others for help in God's courtroom (5:1).[19] The mere fact that Job wishes for an adjudicator to act for him goes beyond anything Eliphaz or his other friends say. Job's

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was no adjudicator to reprove Job (Job 32:12). *Mōwkîaḥ* takes on added significance in Job 40:2, where God charges Job with attempting to act as an adjudicator for himself (Job 40:2).

Note the similar role of adjudicators in the ANE in Hertel, *Old Assyrian Legal Practices: Law and Dispute in the Ancient Near East*, 222; and Cornelia Wunsch, "Legal Narrative in Neo-Babylonian Trial Documents: Text Reconstruction, Interpretation, and Assyriological Method," in *Law and Narrative in the Bible and in Neighboring Ancient Cultures*, ed. Klaus-Peter Adam, et al., Forschungen Zum Alten Testament. 2. 54 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 4, 7, 25.

[16] E.g., Seow, *Job 1–21*, 571; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 182; Edward L. Greenstein, *Job: A New Translation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019), 43; Habel, *The Book of Job: A Commentary*, 196; Robert Gordis, *The Book of Job: Commentary, New Translation, and Special Studies*, vol. 2, MoSe (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1978), 111; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 17:243; Alden, *Job*, 133; Ash, *Job*, 147; Longman III, *Job*, 165; and Wilson, *Job*, 71–72.

[17] Wilson, *Job*, 317; and Longman III, *Job*, 262–63.

[18] So also John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, *Job*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 172. The Hebrew constructions for denoting non-existence or negating an existence are specific: either the adverb אֵין (*ʾên*) ("there is not"; cf. Job 20:21; Pss 53:1, 3 [MT 2, 4]) or the wish particle contrary to fact לוּ (*lû*) ("would that there be"; cf. Gen 17:18; Job 6:2). Job himself knows how to use both particles (6:2, 13; 9:10; 16:14; 21:33). Scholars who argue that Job is expressing a wish contrary to fact usually emend *lōʾ* to *lû* while admitting that Job's construction as given in the MT is found nowhere else. See for example: Clines, *Job 1-20*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1989), 220; Greenstein, *Job*, 43.

In Job 9:33, Job uses the particle of negation followed by the particle of existence (יֵשׁ לֹא; *yēš lōʾ*). *Yēš* itself is never negated (cf. A&C, 156; Bruce K. Waltke and Michael Patrick O'Connor, *IBHS* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990], 623). So, Job is most likely using *lōʾ* with reference to the imperfect יָשֵׁת (*yāšēt*) in 9:33b to cast strong doubt regarding whether the adjudicator will act for him. What Job is expressing in 9:33 is something akin to an American saying, "There is no President who will help me." This person is not denying the existence of the president of the United States. Rather, he is expressing doubt as to whether the President will help him.

[19] See Seow, *Job 1–21*, 415 and Clines, *Job 1–20*, 137.

hope for aid from a heavenly third party drives him to return to the topic multiple times (16:19–21; 19:25–26). Elihu will also draw upon and develop Job's hope in Job 33:23–26.[20]

Job 9:34–35: The Adjudicator Enables Forgiveness of Sins and Reconciliation

As seen above, *mōwkîaḥ* can refer to a legal third party who is vested with authority to adjudicate between two disputants and thus render a binding judgment as to who is in the right. However, in Job 9:33–34, Job does not simply want help in winning a legal dispute against God—he wants someone who can bring himself and God together.

Job describes how he wants his adjudicator to function in the second half of Job 9:33: "Who may lay his hand upon us both." His description of what the adjudicator would do is unique in the Old Testament.[21] The closest parallel is in Genesis 31:37, where the adjudicator is a third party who adjudicates a legal dispute between Jacob and Laban.[22] However, Job and God are not equals in any sense (Job 9:32), and Job is not just wishing for an impartial third party to hear both sides and render a fair judgment. Job wants the adjudicator to, with some level of authority, place his hand on both God and Job. This adjudicator also cannot not be opposed to or over God, since God is not just a legal adversary but the judge in Job's courtroom scene.[23] Thus, if Job's adjudicator were to act on his behalf, such action would only be possible if God allowed the adjudicator to act as an extension of God's grace towards Job (cf. 9:15).[24]

Job 9:34a explains what the result of the adjudicator's work would be for Job: "Let Him remove His rod from me." Regardless of who the first "Him" refers to, Job's point is that the adjudicator's work affects the removal of God's wrath (signified by "rod" [שֵׁבֶט; *šēbeṭ*]).[25] The second half of verse 34 expands the scope of

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[20] For scholars that argue Job 9:32–35 begins a theological motif in Job, see Ash, *Job*, 147; Robert S. Fyall, *Now My Eyes Have Seen You: Images of Creation and Evil in the Book of Job*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 44; Lindsay Wilson, *Job*, Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 98; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 196–97; and Walton and Vizcaino, *Job*, 172. For further discussion on messianic implications of Elihu's mediator see Barrick, "Messianic Implications in Elihu's 'Mediator Speech' (Job 33:23–28)"; and the forthcoming monograph currently under review by SCS Press that this article is adapted from.

[21] The root of *ykḥ* can occur where God is the subject (2 Sam 7:14; 2 Kgs 19:4; 1 Chron 12:17; 16:21; Job 5:17; 13:10; 22:4; 33:19). However, the book of Job is unique in that in multiple places God is the object of *ykḥ* (Job 13:3, 15; 16:21; 23:7; 40:2).

[22] See also Habel, *The Book of Job*, 196.

[23] It is preferable to see Job's adjudicator as someone who brings God and Job together (so Francis Andersen, *Job* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976], 151; and Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 181), rather than as someone who has more authority than God (so Driver and Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job*, 95–96) If the adjudicator has more authority than God, Job's problem would not really be with God, but with the adjudicator.

[24] So also Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 181. Hartley further notes that "Job is grasping for any means to restore his relationship with God. His sense of meaninglessness before inexplicable suffering is deepened by God's absence from his life. That is why his search for vindication is essentially a search for God to make himself known to him" (Ibid., 181).

[25] So also Clines, *Job 1-20*, 17:243; Robert L. Alden, *Job*, New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 133; Edoard Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job* (Nashville, TN:

the adjudicator's work: "And let not dread of Him terrify me." Job's current situation is one where He is afraid of God because of His wrath upon him. In context, Job's hope in Job 9:33–34 is the answer to Job's question in 9:2. By removing God's wrath and thus Job's fear of God, the adjudicator would put Job in the right before God. Job's sin before God would somehow be forgiven and Job would no longer be afraid of God (cf. Job 7:17–21).

Some commentators argue that Job is overwhelmed by God's power and imply that Job simply wants the adjudicator to bring him and God to equal terms.[26] They also argue that God's rod upon Job is God figuratively "beating" Job or something similar.[27] However, Job has already indicated that the gap between him and God is not only one of power and transcendence but of sin and holiness. Mankind's fallen nature prevents anyone from engaging in a successful legal dispute with God (Job 4:17; cf. 9:2). What Job wants is for that sin to no longer be a barrier between him and God (7:21; 14:15–17; 19:26–27).[28] If that sin is removed by the adjudicator, then Job would be able to speak to God without fear of His wrath (9:35).[29] Job does not want to be ontologically equal to God or to have God brought down to his level. He wants forgiveness and reconciliation.

In Job 9:32–35, Job hopes for reconciliation and peace between God and himself.[30] He knows that his fallen nature is the reason why he cannot win a legal dispute with God in the first place. By implication then, Job's legal dispute against God would go away if sin was no longer a barrier between them. Job knows that if God, through an adjudicator, can fix the greater issue of the sin that separates Him from man, then a legal dispute is not necessary. Job would know God cares for him despite his suffering. The work of a heavenly adjudicator is how Job's wish to be justified before God (Job 9:2) is accomplished.

Thomas Nelson, 1984), 144; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 182; and Ash, *Job*, 147–48. Cf. Exod 17:9; 2 Sam 7:14; Ps 89:32; Prov 22:8; Isa 10:5; and Lam 3:1. For God as the subject of the rod, see Greenstein, *Job*, 43; Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 144; Clines, *Job 1-20*, 17:215; Andersen, *Job*, 151; Longman III, *Job*, 176; and Alden, *Job*, 133. Zeev Falk argues that *šēbeṭ* is a symbol of the judicial office. See Zeev W. Falk, "Hebrew Legal Terms," ed. H. H. Rowley and P. R. Weis, *JSS* 5, no. 4 (October 1960): 350.

[26] So Tremper Longman III, *Job*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 176; and Wilson, *Job*, 71.

[27] So Seow, *Job 1–21*, 571; and Driver and Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job*, 96.

[28] Cf. the ESV's translation of Job 14:15–17.

[29] It is best to take the imperfect that begins 9:35 as indicating potentiality (אֲדַבְּרָה; *ʾadabbərâ*). Job is expressing what he would do if the mediator acted on his behalf. For further discussion see Alden, *Job*, 134.

[30] So also Clines, *Job 1–20*, 243; and James Strahan, *The Book of Job Interpreted*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1914), 102. Strahan goes further than Clines in arguing that Job's wish points towards Jesus: "Job is no conscious prophet, but his instinctive cry for a God in human form, and for a daysman between God and man, is an unconscious prophecy of incarnation and atonement. His faith is creative, his heart's intuitions are precursors of revelation" (Ibid.).

Job 16: Job's Heavenly Witness Can Enable Reconciliation After Death

Job 16 marks Job's first response in the second cycle of speeches in Job (Job 15–21). Job is responding to Eliphaz's second speech, where Eliphaz returned to his original argument about mankind's moral fallenness before God (15:14–16). In Job 16, Job returns to the topic of a heavenly third party who might come to his aid. But in contrast to 9:32–35, in chapter 16 Job will express more confidence in what a heavenly third party might do for him. He will also indicate that the time frame in which he believes the heavenly third party will act is after his life. Job 16 thus represents another affirmation of the centrality of the heavenly third party to reconciling him and God, and is a development of when he believes his hope will be fulfilled.

Job 16:1–17: Job Believes God Is Set against Him

In Job 15, Eliphaz had argued that all humans are born morally fallen (Job 15:14–16) and are judged when they sin (15:20–35). To Eliphaz, the evidence points towards Job being a wicked person who is being judged. Job's response is simple—God framed me: "You [God] have shriveled me up, it has become a witness (עֵד; *ʿēd*);[31] and my leanness rises up against me, it answers to my face" (16:8). Job does not claim to be perfect (cf. 14:3–4), but he cannot see why God has chosen to cause suffering to him when he was living an upright life (16:16–17).[32]

By introducing the concept of a legal witness, Job is continuing the forensic metaphor to explain his situation and depict him and God as being legal adversaries.[33] However, if Job had no hope of winning a legal dispute with God before, it is even less so now. To Job, God has created false witnesses to successfully frame Job for wickedness.[34] Job is losing the strength and hope to win a legal dispute with God while he is still alive (Job 16:15–16).

Job 16:18–22: A Heavenly Witness Who Will Act After Death

In Job 16:18, Job appears to lose almost all hope of winning his legal dispute during his life: "O earth, do not cover my blood, and let there be no resting place for my cry."[35] So, Job turns to the only hope he has left in verse 19—not an earthly

[31] An *ʿēd* was a witness in a legal trial who could testify for or against the accused. See Carl Schultz, "עוד," *TWOT*, 648–49.

[32] Job uses more hostile language in Job 16, depicting God as a warrior (Job 16:12–14) and wild beast (16:9) intent on harming him. For further discussion see Seow, *Job 1–21*, 736; Longman III, *Job*, 238; and Ash, *Job*, 190.

[33] So also Fyall, *Now My Eyes Have Seen You*, 42.

[34] Hartley notes that because of the physical evidence of Job's suffering, "No one who sees him believes his verbal testimony of innocence" (Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 260). For further discussion see Clines, *Job 1–20*, 382.

[35] So also Clines, *Job 1–20*, 388. Clines rightly notes that Job's cry for vindication must be placed in an afterlife, because it assumes that Job's blood has already been spilled (Ibid.; and Andersen, *Job*, 197; contra Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 264). Scholars have noted the connection between the earth covering Job's blood

witness, but a heavenly witness who would testify on his behalf: "Even now, behold, my witness (עֵד; *ʿēd*) is in heaven, and my advocate is on high." The following sections will argue that the nature and function of Job's witness is almost identical to the adjudicator of 9:33–34, with the same expected outcome: removal of God's wrath and reconciliation to Him.

The Heavenly Witness Is Also the Adjudicator from Job 9:33–34

Various scholars argue that Job's witness in Job 16:19 is God Himself and that Job is appealing to God to act on his behalf and testify for him in court.[36] However, both the broader context of Job's speeches and a plain reading of the text of 16:19–22 argue against seeing Job's witness as God. Job has described God as more than just a legal adversary but a hostile party intent on causing him as much suffering as possible (Job 6:4; 7:12–21; 9:20–31; 10:3, 6–7, 12–13, 16–17; 13:24–28). Job also believes that because of his moral fallenness, with a heavenly third party he has no hope of being justified before God (9:2, 20, 28–35).[37] It thus goes against the argument of the book and the context of Job 16 to see Job as suddenly expressing hope that God would be His witness.[38]

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and the testimony of Abel's blood crying out as a witness against Cain (Gen 4:10). See Clines, *Job 1–20*, 388–89; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 263–64; and Longman III, *Job*, 239.

Clines, and Driver and Gray argue that Job's cry is a cry not just for vindication but for vengeance (Clines, *Job 1-20*, 388–89; and Driver and Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job*, 147–48). However, this article has argued that Job desires reconciliation with God, not revenge (cf. Job 9:34–35; 14:13–17; 19:26–27). Even so, there may be a connection between Job's cry for vindication and the concept of avenging or vindicating justice. In both the ANE and Israel, the shed blood of an innocent victim required retribution (cf. Num 35:15–25). See Samuel Greengus, *Laws in the Bible and in Early Rabbinic Collections: The Legal Legacy of the Ancient Near East* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 152. Job could be expecting his heavenly witness to act as an avenger or redeemer for him after he has died.

[36] So Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 264; Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 239; Andersen, *Job*, 183; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 2:178; and Greenstein, *Job*, 70, 72–73. Fyal and Ash argue along similar lines of reasoning, that Job is confusing the divine council from Job 1–2. They argue that in the end God will actually be a witness for Job. See Fyall, *Now My Eyes Have Seen You*, 43; and Ash, *Job*, 141. Ash concludes that Job is appealing to God against God (Ibid., 193).

[37] Seow argues similarly, although he probably goes too far in arguing Job expresses no hope in God to act graciously at any point thus far. See Seow, *Job 1–21*, 738. Job 13:15 could be used to support the argument that Job is appealing to God to witness for him. But see also the *ketiv* of the MT of Job 13:15: "Behold, He will slay me; I have no hope."

[38] So also Clines, *Job 1–20*, 389. Longman adds that in the God as the witness view, in verse 19 the witness would be speaking against God (Longman III, *Job*, 239). See also Wilson, *Job*, 97–98; and Marvin H. Pope, *Job*, Anchor Bible Commentary (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973), 146. Seow concludes that if God is Job's witness, "Accordingly, God, who has been portrayed as Job's enemy in the preceding stanza, is at once the accused, the witness, and the judge" (Seow, *Job 1–21*, 1:738).

The witness or *ʿēd* also cannot be Job's own cry of innocence, since Job is thinking of a third party and not his own integrity as the means of adjudication between him and God (so Longman III, *Job*, 239–40; contra Clines, *Job 1–20*, 368; and Seow, *Job 1–21*, 739–40). Job has already affirmed the existence of a heavenly third party and expressed hopelessness that his own testimony could vindicate him (cf. Job 9:3, 14, 19, 20). In Job's courtroom scenario, God has stacked the deck against him through false witnesses (10:17; 16:8) and a refusal to answer him (9:16). No amount of personal integrity or claim of innocence will produce a victory for Job. For further discussion on the weakness of seeing Job's cry as his witness see Fyal, *Now My Eyes Have Seen You*, 12:42–43. Fyal concludes: "It [Job's cry] has no existence in itself, and indeed is the expression of Job's need for vindication, not that vindication" (Ibid., 43).

However, Job's more hostile and pessimistic rhetoric in Job 16 does not mean that he has no hope in God at all. The section on Job 9:32–35 argued that Job viewed the work of his adjudicator as an extension of God's grace—and a similar scenario holds true in chapter 16. The tone of Job's rhetoric is that, while he believes God is set against him, he still holds out hope that God, in the end, would provide a witness to act on Job's behalf.[39]

If Job's heavenly witness is not God and not his own cry for vindication, it must be a third party. Job's witness thus takes a similar role to the adjudicator of Job 9:33, because Job is placing hope in a heavenly third party to successfully act for him and resolve his dilemma. Job's witness must also in some way be equal to God, like the adjudicator (Job 9:33–34), as he must be able to effectually testify on Job's behalf—such that God is moved to vindicate Job. Otherwise, there is no reason for Job to hope in a witness in the first place.

Job possibly makes further connections to the adjudicator of Job 9:33–34 in 16:20–21. Most English versions translate verse 20a (מְלִיצַי רֵעָי) as something like, "My friends are my scoffers,"[40] and some commentators emend the MT here to reflect such a translation.[41] However, the NIV and NET Bible offer a different possible translation: "My intercessor is my friend."[42] This latter translation of verse 20 would provide a stronger indication that Job is continuing to hope in a heavenly third party who would intercede on his behalf in God's courtroom.

To begin Job 16:21, some English translations have something like, "O that a man might plead with God."[43] However, the verse begins with a *wayiqtol* (וְיוֹכַח; *wəyōwkaḥ*) from the root *ykḥ*, and there is no wish statement or formula that would necessitate a translation implying Job is wishing for something (as in Job 6:20; 11:5; 13:5; 14:4, 13). Although the syntax of verse 21 is difficult, a natural way to do justice to the *waw* is to view it as continuing the line of thought from verse 20, while viewing the final clause of verse 20 as circumstantial, similar to the NET Bible's translation:

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[39] Habel argues that "Job is not contemplating the good side of a schizophrenic deity, but with bold faith seeking vehicle for winning his case against God" (Habel, *The Book of Job*, 275). Habel is correct to see Job having bold faith, but that faith is connected to hope in God to be gracious, not simply to win a legal dispute.

[40] E.g., LSB, NASB, ESV, KJV.

[41] Cf. Seow, *Job 1–21*, 748–49.

[42] *HALOT* glosses the Hiphil form of, לוץ (*lyṣ*) as "to scoff, deride" ("לוץ," *HALOT,* 529). However, BDB notes that the Hiphil participle form of *lyṣ* (מֵלִיץ; *mēlîṣ*) is only used to refer to people who are mediators ("לוץ," BDB, 539; cf. Gen 42:23; Isa 43:27; Job 33:23; 2 Chron 32:31). The occurrence of the same form in Job 33:23 could also mean that Elihu is directly referencing Job 16:20 and Job's hope in a heavenly mediator. For further discussion on מְלִיצַי in Job 16:20 meaning mediator, see Walter C. Kaiser, "1113 לוץ," *TWOT*, 479; Tim Powell, "לוץ," *NIDOTTE*, 2:800; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 263; Ash, *Job*, 452n10; John B. Curtis, "On Job's Witness in Heaven," *JBL* 102, no. 4 (December 1983): 554; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 390; Alden, *Job*, 187; and Balentine, *Job*, 258–59. Hartley adds that if the Hiphil of *lyṣ* is taken as "scorn," it would create a single occurrence of the word. Instead, the Qal participle form is always used to refer to scorning (Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 263n6). Seow and Dhorme further note that Targum Job has something like, "My intermediaries are my friends/there I have intercessors and friends" (Seow, *Job 1–21*, 748; and Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 240). The *BHS* critical apparatus entertains the idea of taking *mēlîṣ* as mediator.

The primary challenge to taking *mēlîṣ* as mediator/intercessor in Job 16:20 is the difference in the pronominal suffixes in verses 20 and 21 (plural in verse 20, singular in verse 21). One solution is to emend the vocalization of the consonants, so that the suffixes in verses 20–21 can all match as singular (so Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 263; and *NET Bible*). This author believes such a solution is more plausible than emending the consonants of the MT (as referenced above).

[43] E.g., LSB, NASB, KJV.

"My intercessor is my friend as my eyes pour out tears to God; and he [the intercessor] mediates with God on behalf of man."[44] This translation suggests that Job's witness is the same person as his adjudicator (cf. *ykḥ* in Job 9:33)[45]—and thus the same desire for the removal of God's wrath and for reconciliation is present. Even when Job is despairing due to his perception that God is attacking him, he hopes to be restored to a close relationship with Him (cf. Job 16:20b).

Job 16 thus marks a development in Job's mind of being reconciled to God: 1) He begins to lose hope of being reconciled to God while he is alive; 2) he expresses more confidence in the help of a heavenly third party; 3) and he places that hope of help in a life after death. Job is laying the groundwork for an eschatological theology of justification and reconciliation, one which will take full expression in Job 19:23–27.

Job 19: Job's Eschatological Hope

In Job 19, Job gives full expression to how he thinks a heavenly third party might come to his aid. Here he combines his resurrection hope (Job 14:13–14), his desire for forgiveness of sins and reconciliation (7:17–21; 14:15–17), and his hope in a heavenly third party (9:33–35; 16:19–22). The result is a clear explanation of an eschatological hope of justification that is fulfilled through the work of a heavenly third party.

Job 19 is Job's second response to Bildad. Job is tiring of his friends' disbelief and condemnation of him as a wicked sinner (Job 19:1–6). Job's sense of despair also becomes deeper, as for the first time, Job states that every person in his life has abandoned him (19:13–20). Job's response to being rejected by the world is to appeal to pity from his friends, a pity that they are not willing to give (19:21–22).[46] Job's hope in vindication during his life is at its lowest point. However, in his despair is also when Job's faith in a heavenly mediator acting for him in a new life is at its strongest.

Job 19:25–27: Job's Redeemer Accomplishes Eschatological Justification

The following sections will argue that, since Job has lost all hope of vindication in this life, he turns to hoping in a heavenly third party for a final justification in the eschaton.[47] The sections will also argue that his description of the heavenly third party as a "redeemer" is Job's acknowledgement of his need for cleansing from sin.

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[44] Author's translation. The ESV, NIV, and LEB have similar translations as the NET for verse 21. See also Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 264. He notes that "The *interpreter* is one who advocates a party's case, explaining the situation to the court and defending him against any charges" (Ibid.; italics original). Clines notes the "extreme difficulty of the Hebrew" but affirms Hartley's position (even if they differ on who the interpreter is). See Clines, *Job 1–20*, 390. He takes the *waw* to begin verse 21 as one of purpose (ibid., 390–91).

[45] So also Habel, *The Book of Job*, 275.

[46] For further discussion see Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 287–90. He concludes: "Just as his [Job's] alienation is total, so too his physical suffering is complete" (Ibid., 289).

[47] Seow sees verses 23–27 as conveying Job's desire for justice to be done even after he dies (Seow, *Job 1–21*, 794). Balentine similarly describes Job's knowledge of a redeemer in 19:25 as "hope for 'something beyond'" (Balentine, *Job*, 286). By "eschaton" it is not meant that Job had a full-fledged doctrine of the end times. Job is simply theorizing that things will be made right "in the end," in a time after his current life.

And finally, they will argue that Job views the outcome of justification not as victory over God but reconciliation to Him.

The Redeemer Is a Heavenly Third Party Who Saves from Sin

Job 19:23–24 sets the timeframe of Job's words in verses 25–27. In verse 23 Job uses the formula *mî-yittēn*, here to express his wish that permanence would be given to his words.[48] Job believes no one in this life will help him. So, Job's desire for a written record that will last forever (lit. "to the end [לָעַד; *lāʿad*]" in verse 24b) must be in the hope that someone in the future would come to his aid.[49] Such a reading comports with Job's already expressed desire for a new life after death and reconciliation with God in that new life (Job 14:13–17).[50]

Verse 25 then begins with a shift from what Job's friends and family think about him, to what he knows to be true: "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives…"[51] Earlier, Job said that he knew God would not acquit him (Job 9:28) and did not know why God was causing his suffering (13:23). Yet Job in 19:25 knows that a redeemer is for him. There is thus a notable development and growth of Job's hope in how he and God might be reconciled. Job is also not making a random or sudden turn to discussing a redeemer. Rather, his words here are the result of a developed, confident theology of hope and reconciliation.[52]

Job 19:25–27 marks a high point in the development of Job's faith and hope. In 9:32–35, Job had expressed strong doubt as to whether a heavenly third party would come to his aid. In Job 16, Job expressed strong hope that a heavenly third party would vindicate him after death. In Job 19, Job says "I know" regarding this hope. It is not something Job "knows" is false but is a building and triumphant affirmation.[53]

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[48] Cf. Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 281. The reference to writing multiple times in these verses further shows Job's desire that his words endure.

[49] Cf. William David Reyburn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, UBSH (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 361–62; Seow, *Job 1–21*, 1:802; and Wilson, *Job*, 106.

[50] Contra Clines, who believes "forever" simply contrasts with Job's imminent death. See Clines, *Job 1–20*, 433.

[51] The disjunctive *waw* and the doubling of the first-person pronouns (וַאֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי; *aʾănî yādaʿtî*) indicate a distinct shift in thought and an emphasis on what comes next. Contra David Wolfers, *Deep Things Out of Darkness: The Book of Job: Essays and a New English Translation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 486.

Seow appears to argue that Job's use of "know" in Job 19:25 is either mistaken or shortsighted. He thus concludes that Job is merely, "lifting up a conceit for consideration" (Seow, *Job 1–21*, 803). Seow's interpretation of Job's other uses of ידע (*ydʿ*) is debatable—but even if he were correct that Job's knowing was shortsighted or incorrect, Job can still be expressing true conviction. Furthermore, only if one is interpreting Job 19:25 without setting it in context with Job's other statements can one claim Job's statement is a fanciful expression that he simply wants others to consider. Job's description of his redeemer as "alive" (חָי; *ḥāy*) further underscores the strength of Job's hope.

[52] Contra James Wood, who believes Job was making a passing wish statement (James Wood, *Job and The Human Situation* [London: Geoffrey Bles, 1966], 77); and Mike Mason, who argues Job was raised to a state of "prophetic ecstasy" (Mike Mason, *The Gospel According to Job* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994], 217).

[53] Clines argues that Job is stating something he knows is not true. See David J. A. Clines, *Job 21-37*, vol. 18A, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 457–59. Clines does not give evidence to support his assertion. Furthermore, the context would support Job making a claim of faith, not being sarcastic or ironic (contra Seow, *Job 1–21*, 805).

Following Job's logic so far, Job's redeemer must be the heavenly third party[54] from Job 9 and 16.[55]

What might Job's redeemer do? In the Old Testament, a גֹּאֵל (*go'el*) would avenge the blood of a relative or deliver an oppressed family member.[56] He would do so through means of buying back or recovering something,[57] thus making payment the means of redemption.[58] In Job's case, his redeemer would not only act on his behalf but would take it upon himself to do away with Job's debt. Job's language of "my redeemer" (גֹּאֲלִי; *gō'ălî*) is also more personal than the adjudicator or even "my witness." Job is referring to someone whom he would have a personal relationship with—who would thus take Job's debt upon himself and procure redemption for Job.

What kind of debt does Job owe, and who does he owe it to? Job must owe some kind of legal debt to God, since he has been operating within legal metaphor and has stated that he is a condemned sinner before God (Job 7:7–21; 9:2–3; 14:1–4). Job is also not just asking his redeemer to help him win a legal dispute with God—something he wants to happen before he dies (cf. 13:3, 18–19). Job is hoping for his redeemer to remove the legal debt his creaturely fallenness has accumulated against a holy God. In other words, Job is asking his redeemer to remove the barriers to his reconciliation to God, as he has spoken of regarding the adjudicator and the witness.

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[54] Clines asserts that Job's redeemer is his cry for vindication (Clines, *Job 1-20*, 459). However, Clines' argument appears to be driven from his assumptions about Job 16. Moreover, the personal pronouns used for the redeemer in 19:25 seem to undermine against Clines' position.

[55] So also Pope, *Job*, 146; Seow, *Job 1–21*, 804; and Wilson, *Job*, 107. Wilson notes about Job 9:33, 16:18, and 19:25: "Each passage has a call for an arbiter, is preceded by an angry protest, and succeeded by despair and the floating of unfulfilled hope" (Ibid.).

Hartley argues that Job's redeemer is God, in large part because the root גאל (*g'l*) has a rich theology in Israelite literature, where it often refers to God. See Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 292–93. However, Hartley's objection is avoided if one takes Job's historical setting as being earlier than the other Old Testament Scriptures. But even if Job is dated late, this article has argued that the best contextual understanding of Job's adjudicator/witness/redeemer is a third party, not God.

Another objection to seeing the redeemer as a third party is that Job is a monotheist, so he would not think of another divine being equal to God who would come to his aid (so Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 2:206). While it is true Job is a monotheist, his language regarding the heavenly third party consistently points to someone who can stand between Him and God. Job can still affirm faith in the one true God, while hoping that some way, a third party would bring God and him together. The LXX's translation of גֹּאֲלִי חָי (*gō'ălî ḥāy*) in Job 19:25 as "an eternal one is" (ἀέναός ἐστιν ὁ) indicates that pre-Christian Jews had no difficulty ascribing divine characteristics to Job's redeemer.

[56] See Reyburn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, 362–63.

[57] "גאל," *HALOT*, 169; cf. Lev 25:33, 48.

[58] Cf. R. Laird Harris, "גָּאַל," *TWOT*, 144. See also Jeremiah Unterman's chapter in which he examines the socio-legal contexts that form the basis of the metaphoric meaning of redemption. He argues that the *go'el* was "Always the nearest adult male relative responsible for the economic well-being of his kind, inasmuch as the latter lacked sufficient means to redeem his own property of himself. As blood-redeemer, the *go'el* avenged murder and, by extensions, all severe harm inflicted upon a relative (Num 35:12–28; Deut 19:4–6, 11–13; Judg 8:18–21; 2 Sam 3:27; 13:28–29; 14:11)." See Jeremiah Unterman, "The Social-Legal Origin for the Image of God as Redeemer גואל of Israel," in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*, ed. David P. Wright, David Noel Freedman, and Avi Hurvitz (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 399–400. However, Unterman's argument that Job 19:25 is a prayer to God to redeem him from unspecified enemies (cf. Ibid., 401). does not fit the thought process and argumentation of either Job or his friends.

Job's Redeemer Will Do His Work in the Eschaton

In Job 19:25–27, Job also incorporates his hope in life after death. He does so by positioning his redeemer as one who will give Job life in the eschaton, signified by the phrase וְאַחֲרוֹן (*wəʾaḥărōwn*; and at the last)[59] in 19:25b: "And at the last He will take his stand over the dust *of the world*."[60] What will Job's redeemer do in the eschaton? Job believes his redeemer will "take his stand" (יָקוּם; *yāqûm*), acting for him in God's court like the witness of 16:19.[61] Job's reference to "dust" (עָפָר; *ʿāpār*) and the eschatological context denoted by *ʾaḥărôn* indicates Job believes his redeemer will do his work after Job has died to reverse the consequences of his sinful nature—and by implication, the consequences of sin, which is death.[62]

The Work of Job's Redeemer Will Result in Resurrection and Reconciliation

In Job 19:26–27, Job expands upon his hope of reconciliation with God by including the concept of resurrection: "And after this skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall behold God, whom I myself shall behold, and whom my eyes will see

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[59] The phrase *ʾaḥărôn* always refers to the end of something (Exod 4:8; 2 Chron 9:29, 26:22; 29:29; Dan 11:9; Zech 14:8). The question remains, though, as to how to translate *ʾaḥărôn* and what it refers to: Job's redeemer, as a substantive (So NET Bible), or to the stand his redeemer takes, as an adverbial accusative (So NASB, LSB). Under the former view, Job is picturing his redeemer as the last one left to defend him, but there is no mention of timing: "and that as the last." However, whenever *ʾaḥărôn* is used in reference to a person, it does not mean last as in "only" but rather differentiates between groups of people (Deut 24:3; 29:22). There is only one person in view in Job 19:25—Job's redeemer.

Seow argues that *ʾaḥărôn* is never used adverbially and is better taken as a substantive: "the last," in reference to God the Redeemer being the first and the last in Isaiah 44:6 (Seow, *Job 1-21*, 806–7; so also Clines, *Job 1–20*, 428). However, if the book of Job was written before Isaiah, then Isaiah would be drawing upon Job, not the other way around. Furthermore, the syntax in Isaiah 44:6 renders *ʾaḥărôn* as the object of an assumed predicate "am": וְאֲנִי אַחֲרוֹן (*waʾănî ʾaḥărôn*). Seow's grammatical argument that *ʾaḥărôn* is never used as an adjective is weighty (Ibid., 823–24). But the ultimate rule of how a word is used is the speaker/author, and Seow's translation of verse 25 (But I know that my redeemer lives, and the last will rise over dust) does not clarify what Job meant when he spoke these words. It is more natural to take the third singular verb יָקוּם (*yāqûm*) as giving the main action of the second half of verse 25, while the subject doing the action is the redeemer—with *ʾaḥărôn* then modifying when such action takes place. The redeemer will take his stand for Job "at the last."

[60] Author's translation. Italics give the implication of עַל־עָפָר (*ʿal-ʿāpār*).

[61] קום (*qwm*) can occur in legal contexts to refer to a party taking a stand to say or do something in a courtroom scenario (Deut 19:16; Job 16:8; Pss 27:12; 35:11). See "קום," *HALOT*, 1086–87; Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 283; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 293; Waters, "Job 19:23-27: A Living Redeemer," 443; and Clines, *Job 1–20*, 460. Seow is pessimistic about the usage of קום in a forensic sense in Job 19:25 but admits that legal connotations are present in the verse (Seow, *Job 1–21*, 807).

[62] "Dust" (*ʿāpār*) in the book of Job is often a metaphor for frailty and death (Job 4:19; 7:5, 21; 10:9; 16:15; 17:16; contra Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 283). As a reference to mankind's origin, *ʿāpār* can also refer to source of their creation (Job 8:19). See also Waters, "Job 19:23-27: A Living Redeemer," 443; and Seow, *Job 1–21*, 1:808. Almost every time *ʿāpār* is used in the Old Testament, it does not refer to the entire earth, except for Job 41:33 and perhaps here in 19:25. Given that Job has been wishing for a solution that applies to all mankind (7:17–21; 9:2; 14:3–4), views his redeemer as performing a final, eschatological work, and refers to a non-definite "dust," it is possible that Job is not just referring to his own death but views his situation as representative of mankind's. *ʿApār* in 19:25 would then serve as a metaphor for death, with the redeemer overcoming it.

and not another. My heart faints within me!"[63] In these verses, Job speaks of seeing God in a state of reconciliation with Him, after he has died and risen again.[64] Job is not referring to a post-death spiritual vision of God. Rather, he has in view a time after death when he has a renewed body,[65] and where he beholds God face-to-face.[66]

The most serious objection to the bodily resurrection view in Job 19:26 comes from Job's own words in Job 14:12: "So man lies down and does not rise. Until the

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[63] Author's translation. Some scholars argue that the MT of Job 19:26–27 is either corrupted or has nothing to do with resurrection. For example, Pope and Habel both say verse 26 is "notoriously difficult" to interpret (Pope, *Job*, 147; and Habel, *The Book of Job*, 293). Pope adds that "The ancient versions all differ and no reliance can be placed in any of them" (Pope, *Job*, 147). Vicchio similarly claims that that MT is unrecoverable and that it is impossible to understand what verse 26 says (Vicchio, *Job in the Ancient World*, 82). Aron Pinker argues that the MT of verse 26 has been edited to reflect a bias towards physical resurrection and a hope in future vindication. See Aron Pinker, "A New Interpretation of Job 19:26," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 15, no. 2 (2015): 1. However, these scholars do not show objective evidence (manuscripts or textual discrepancies) for their positions. Vicchio admits that most of the differences between different Hebrew manuscripts are minor (Vicchio, *Job in the Ancient World*, 63), and Pinker's source to support his argument merely repeats his assertions (cf. T. K. Cheyne, "On Some Suspected Passages in the Poetical Books of the Old Testament," *JQR* 10, no. 1 [1897]: 16).

Other Joban scholars give translations of Job 19:26–27 that are subjective or based on emendations to the MT. Wilson reflects what seems to be the attitude amongst many of these scholars on verse 26: "However, a better view is that the limits of language have been reached here, and the details should not be pressed too far" (Wilson, *Job*, 108). There seems to be a hesitation amongst scholars to allow the text of Job 19:26–27 to talk about resurrection.

[64] "And after" translates וְאַחַר (*wəʾaḥar*). The primary function of *ʾaḥar* is to temporally frame contexts (cf. Deut 8:16; Job 42:12). See also "אַחֲרִית," *NIDOTTE*, 1:361–62. Seow further notes that the wordplay between *wəʾaḥărōwn* and *wəʾaḥar* makes *wəʾaḥar* temporal (Seow, *Job 1–21*, 805). See also Fyall, who sees this verse as Job expecting vindication after he dies (Fyall, *Now My Eyes Have Seen You*, 51).

[65] In verse 26, Job is speaking of a time after his skin (עוֹר; *ʿôr*) is destroyed or cut off, which is probably a reference to Job 19:20—where Job is at the edge of death and his bones cling to his "skin" (*ʿôr*) and "flesh" (בָּשָׂר; *bāśār*). Job is envisioning a time when, what is currently physically left of him (his skin and flesh) will die and be replaced by a renewed body of flesh (*bāśār*) in 19:26b. For further discussion on what Job means by "destroyed" (נִקְּפוּ; *niqqəpû*) see Habel, *The Book of Job*, 293. There is a question as to whether the *min* in the phrase מִבְּשָׂרִי (*mibbəśārî*) should be taken as a privative (without my flesh) or one of source (from [the location of] my flesh). There are a few reasons to take the *min* as one of source: 1) the only other cognate construction in the Old Testament is a *min* of source (Gen 2:23). 2) Job parallels his hope of resurrection in Job 14:13–17 to the new life a tree gets (Job 14:7), indicating a desire for a new body. Just as Job views his physical suffering as a sign of judgment, so he views total physical restoration as a sign of reconciliation. 3) While the *min* preposition can be used to say, "without" (cf. Job 24:7) it is not usually translated that way unless it is in combination with another preposition (e.g., מִבַּלְעֲדֵי [*mibbəlʿădê*] in Job 4:11; 18:15; 31:19; Jer 9:11, 12; Hos 4:6, etc.).

Habel adds that nowhere in Israelite tradition do disembodied people see God and that the broader context points to Job wanting to see God face-to-face with his own eyes (Ibid., 293–94). Fyal appears to take the *min* in a privative sense, but he accurately sums up Job's meaning in Job 19:26: "Job seeing God without his flesh does not imply a disembodied experience, but rather that *this* body has gone" (Fyall, *Now My Eyes Have Seen You*, 51; emphasis original). Within the broader ANE context, M. L. Barré has argued that in Akkadian literature, anytime the verbal parallels to *ḥay* and *qwm* occur in the same context, healing and resurrection are in view. See M. L. Barré, "A Note on Job XIX 25," *VT* 29, no. 1 (1979): 107.

[66] The words for "behold" (חזה; *ḥzh*) and "seeing" (ראה; *rʾh*) in verses 26 and 27 often refer to something like gazing with wonder at God or His works (Pss 11:7; 17:15; 27:4; 46:8; 63:2). This emotional language fits the rest of the Job 19:25–27 passage ("I myself," "not another") and other places where Job expresses a desire to be reconciled to God or to speak to Him without fear (Job 9:35; 10:8–9; 14:15–17; 16:21). See also Waters, "Job 19:23–27: A Living Redeemer," 443. In verse 25, Job used a reduplication of first-person pronouns to refer to knowing that his redeemer lives. Job reduplicates first person pronouns again in verse 27 when referring to seeing God—indicating his confidence and his emotional state about both his redeemer and God.

heavens are no longer, he will not awake nor be aroused out of his sleep."[67] But while Job does believe death is the end of man's existence, just one verse later Job appears to hope for a new system where death is not the end of mankind's hope, and where reconciliation with God is possible (14:13–17).[68] Job's hope in 19:26–27 is thus a development of Job's thought process about how to be reconciled to God. Job would finally see God—not to challenge Him in a legal dispute, but to see Him while being in a right relationship with Him, with a new body not affected by sin and death.[69]

Job 19:25–27 is the height of Job's hope of being reconciled to God, and the heavenly third party plays a central role in fulfilling his hope. Job expresses confident faith that God would, through a redeemer, raise him from the dead and enable Job to see Him face-to-face, without sin as a barrier between them. Job has faith that God's wrath and condemnation do not solely define Him, and that God is also gracious and kind to reconcile man to Himself through a redeemer.[70]

The Heavenly Mediator and Christ

Job's heavenly third party is someone who can save Job from His sin, grant him a resurrection body, and reconcile him to God. For Christians, this is exactly the role that Jesus Christ fulfills. At a cursory level, there are multiple parallels between the work of Job's heavenly third party and the work of Jesus Christ for His people. Jesus—who is both man and God—stands between God and man as a mediator, to bring them together (Job 9:33 [LXX]; cf. 1 Tim 2:5–6). Jesus provides the ransom payment for sin (1 Tim 2:6; cf. Rom 3:24; Eph 1:7; Heb 9:12), while Job's redeemer would make a payment to save Job (Job 19:25–27).[71]

Job knew no one could be justified before God because of their moral fallenness (Job 9:2; cf. 4:17), but he still hoped in an adjudicator to bring about justification (9:33–35). Jesus accomplished justification (Rom 3:23–24; 8:1, 33) and intercedes for His people before God the Father (8:34; Heb 4:14–16). Job had a hope that his redeemer would conquer death, somehow enable Job's bodily resurrection, and reconcile him to God (Job 19:25–27; cf. 14:13–17). Jesus' resurrection overcomes death, reconciles us to God, and gives us new bodies that are free from sin (Rom 6:4; 1 Cor 15:4, 49–57).

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[67] So Pope, who also notes that Chrysostom denied bodily resurrection in the book of Job based off this verse (Pope, *Job*, 147). Vicchio states that it is impossible for Job to be thinking about resurrection based on Job 14:12. See Vicchio, *Job in the Ancient World*, 82.

[68] Cf. Waters, "Job 19:23–27: A Living Redeemer," 442; and Ash, *Job*, 216. See the ESV's translation of Job 14:13–17, where Job is giving a picture of what would be true if resurrection is possible. For further discussion on Job's resurrection hope in Job 14, see the forthcoming monograph currently under review by SCS Press.

[69] Cf. Ibid. Ash implies that the post-resurrection meeting with God would prove they were already in a right relationship.

[70] Hartley's conclusion is not quite the same, but his tone is in line with the argument of this article: "To express it another way, Job believes that his present experience with God's anger is transitory and ephemeral. In the end he will encounter God in justice and mercy, the God who will fulfill his kinship commitment to his servant by vindicating him before the people" (Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 297).

[71] There is also Elihu's discussion of a heavenly mediator who finds a ransom payment for atonement in Job 33:23–24. For further discussion, see Barrick, "Messianic Implications in Elihu's 'Mediator Speech' (Job 33:23–28)"; and the forthcoming monograph under review by SCS Press this article is adapted from.

There are multiple works written at a more popular level that argue for connections between the book of Job and Jesus.[72] Yet, there remains a need for complete scholarly works that examine if and how Paul drew upon Job as he was developing his own understanding of Christ and His works—including justification, mediation, atonement, and resurrection.[73] At the very least, the parallels between Job's heavenly third party and Jesus should provide an impetus for further research into this area. There is much fruit that is to be discovered from Paul's use of Job that glorifies Jesus.

[72] E.g., G. Campbell Morgan, *The Answers of Jesus to Job* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1935); Mike Mason, *The Gospel According to Job* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1994).

[73] One in-depth scholarly work that focuses on Paul's use of Job is by Andrew David Naselli, *From Typology to Doxology: Paul's Use of Isaiah and Job in Romans 11:34-35* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012).

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THE SECOND ADAM AND THE NECESSITY FOR ESCHATOLOGICAL EARTHLY DOMINION

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The Old Testament's portrayal of the coming Davidic King demonstrates His successes in the realm in which Adam failed. God tasked Adam with a mandate of dominion, in which he must rule over and subdue the created order such that it flourishes. However, Adam failed to uphold this mandate by disobeying God's Word, plunging the world into sin. Though mankind's mandate was not removed, none who followed Adam lived up to the fullness of its requirements before God. Yet the Scriptures make it clear that the Davidic King will not collapse like Adam, nor any other earthly king. He will succeed in the divine mandate. And it is this action that necessitates an earthly kingdom, such that the Second Adam triumphs in dominion as King over all creation.

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Introduction

One of the most theologically rich themes of Scripture as it pertains to Christ is the last Adam motif. Several scriptural passages show an intentional theological correspondence between Adam and Christ, communicating rich doctrinal truths regarding the person and work of Christ. Luke's gospel draws a parallel in sonship between Jesus Christ as the Son of God (3:22–23; 4:3, 9) and Adam as the son of God (3:38). Luke 3–4 intentionally carries the genealogical record back to Adam to portray Jesus as the second Adam who succeeds in passing Satan's temptations, in contrast to the first Adam who failed in temptation.[1] Luke emphasized sonship by strategically placing the baptism, genealogy, and temptations of Christ side by side.

[1] I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), 161.

This draws the reader to compare the first Adam with the last Adam.[2] Luke shows a divine correspondence between Christ and Adam, illustrating that Christ is the Son of God who succeeded on the earth, against the temptations of the serpent/Satan, in the same realm where Adam, the son of God had failed. The apostle Paul also draws a theological correspondence between Christ and Adam, pointing to each one's activity upon this earth. He describes Christ as the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45), who brings life and righteousness for those in union with Him in contrast to the first Adam, who brought sin and death for those in union with him (Rom 5:12–21; 1 Cor 15:20–22, 45–49). Likewise, Paul describes Adam and Christ in Romans 5:12–21 as representatives who impact humanity through the effects of each one's actions accomplished upon the earth. Adam and Christ are established as the two "heads" of humanity[3] in 5:15–21, one being a type ("τύπος") of the other. Consequently, the last Adam succeeds in the same realm and against the same foe of the first Adam's failure securing soteriological realities.

The concept of the first Adam and last Adam motif in Scripture is most explicitly connected to hamartiology and soteriology as seen in the above examples. The first Adam failed, which brought devastating consequences, whereas the second Adam reverses these consequences for those united in Him. This important pattern compares Adam's failure resulting in sin and death (hamartiology) with Christ's success resulting in righteousness and eternal life (soteriology). Another significant correspondence between Adam and Christ is rooted in the creation mandate of Genesis 1:26–28 for dominion over the earth and animal kingdom. Just as Christ's first advent into this world brought soteriological realities of life and righteousness, so too will His second advent bring eschatological realities of a comprehensive dominion over the earth. Christ must have a successful reign from, upon, and over the earth and everything in it as the last Adam in order to fulfill the creation mandate where Adam had failed in Genesis 1–3.[4] Several biblical passages emphasize the necessity of an earthly eschatological dominion that reverses Adam's failure as God's viceroy over this world. The exegetical details of these passages overwhelmingly

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[2] James M. Hamilton Jr., *Typology: Understanding the Bible's Promise-Shaped Patterns: How Old Testament Expectations Are Fulfilled in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2022), 60–61.

[3] John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Biblical Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 464–6. The theological concept of representation or headship highlights how an individual can represent a larger group. It is typically referred to as *federal headship*, and most often connected to covenant theology. However, the label *representative headship* is a better description because it directly relates to the emphasis of the texts of Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15 which show both individuals as legal representatives for those who are identified as being either "in Adam" or "in Christ." Furthermore, though this view is often a component of covenant theology, one can view Adam and Christ as representative heads of humanity without embracing theological covenants or covenant theology. Even some covenant theologians such as Anthony Hoekema and G. C. Berkouwer rejected a covenant of works in Scripture while holding to the headship concept. See Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 118–21, 161; G. C. Berkouwer, *Sin*, Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 208. Thus, one can hold to the exegetical evidence of a representative-headship view of Adam and Christ in Scripture (specifically Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15) without embracing a covenantal theological framework or imposing a covenant of works upon the text. See MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 461–466, and 870–871 for a brief discussion on representative headship and theological/philosophical covenants respectively.

[4] Michael Vlach, *Premillennialism: Why There Must Be A Future Earthly Kingdom of Jesus* (Los Angeles, CA: Theological Studies Press, 2015), 69–71.

stress a worldwide and complete dominion that extends to the animal kingdom displayed through the Davidic King and last Adam. Consequently, the last Adam must have success in the same location where the first Adam failed in both soteriological issues and eschatological issues. Otherwise, there is an earth-sized gap in the biblical storyline of the creation mandate for dominion over this world.

The Creation Mandate for Dominion of the Earth

Adam, created in the image of God, was given a mandate to subdue the earth and to have dominion over the animal kingdom (Gen 1:28), functioning as a vice-regent on the earth and mediator between God and His creation. His failure in the garden brought devastating consequences into the world (Rom 5:12; 8:20–22). Adam's failure in the garden was a failure in the creation mandate of dominion over the earth, introducing a breakdown of the global directive that has not been "wholly remedied."[5] No one in history has rectified Adam's forfeiture of dominion over this earth. Only Christ can and will fulfill the creation mandate as set forth in Genesis 1:26–28. Scripture shows that Christ is uniquely the true image of God (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15) and perfect mediator (1 Tim 2:5), who will have a successful reign of dominion upon this earth in a future global kingdom (Num 24:17–19; Pss 8; 72:8–11; 110:2, 5–7; Dan 7:13–28) that extends to the animal kingdom (Ps 8; Isa 11:6–9). The Genesis account of creation introduces the concepts of dominion of which other biblical writers build upon these ideas through intertextual connections and theological themes, either using the same terms and phrases or alluding to dominion motifs. These biblical writers build a compounding picture of fulfillment in the creation mandate for dominion given to the first Adam through the second Adam earthly reign over geopolitical realities and God's creation with Edenic-like conditions of peace and abundance in the culmination of God's prophetic program.

Genesis 1—The First Adam's Mandate Expressed

Genesis identifies God as the Architect and Creator of all that exists.[6] He is the sovereign Creator King who not only establishes the universe, but also owns and rules over His creation (1 Chr 29:11–12; Ps 89:11–13). He sits on His throne in heaven (Pss 2:4; 11:4) and His "kingdom rules over all" (Ps 103:19). His universal kingdom "is an everlasting kingdom" and His "dominion endures from generation to every generation" (Ps 145:13). While God's universal kingdom encompasses the universe, He has also established a mediatorial kingdom[7] upon the earth first discharged through His creation mandate to Adam to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the

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[5] Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 2007), 43.

[6] John J. Davis, *Paradise To Prison: Studies In Genesis* (Salem, WI: Sheffield Publishing Company, 1998), 42.

[7] For a detailed discussion between the differences of God's universal kingdom and man's mediatorial kingdom, see McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God,* 34–36; Michael J. Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God* (Silverton, OR: Lampion, 2017), 54–56.

birds of the sky and over every living thing that creeps on the earth" (1:28). This is a mediatorial dominion in that Adam, and mankind by extension, was to rule over the earth as God's representative. The call for dominion is rooted in the divine image, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, so that they will have dominion" (1:26). The text suggests that the result of being made in God's image is expressed in exercising dominion.[8] The terms for "image" and "likeness" in 1:26–28 not only show a unique relationship with God as Creator, but also accentuate an exalted and regal role with God's creation.[9] God's image bearers function as His representatives on earth and as rulers over nature.[10] In summary, God is King over His universal kingdom which entails all of creation (1 Chr 29:11–12; Pss 2:4; 11:4; 89:11–13; 103:19–22; 145:13; Dan 4:34–35) and has created man to be a mediator over the earth as a vice-regent (Pss 8:6; 115:16).

The specific creation assignment is attached to two key verbs, רדה ("to have dominion") and כבשׁ ("to subdue"). The verb רדה ("to have dominion") is used in Genesis 1:26 and 28 with reference to five key categories: 1) fish of the sea; 2) birds of the sky, 3) cattle, 4) the earth, and 5) creeping things on the ground (most likely reptiles and insects). These categories are marked with the Hebrew preposition בְּ, describing the exact objects of the dominion injunction. In addition, the phrase וּבְכָל־ הָאָרֶץ ("over all of the earth") makes this mandate specifically a global dominion and not simply regional or localized. Consequently, dominion on this earth, over all the earth, and over earthly creatures will be significant markers for other biblical writers alluding back to Genesis 1:26–28 for the fulfillment through the last Adam. God will not leave this mandate unrealized but will fulfill it in respect to both the location and the objects of dominion in the first Adam's failure.

The charge in Genesis 1:28 contains two indicative sentences introduced by imperfect consecutive verbs וַיְבָרֶךְ ("to bless") and וַיֹּאמֶר ("to speak").[11] This specific mandate is established in the context of Yahweh's blessing and only achievable through His blessing and empowerment. Additionally, the two indicative sentences are followed by five imperatives, פרה ("be fruitful"), רבה ("multiply"), מלא ("fill"), כבשׁ ("subdue"), רדה and ("have dominion").[12] The first three verbs ("be fruitful," "multiply," and "fill") are textually linked to "the earth" ("אֶת־הָאָרֶץ"), pointing to the process of populating the earth in order to bring about the last two verbs of subduing ("כבשׁ") the earth and exercising dominion ("רדה") over the animal kingdom. Thus, populating the earth was a part of ruling over it.

The concept of dominion communicated through the terms כבשׁ ("subdue") and רדה ("have dominion") are associated with power, rule, authority, and governance over a realm, which in the case of the first Adam is the whole earth. The term רדה

[8] It is beyond the scope of this article to explore the image of God and its implications with any depth. See MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 407–14. The view taken here is the image of God is "substantive," something inherently structural to man. Therefore, dominion is a consequence and result of being made in the image.

[9] Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, ed. D. A. Carson, vol. 15, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), 59.

[10] T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*, Third Edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 125.

[11] Mark D. Vander Hart, "Creation and Covenant, Part One," *Mid-American Journal of Theology* 6, no. 1 (Fall 1990): 5.

[12] Ibid.

("have dominion") stresses "the act of dominance by force" and can seem to have a negative association in prohibitions in the Torah against subjugating fellow Israelites (Lev 25:43, 46, 53; Ezek 34:4).[13] Though to be precise, Leviticus 25:43, 46, 53 adds פָּרֶךְ ("brutality") to qualify the kind of dominion, thereby showing that רדה does not inherently have a negative connotation. רדה also overlaps in meaning with מׇשַׁל ("rule"), as both describe Solomon's rule (1 Kgs 4:21) and dominion (1 Kgs 4:24) over the surrounding nations. Moreover, רדה is used to describe the Messiah's future global kingdom reign (Num 24:19; Pss 78:2; 110:2). The other key term כבשׁ ("subdue") "depicts a hierarchical relationship in which humans are positioned above the earth and granted power and control over it."[14] "Subdue" can describe the subjugation and conquest of the land (Num 32:22, 29), but the usage of כבשׁ in Genesis 1:28 is specifically connected to the earth, implying the kind of work man must do in order to "bring creation into submission through man's strength,"[15] through the area of "settlement and agriculture."[16] Hence, the earth is designed to flourish, providing plant-based food for man and animals (1:29–30). These two verbs in the context of Eden point to dominion that is peaceful, productive, and mutually beneficial for mankind, animals, and the land. This positive view of dominion is illustrated through Adam's work in the garden of Eden in chapter 2 by cultivating and keeping the land (2:5, 15) and giving names to the animals (2:19–20).

Genesis 2—The First Adam's Mandate Illustrated

The creation mandate of Genesis 1:26–28 is closely linked to both the activity of God in creation and Adam's work in the garden. The Creator King has dominion over His creation, making the formless, void, and uninhabitable earth (Gen 1:2; Jer 4:23) a hospitable place for life (1:3–19), which He then fills with life (1:20–28). Yahweh also creates man as a mediator and viceroy over His creation for the purpose of subduing it and exercising dominion over it to bring about its order, productivity, and flourishing. Man's vice-regency resembles Yahweh's sovereign work over the earth in a limited yet significant way. The creation account describes God's dominion over all aspects of creation, providing insight into how His image bearers will function in the garden in carrying out the dominion of the earth and the animal kingdom.

The first three days of creation change the barren earth into an inhabitable and productive environment in the spheres of water, sky, and land (1:3–13). The last three days pertain to populating the spheres (water, sky, and land) with fish, birds, and land creatures (1:20–25), culminating in the creation of mankind (1:26–31). Through His creative word, God cultivates and shapes the earth for the sustainability of life in the hydrosphere, atmosphere, and geosphere. Not only does He subdue the earth, developing and preparing it for life, but He also gives specific names to what He

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[13] Philip J. Nel, "רָדָה" in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, ed. Willem VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 3:1056.

[14] Theodore Hiebert, "Rethinking Dominion Theology," *Direction* 25, no. 3 (Fall 1996): 18.

[15] Vander Hart, "Creation and Covenant, Part One," 7.

[16] Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 40.

creates, demonstrating His authority and dominion over what exists.[17] The text uses the term קרא ("to call") in 1:5, 7, and 10 to highlight God's authoritative act in naming the day, night, heaven, earth, and seas that He spoke into existence.[18] This activity of naming aspects of His creation illustrates God's sovereign dominion over it.

Likewise, when man is tasked with dominion over the earth as God's vice-regent, he is further told in Genesis 2:15 to "cultivate" and "keep" the garden. Man was to work the earth to produce a flourishing environment for God's creation to thrive. He was also tasked with giving names to the animals (2:19–20). The same term קרא ("to call") used to describe God's activity in naming aspects of creation is used in 2:19–20 to highlight man's act in naming the animals, demonstrating man's representative activity. As Creator King, God had every authoritative right to name the animals as He had done for other aspects of creation, yet He chose to give that activity to man as a stewardship of dominion over the animals. Thus, Adam undertakes similar activities to God in exercising dominion over creation.

Another connection which helps in understanding the creation mandate of 1:26–28 is the role of the sun, moon, and stars "ruling" the day and night in 1:14–19. The two great lights separate the day from night (1:14), operate as signs (1:14) for the calendar (seasons, days, and years), give light to the earth (1:15, 17), and function as "rulers," governing the day and night (1:16, 18; cf. 136:8–9). The noun מֶמְשָׁלָה from the root משל ("to rule") in Genesis 1:16 and 18 likens the sun and moon to rulers of their domain, exercising dominion over day and night.[19] The noun is often used to highlight the control of a king over his domain. Psalm 145:13 connects Yahweh's מֶמְשָׁלָה ("dominion") alongside His מַלְכוּת ("kingdom").[20] Additionally, מֶמְשָׁלָה described Solomon's rule over the kingdoms next to Israel (1 Kgs 4:21 [5:1] MT), with the cognate מֹשֵׁל linked to the global earthly messianic kingdom (Zech 9:10). The verb משל ("to rule") is used in contexts describing God's rule (Isa 40:10; Pss 89:9; 103:22), as well as man's creation mandate of ruling over the earth and the animal kingdom in Psalm 8 (8:6–8). These intertextual connections are important, for it closely links the action of משל ("rule") with the activity of רדה "have dominion" in Genesis 1:26 and 28. The text subtly associates the rule of the luminaries with the dominion of man in serving God's creation. David Carr notes, "…it appears that this otherwise unexplained "rule" (ממשלה) by non-personified heavenly bodies in 1:14–18 anticipates the (differently worded) "rule" (רדה) to which humans will be destined in 1:26, 28."[21] Thus, the great lights serve creation on behalf of God by giving light and serve mankind by providing visible signs for calendar purposes like a world clock.[22]

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[17] James McKeown, *Genesis*, The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 22.

[18] Meredith G. Kline, *Genesis: A New Commentary*, ed. Jonathan G. Kline (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2016), 11.

[19] Philip J. Nel, "מָשַׁל," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 2:1137.

[20] Ibid.

[21] David M. Carr, *Genesis 1–11*, International Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament 1 (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2021), 62–63.

[22] H. Gross, "מָשַׁל (2)," ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. David E. Green, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 9:71.

Moreover, the sun and moon function as rulers over their particularly designed realms to assist the earth in flourishing. Similarly, man has been given the charge to rule over the earth in a more detailed way, through dominion and subjugation of the earth and all the creatures in the earth. Both the luminaries and mankind are tasked with providing for the earth in different ways according to their function and spheres. The luminaries would order and govern their domain in the heavens as divinely mandated to carry out the cycles of day and night (Gen 1:16–18) for the glory of God (Ps 19). Likewise, man is to order and govern his domain upon the earth as Yahweh's representative and bring Him glory through godly dominion. Thus, Adam's activity in Genesis 2:15–20 highlights a governing of the garden and an ordering of the animal kingdom as God's vice-regent, serving through royal labor as a mediator on God's behalf.

Genesis 3—The First Adam's Mandate Failure

The blessing of man's exalted status in exercising dominion is contrasted to the curse in the Fall (Gen 3:17) through man's failure in the garden. The very ground man was to cultivate and keep would require great toil, growing thorns and thistles because of sin (3:18). In a devastating twist, man would be dominated by the very ground he was to have dominion over (1:26–28). Adam's failure happened on the earth and he would return to it via death and decay through sin (Gen 3:19; Rom 5:12). Similarly, the last Adam would come to the earth in his first advent to deal with sin (Rom 5:15–21; Heb 9:28). Additionally, Adam's failure in governing his wife, his desires,[23] and the animal kingdom (the serpent) meant failure in the creation mandate. He can no longer "fulfill his God-given destiny to rule the earth successfully."[24] This failure invalidated Adam's vice-regent and mediatorial position of exercising dominion over the earth and the animal kingdom under the leadership of God. Only the last Adam in His second advent through an earthly kingdom can fulfill the creation mandate in the way the last Adam failed. Christ's first advent to earth was necessary to undo the consequences of sin and death of Adam. Correspondingly, Christ's second advent to earth exercising dominion over it through His kingdom rule is necessary to succeed in the same realm and sphere where Adam failed.

The effects of the curse not only brought about the loss of subduing the land as intended, but also an upheaval in the animal kingdom with hostility between man and animals. Genesis 9:2 notes that the beasts of the earth, the birds of the sky, the creeping things on the ground, and the fish in the sea will be fearful and terrified of man. The very spheres of the animal kingdom that were under Adam's dominion (1:28) and of which he organized and named through peaceful dominion (2:19–20) were now in a state of estrangement, fear, and terror. The devastating consequences of the curse shattered the peace and tranquility between mankind and the animal kingdom, bringing enmity and hostility. This is foreshadowed in the hostility between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman in Genesis 3:15. Animals were in no danger of being eaten prior to the Fall. The menu of the garden was plant-based

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[23] Eugene H. Merrill, "Covenant and the Kingdom," *Criswell Theological Review* 1, no. 2 (1987), 301.

[24] Michael Vlach, *The New Creation Model: A Paradigm For Discovering God's Restoration Purposes from Creation to New Creation* (Cary, NC: Theological Studies Press, 2023), 72.

for both man and creature (1:29–30), but now changes after the Fall, with animals available as food for people (9:2–3). Additionally, the Fall brought in the inversion of man's relationship with the animal kingdom through idol worship. Eugene Merrill observes, "No longer did man have dominion over all things; instead, he abdicated his role as sovereign and worshipped what he should have ruled."[25] Man would no longer exercise dominion over the animal kingdom as an act of worship of the Creator King. Instead, man worships the creatures, making idols in the likeness of corruptible man, birds, four-footed animals, and crawling creatures (Rom 1:23).

Man has failed to fulfill the creation mandate in the exact way it was given and over the exact realms it covered. While there have been attempts at dominion through people like Nimrod (Gen 10:8–12), or Gentile nations like Babylon (Dan 2:38; Isa 14:6), Egypt (Ezek 29:13–16), Persia (Isa 41:2), or even future empires like the Antichrist (Dan 7; Rev 13), they all have failed to include the whole earth, peace in the animal kingdom, and the abundant flourishing of creation. Even God-fearing men like Noah and Solomon exhibited only limited aspects of dominion. Noah provided for and protected two of every kind of bird, animals, and creeping thing on the ground (Gen 6:16–22; 8:15–19), categories of Genesis 1:26–28. Solomon also functioned in a similar way, having rule and dominion of the surrounding nations (1 Kgs 4:21; 24). Furthermore, Solomon's activities are reminiscent though not a recapitulation of Adam's activities in the garden. Solomon's wisdom is illustrated through his articulation of creation (1 Kgs 4:33). He spoke of trees, from cedar trees to hyssop, and of animals, birds, creeping things, and fish. These are the same categories that Adam had dominion over, ordered, and even named. However, no person nor empire has even come close to exercising the kind of righteous rule and dominion over the earth and animals stipulated in the creation mandate. Adam's failure leaves a hole in the biblical storyline involving the creation mandate. There is a last Adam who is destined to have dominion over all the earth and over all the animal kingdom and succeed in the same terrestrial location where Adam failed.[26]

The Messianic Dominion of the Earth

Adam's failure requires one to fulfill the mandate in its original design and intent. David in Psalm 8 showed the creation mandate is still applicable. Additionally, David and other biblical authors established new revelation in connection with the creation mandate through unique words, phrases, motifs, and concepts[27] directly anchored in Genesis 1:26–28 language and stipulations. Numbers 24, Psalms 72 and 110, Isaiah 2 and 11, and Daniel 7 are key to this discussion because the biblical writers connect the messianic expectation of success in the same realm (earth and the animal kingdom) where Adam's failure occurred. The prophetic solution to the dominion mandate through the last Adam is exegetically and theologically consistent with the mandate failure of the first Adam.

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[25] Eugene H. Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2006), 285.

[26] Vlach, *Premillennialism: Why There Must Be A Future Earthly Kingdom of Jesus*, 70.

[27] Abner Chou, *The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers: Learning to Interpret Scripture from the Prophets and Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2018), 48–49. For a discussion on the hermeneutics of OT writers see pages 47–92.

Numbers 24

Numbers describes Israel's travel to the Promised Land from Sinai (Num 1–10) to the plains of Moab (Num 22:1; 36:13). There, the king of Moab and Balaam attempt to curse Israel (Num 22:4–7). The cycle of Balaam's four discourses (23:7, 18; 24:3, 15) in Numbers 22–24 are initiated due to Moab's fear of Israel because of their success against the Amorites (22:2–3). Balak hoped Balaam's curses would help him defeat Israel. Yet Balaam can only speak what Yahweh gives him to speak (22:35, 38; 23:5, 16, 26) pronouncing blessings for Israel, revealing for Israel Yahweh's intent of fulfilling His promises made to the patriarchs.[28] Israel's immutable God will exhibit an unyielding fidelity to His covenant oath.

Numbers 24 contains the last two discourses of Balaam with the third discourse centered on the coming messianic King "who would bring the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant both to Israel and the nations."[29] This messianic hope reaches back to Genesis 3:15 and the promised "head crusher."[30] Genesis 49:8–12, Jacob's latter days prophecy (49:1), describes an eschatological King from Judah wielding a scepter and ruler's staff, receiving the obedience of the nations (49:10) in a time of unprecedented agricultural prosperity (49:11–12). This future king with scepter and staff is a "warrior-king whose rule will extend from Judah to encompass…all the peoples of the earth,"[31] and who "brings order and a new creation to this world."[32] Balaam's third discourse (24:3–9) predicts a blessings on Israel's seed with promises of an exalted king and kingdom (23:7), the crushing and shattering of enemies (23:8), and a repetition of Genesis 49:9 and Genesis 12:3 in Numbers 24:9. The third discourse highlights a connection between the Abrahamic promise and a victorious King over his enemies. Greg Harris states, "Both Genesis 49 and Numbers 24 depict the promised King as fierce, crouching and lying down like a lion whom no one will dare to rouse (Gen 49:9; Num 24:9), and—most significantly—it is through this promised individual King that both the blessing and the cursing will come in its fullness (Gen 12:3; 27:29; Num 24:9)."[33] Consequently, the third discourse points to a King who has victory over enemies because of God's Abrahamic promises of blessings and curses (Gen 12:3; 22:15–18).

Balaam's fourth discourse (Num 24:5–19) centers on "the last days" (24:14; cf. Gen 49:1) emphasizing a ruler exercising dominion. A King will come from Israel, crush the forehead of His enemies with His scepter (24:17), and have dominion (24:19). Here, the Hebrew verb רדה ("have dominion") in 24:19 is used to show that this messianic figure will exercise dominion over his enemies. The usage of רדה in the Pentateuch is limited, making this a unique case, occurring in Genesis 1:26, 28;

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[28] Gordon J. Wenham, *Numbers: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 4 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1981), 190.

[29] John MacArthur Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1997), 231

[30] For a detailed discussion of the messianic intentions of Genesis 3:15, see Chou, *The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers: Learning to Interpret Scripture from the Prophets and Apostles*, 83–87.

[31] Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, 91.

[32] Chou, *The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers: Learning to Interpret Scripture from the Prophets and Apostles*, 86.

[33] Greg Harris, *The Bible Expositor's Handbook* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2020),

Leviticus 25:43, 46, 53; 26:17, and here in Numbers 24:19.[34] The uses in Leviticus have already been discussed above and refer to the harsh treatment of an Israelite, thus making Genesis 1:26–28 and Numbers 24:19 the only references in the Pentateuch dealing with a kingly dominion rule. The creation mandate stipulated in Genesis is carried over to Numbers 24, describing one who has dominion. Moreover, other biblical writers continue the language and themes of the Pentateuch's promise for a King who will successfully exercise dominion on the earth through God's "blessing" in connection with the creation mandate of Genesis 1:26–28.

Psalms 8, 72, 110

The Genesis motif of a man exercising dominion over all of God's creation as a vice-regent is tied to three Davidic Psalms (8, 72, 110). The terms used in Genesis 1 for "rule" (מִשׁל - 1:16, 18) and "dominion" (רדה - 1:26, 28) in the creation account are also used in these three psalms to describe kingly rule over creation. Psalm 8 is an exposition of the Genesis 1 creation mandate by David, in which he praises Yahweh, the Creator King for creating man as a king to rule over His creation. Later biblical writers link Psalm 8 with Christ's own kingdom rule (1 Cor 15:25; Heb 2:7). Psalms 72 and 110 paint a picture of a future messianic king exhibiting dominion over his enemies, sharing the language of Genesis 1:26–28. These three psalms emphasize One who will have unprecedented success in exerting dominion over the earth, over nations, and over the animal kingdom.

Psalm 8 praises Yahweh for His majestic splendor exhibited through creation and for creating man to rule over the earth as His representative. The psalm incorporates an inclusio, beginning and ending with the same phrase, "O Yahweh, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth" (8:1, 9). Contained within this inclusio are two stanzas that: 1) praise God for creation, ending with a rhetorical question about man's value (1:1–4) and 2) answers that question through describing man's position as vice-regent over creation (1:5–8).[35] There is a parallel emphasis on the theme of ruling for both Yahweh and man, recalling the Genesis account. Yahweh is called אֲדֹנֵינוּ ("our Lord," or "our Master") acknowledging His Kingship, which not only extends over Israel but also over the earth as the universal ruler.[36] At the same time, Yahweh has created man with regal terms and implications. God "crowns" (עטר), man with "glory" (כבוד), and "majesty" (הדר)," all of which are royal terms.[37] Two other key concepts that show this vice-regent status are seen in Psalm 8:6. David proclaims that man "rules" (מִשׁל cf. Gen 1:16, 18) over the works of Yahweh's hands. The term מִשׁל "to rule" has a close association with רדה "dominion" and its usage here links מִשׁל "ruling" with the creation mandate (Gen 1:26–28). Both Genesis 1 and Psalm 8 use terms, concepts, and motifs to describe Yahweh's dominion over the

[34] Chou, *The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers: Learning to Interpret Scripture from the Prophets and Apostles*, 87, fn. 155.

[35] Rolf A. Jacobson and Beth Tanner, "Book One of the Psalter: Psalms 1–41," in *The Book of Psalms*, ed. E. J. Young, R. K. Harrison, and Robert L. Hubbard Jr., The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 120.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, Second Edition. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 231–2.

universe (universal kingdom) and man's role as His viceroy over the world (mediatorial kingdom).

Moreover, Psalm 8:6 continues the royal motif of man with the phrase "You have put all things under his feet." The idea of having something or someone "under the feet" continues the idea of "dominion." This was a common concept in the OT (1 Kgs 5:3) and was associated with a footstool connected to a throne (1 Chr 28:2; 2 Chr 9:18; Pss 110:1 132:7; Isa 66:1). It was also imagery on reliefs for the dominion of ancient kings subjugating their enemies and wild beasts. Dominion is extended to the animal kingdom in Psalm 8 in repeated phrases and categories of Genesis 1:26–28, except listed in reverse order. Consequently, Psalm 8 connects back to Genesis 1 in a multitude of ways to show the continued relevance of the creation mandate. Though Adam failed in having dominion, man still possesses the mandate to rule over the earth and the animal kingdom through God's blessing. This mandate awaits someone who can complete such a global task the way God intended in Genesis 1:26–28. The Old Testament passages will develop the implications of this theme, painting a compounding picture of One who fulfills the expectations of the creation mandate's design of man ruling and having dominion over the earth as God's vice-regent and thereby ruling like Him. Furthermore, the New Testament writers quote Psalm 8 in connection with Christ's rule on the earth, looking for a future fulfillment in the world to come when He returns to put all things under His dominion (1 Cor 15:25; Heb 2:7).

Psalm 72 describes a King who has worldwide dominion over the earth. It focuses attention upon a time of flourishing and abundance upon the earth for both people and the land. The King functions as Yahweh's representative, instituting a period of peace, righteousness, and blessing (72:1–7, 16–17), while exhibiting absolute power and authority over all kings and nations (72:8–15). This King has a great and enduring name (72:17), yet brings glory to Yahweh's name, with the whole earth filled with His glory (72:19). Hamilton notes that Psalm 72 is structured in a chiasm with the central focus on the king's worldwide dominion (72:8–11) and the exercise of justice in the world (72:12–14).[38] This draws attention to a righteous dominion over the earth as the root cause of the productive and peaceful land. The superscription of Psalm 72 notes "of Solomon" though this psalm is hardly fulfilled in his rule for a few reasons. First, while Solomon did exhibit extraordinary wisdom in judgment, administering justice (1 Kgs 3:1–28), he personally fell short of a righteous life (1 Kgs 11) that is exhibited by the king described in Psalm 72. Second, while Solomon did have tremendous wealth from countries, including Tyre (1 Kgs 9) and Sheba (1 Kgs 10), there was not a global tribute paid to him like this king (Psalm 72:10–11). Third, while Solomon did "rule" (מׇשַׁל) the surrounding kingdoms (1 Kgs 4:21) and exercise "dominion" (רדה) in the region (1 Kgs 4:24), his rule and dominion were limited in scope, degree, and extent, with the kingdom splitting after his death (1 Kgs 12).

However, the Davidic King described in Psalm 72 has a global kingdom with absolute dominion over a flourishing and productive earth. The King is one who represents Yahweh. The psalmist petitions Yahweh to give the King "Your judgments" (מִשְׁפָּט) and "Your righteousness" (צְדָקָה) so that the King implements righteous displays of "justice" (מִשְׁפָּט) for the people, including the afflicted (72:1–

[38] James M. Hamilton, *Psalms* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2021), 1:628.

2). This King's vice-regent rule with Yahweh is similar to Isaiah's description of Yahweh's activity as a "judge" (שׁפט) of the nations in the last days (Isa 2:1–4) and the activity of the messiah as a "judge" (שׁפט) marked by "righteousness" (צֶדֶק) in the future kingdom (Isa 11:3–4). He also exercises worldwide "dominion" (רדה) from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth (Ps 72:8). This unique phrase is the same geographical description of the messianic kingdom in Zechariah 9:10 (cf. Zech 14:9). The Davidic King brings in abundant peace and abundant productivity upon the earth (Ps 72:3–7; 16), again reminiscent of the messianic age (Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13). The extent of the King's rule is connected to the function of the sun and moon (72:5, 17), describing a kingdom which lasts for as long as the sun and moon follow their cycle (Jer 31:35–36; 33:20–26). Verse 17 includes "forever," establishing an eschatological connection. Therefore, the King and the kingdom described in Psalm 72 is categorically different than Solomon's rule. Additionally, while this psalm is not a fulfillment of Solomon's rule, it most likely is a petition by David (Ps 72:20) for his son and ultimately fulfilled in the ultimate Son of David, the Messiah.[39] Psalm 72 ends book two of the Psalms with a petition by David for the fulfillment of the creation mandate of Genesis 1 through the Davidic king, longing for the day when the Messiah rules a flourishing earth, bringing an end to injustice, subjugating the nations, and establishing a blessing upon the earth. Though the New Testament does not quote this Psalm as messianic, the parallels of this psalm with other Old Testament prophecies of the messiah and his rule are considerable, as has been briefly shown above. The psalm's grammatical link with Isaiah 11 alone shows its messianic intention and has long been recognized as such in both Jewish and Christian writings.[40]

Adam's activity as king over creation by cultivating it, keeping it, and exercising dominion over the animals (Gen 1:26–28; 2:15, 19–20) mirrored the activity of Yahweh in shaping creation (Gen 1:1ff) and naming it (Gen 1:5, 8, 10). The same is true in Psalm 72, with the Davidic King displaying activities describing God. As noted above, this comes out in the first two verses where the request is made for Yahweh to give the Davidic King characteristics and activities belonging to God (מִשְׁפָּט – "Your judgments" and צְדָקָה – "Your righteousness") so that the king will implement righteous displays of "justice" (מִשְׁפָּט) for the people. The messianic king functions as Yahweh's representative empowered by Yahweh's judgments with Yahweh's righteousness (72:1) for the expressed purpose of rendering righteous decisions to Yahweh's people and Yahweh's afflicted (72:2). Four times "Your" is used in these two verses to emphasize this representative judicial function. Additionally, the King's righteous decisions render justice to the afflicted (72:2, 4) and helpless (72:12). Similarly, Yahweh is described as One who brings help up to the afflicted (Ps 147:6) and gives justice to the oppressed (146:7). Similarly, the King saves (72:4), delivers (72:12), and redeems (72:14). These are all works of Yahweh

[39] Hamilton, *Psalms*, 1:620–621; Geoffrey W. Grogan, *Psalms*, The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 131

[40] Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 15, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 273; Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms 42–89: Commentary*, vol. 2, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2011–2013), 533; William Varner, *Awake O Harp: A Devotional Commentary on the Psalms* (Woodlands, TX: Kress Biblical Resources, 2011), 187.

in which the coming King will participate in as vice-regent over the earth. Furthermore, the King will "crush" (דכא) the oppressor. This term pictures a type of crushing that pulverizes and dashes to pieces.[41] This is an activity that describes Yahweh's action toward His enemies (Ps 89:10). Finally, another key activity that this King does as a representative and vice-regent is exercise "dominion" (רדה) over the earth (72:8). This Davidic King acts in Adamic fashion by exercising dominion over the earth in the exact way Yahweh intended His vice-regent to function. He will successfully carry out the mandate of dominion with Edenic results.

Blessing and abundance on the earth is an additional theme of Psalm 72 that recalls Genesis 1–2. The King's righteous rule through righteous decision making brings about peace and righteousness in creation (Ps 72:1–2). The mountains and the hills are actively involved through "lifting up" (נשׂא) peace and righteousness throughout the whole land (72:3). The righteous reign of the Davidic King is like that of heavy rains bringing about "flourishing" and "abundance" (72:6–7). This Psalm, and many other messianic passages, show the effects of righteousness established on the earth through a righteous ruler who propagates prosperity in the land (Gen 49:10; Isa 32:1–2, 15–20; 35:1–2, 6–7; Jer 31:2–14; Ezek 34:23–27; 36:22–36; Amos 9:11–15; Zech 8:11–12; 9:9–17; Joel 3:18; Mic 4:4). There is a close connection between the cultivation of righteousness and the cultivation of abundance that goes back to the garden. For example, Ezekiel promises a new Davidic King who will bring about a time of political and agricultural prosperity (Ezek 34:23–29) where the people are cleansed from sin and the desolate places are cultivated instead of being desolate, becoming like the garden of Eden (Ezek 36:22–38, esp. vvs. 34–35). Psalm 72 testifies to this by describing the Davidic King working together with creation for the fruitfulness, prosperity, and flourishing of the earth, illustrated by an abundance of grain which waves like the trees in Lebanon known for their height (Ps 72:16). Additionally, abundance carries over to the people living in cities, blossoming like vegetation (72:16). The prosperity, abundance, and fruitfulness depicted in the psalm are anchored in the blessings that proceed from the Davidic King.[42] This blessing affects all the nations, employing language directly connected back to the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12:1–3). There is a reversal of the curse on the ground with nature responding to the righteous rule of the king and abundantly producing food. Thus, the Davidic King, functioning as a conduit of blessing for both the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants, brings a blessing of fruitfulness and multiplication that ties back to Genesis 1:26–28. In other words, the Davidic King as the last Adam succeeds where the first Adam failed to exercise dominion through the blessing of God (Gen 1:26–28) that includes fruitfulness and multiplication. This emphasizes the fulfillment of the creation mandate in the specific realm where Adam's sin took place, on the earth and involving geopolitical realities of the earth. Psalm 72 defines the success of the last Adam in terms of Edenic conditions in the same realm where the first Adam failed, reversing the curse and bringing blessing to Yahweh's creation.

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[41] H. F. Fuhs, "דָּכָא," ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John T. Willis and Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), 3:195.

[42] Hans-Joachim Kraus, *A Continental Commentary: Psalms 60–150* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 80.

One of the most significant aspects of Psalm 72 is the description of dominion over the earth with specific geographical features and dominion over both the animals and kings. The Davidic King's dominion includes the mountains and hills lifting up peace and righteousness (72:3). It encompasses abundant peace over the whole earth for as long as the moon functions in its cycles (72:5–7). Moreover, it extends from sea to sea, pointing to faraway places like Tarshish (Spain) and the coastlands (72:8, 10) rather than the local bodies of water that formed the border of Israel (the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea). This is further backed by the addition of "to the ends of the earth," emphasizing a global reach of the King's dominion. His dominion also includes rulers from the ends of the earth bringing tribute and paying homage (72:9–11). Additionally, those who are subjugated are described as desert creatures (צִיִּים) and enemies who "lick the dust" (Isa 49:23; Mic 7:17) depicting them as animals. Desert creatures (צִיִּים) describe animals that live in desolate areas once populated by kingdoms like Babylon and Edom whose dominion has been removed (Isa 13:20–21; 23:13; 34:14; Jer 50:39). The King's enemies who "lick the dust" remind the reader of the serpent cursed in Genesis 3:14 which crawls on its belly and eats dust (cf. Isa 65:25).[43] The imagery points one back to the garden and Adam's failure to subjugate the serpent's seed, thereby failing to fulfill his dominion mandate. The King's enemies are seen as the seed of the serpent, sharing in its fate. Only an earthly eschatological kingdom dominion fits the description of Psalm 72, which depicts the Adamic/Davidic King ruling in the midst of enemies who bow in subjugation and kings who serve Him (72:8–11)—all while He oversees a worldwide kingdom of Edenic stature. Only the successful dominion of an earthly kingdom reverses the failure of the creation mandate by the first vice-regent of the earth. Psalm 72 continues the prophetic expectation of One who fulfills the creation mandate over the earth from the earth.

Psalm 110 reiterates the description of dominion in Psalm 72:8–11 in several ways. First, the same term for "dominion" (רדה) is used in 110:2 in describing authority granted by Yahweh to David's Lord, the Messiah, in exercising kingly dominion over His enemies. The activity of dominion over the earth as Yahweh's vice-regent has been building through Scripture in Genesis 1:26–28, Numbers 24:19, Psalm 8, Psalm 72, and now Psalm 110. Second, the Davidic King will "crush" (מחץ) these enemies (110:2) and kings (110:5), including crushing (מחץ) "the head that is over the wide earth" (110:6).[44] Although the term for "crushing" is different in Psalm 72:4, the concepts are the same, conceptually linking back to Genesis 3:15. The Davidic King will subjugate and crush His enemies, including the serpent. "Crushing" (מחץ) and "dominion" (רדה) in Psalm 110 are also used of the promised deliverer in Numbers 24:17–19, drawing a parallel between messianic texts. Third, the "scepter" (מַטֶּה) of the Davidic King that goes from Jerusalem ("Zion") in 110:2 is a synonym for the "scepter" (שֵׁבֶט) of the promised King who exercises dominion over all of the nations (Gen 49:10; Num 24:17; Ps 2:9). The scepter is a symbol of

[43] Chou, *The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers: Learning to Interpret Scripture from the Prophets and Apostles,* 88.

[44] Chou observes, "Translations may render the Hebrew phrase as "shatter the chief men" but the word for "chief men" is actually "head." The language is actually quite distinctive for the verb מחץ (crush) with ראשׁ (head) when combined is consistently used in imagery dealing with crushing an ultimate foe (Ps. 68:22; Hab. 3:13; see also Num. 24:17)." Ibid.

authority that also functions as a picture of dominion through its use in subjugating enemies. These concepts paint a portrait of man's rule and dominion over the whole earth which began through the creation mandate in Genesis 1:26–28, affirmed in Psalm 8, and expressed through the Davidic King in Numbers 24, Psalm 72, and Psalm 110.[45] Thus, the OT prophets have predicted that one would come to reverse what Adam had lost and succeed where Adam had failed upon the earth as Yahweh's representative king. These texts form a resounding declaration of the necessity for the last Adam to successfully rule over the earth in an eschatological kingdom with Edenic characteristics thereby fulfilling the creation mandate.

Isaiah 11

Although Isaiah does not use the term "dominion" (רדה) in connection with the Davidic King, the conceptual emphasis of dominion indicative of the creation mandate in Genesis 1:26–28 is expressed in chapter 11. Isaiah shows that the activity of the Davidic King (Isa 11) is equated with the activity of Yahweh during the last days (Isa 2). Yahweh, ruling from His eschatological temple [46] in the last days, is the ultimate global educator through divine instruction (תּוֹרָה) as well as the global theocratic ruler "judging" (שׁפט) and "rendering decisions" (יָכַח) for the nations in the establishment of worldwide peace (2:2–4). His exercise of dominion over the nations includes education, training (2:2–3), arbitration, justice, and peaceful agreements (2:4). In the same way, the Davidic King functions as Yahweh's representative on earth through performing the same activities. He will lead and rule in a new, future kingdom rooted in "justice" and "righteousness," while "judging" (שָׁפַט) and "deciding" (יָכַח) global matters with equity (11:3–4). Like Psalm 72, this King will rule in justice and righteousness that impact the poor and the afflicted (Isa 11:4; cf Ps 72:1–4, 12–14). This judicial power is exerted throughout the earth resulting in the judgment of the wicked (Isa 11:4; Ps 72:4). The "rod of His mouth" and "breath of His lips" in 11:4 highlight the King's powerful word in judgement (Num 24:17–19; Psalm 110:2–6; 2 Thess 2:8; Rev 19:15). Scripture again vividly portrays the last Adam as successfully ruling over the earth in an eschatological kingdom with Edenic characteristics thereby fulfilling the creation mandate and succeeding as Yahweh's representative on earth. The first Adam's failure is reversed through the righteous dominion of the earth by the last Adam and Davidic King.

Moreover, both Isaiah 2 and 11 depict an unprecedented time of global peace. Yahweh and the Davidic King establish peace through their righteous, worldwide theocratic and judicial rule over the earth. The result of righteous dominion on the earth is one of peace, harmony, and tranquility where people and the earth can flourish (see also Ps 72), including animals. The wolf and lamb, the leopard and young goat, the calf and young lion, and the cow and bear emphasize the wild animals living peacefully among the domesticated animals (11:6–7). The animals will no longer kill each other for food, as illustrated by the lion eating straw like an ox (11:7), harkening back to the harmony of God's creation in Genesis 1 and the provision of

[45] Hamilton, *Psalms*, 2:293.

[46] For a detailed discussion on the purpose and function of the eschatological temple, see Jason Beals, "Does God Require a House of Cedar?" (PhD Diss., The Master's Seminary, 2022).

plant-based food for animals (1:29). The blessings of the Davidic King's righteous rule brings tranquility between animal to animal and animal to people, moving back to pre-Fall conditions under the first Adam in Genesis 1–2.[47] Even the enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent (Gen 3:15) will be abolished as illustrated by children playing in harmony with snakes in Isaiah 11:8. Ezekiel 34:25 and Hosea 2:18 concur with an eschatological kingdom tranquility for animals, showing a reversal of the curse upon creation. The conditions for the animals will be restored to an Edenic environment through the last Adam's dominion and kingdom.[48]

Isaiah 11 adds to the compounding picture of Scripture which looks to the reversal of the curse through Adam's failure by installing the Davidic King who must have dominion over the world in a righteous rule over the earth that includes geopolitical realities like nations and kings, as well as a harmonious animal kingdom. The restoration promised includes all aspects where Adam failed, even in his failure with the serpent in the garden. Isaiah illustrates that the Davidic King brings peace and tranquility extending to all the nations and to all the animals. Under the dominion of the last Adam, children can even play with serpents! Only an earthly eschatological kingdom dominion meets the criteria in reversing Adam's failed dominion upon this world. Only the earthly eschatological mediatorial kingdom rule from and over this earth by the last Adam deals with Isaiah's (as well as others) prophetic expectations of dominion with any consistency.

Daniel 7

The book of Daniel emphatically demonstrates that Yahweh is the King of the universe who has dominion and over all nations, including Israel and the Gentile nations. Yahweh changes the times and seasons as well as removing kings and establishing kings (Dan 2:21). Though the Gentile kings have dominion, it is a dominion given by God (Dan 4:17, 22–25), and limited since kingdoms rise and fall (Dan 2 and 7). Ultimately, it is Yahweh's King who will have worldwide dominion, glory, kingdom, and the obedience and worship of all the nations. Daniel emphasizes Yahweh's ultimate dominion over heaven and earth, including kings and kingdoms. Daniel also shows the end of these inferior dominions with the Son of Man establishing dominion on the earth and ruling it with total authority as Yahweh's representative ruler (2:28–45; 7:1–27).

Daniel's structure has a unique feature as 2:4–7:28 is in Aramaic and not Hebrew. Therefore, when looking at the issue of dominion, the Hebrew term רדה is not used. Rather, the Aramaic term שָׁלְטָן ("dominion") is used in Daniel 7 to denote the power and dominion of a king and kingdom, with the plural referring to empires (7:27).[49] Daniel contrasts the dominion of Gentile kingdoms which can be taken away (7:6, 12) with everlasting dominion of the messianic kingdom that does not pass away

[47] Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God*, 158–60.

[48] Vlach, *The New Creation Model: A Paradigm For Discovering God's Restoration Purposes from Creation to New Creation*, 106–7.

[49] A. Gianto, "שׁלט," ed. Holger Gzella et al., trans. Mark E. Biddle, *Aramaic Dictionary*, Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 16:771.

(7:14). Both Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 portray four empires as temporal and transitory, replacing one another in succession (Dan 2:31–33, 36–43; Dan 7:1–8) until these four are replaced by the enduring kingdom of God (2:34–35, 44–45; 7:13–14). Both chapters emphasize the earthly sphere of the eschatological kingdom dominion (2:35; 7:27). Both visions contrast the trajectory of human empires (metals and beasts) through limited dominion with a divine kingdom that can never be destroyed (2:44; 7:14, 27). However, only Daniel 7 emphasizes the concept of dominion of the Gentile kings (7:6, 12) and ultimate dominion the Son of Man (7:14, 27). Thus, the central focus of Daniel 7 is a contrast between the transient Gentile kingdoms described as four beasts and the Son of Man's enduring dominion as Yahweh's representative ruler of the world.

Daniel's vision includes a lion with wings (7:4), a bear (7:5), a leopard with four wings and four heads (7:6), and a fourth beast that is mysterious and unclassified but dreadfully terrifying (7:7–8). These beasts are four kings from the earth (7:17) representing kingdoms of the earth (7:23). These beasts also represent a twisted and inferior quality of the rulers and their kingdoms.[50] The imagery of this vision evokes the creation account in Genesis.[51] First, these kings are described as an amalgamation of beasts in contrast to the messianic ruler described as One like a Son of Man (7:13). The creation of beasts and man on the sixth day, along with the concept of dominion are central to both Genesis 1 and Daniel 7. Second, even though the title "Son of Man" uses אֱנָשׁ for "man" in Daniel 7:13, it is reminiscent of the concept of Adam since his name is closely associated with the general term for "man" (אָדָם).[52] This figure who was like a Son of Man followed the beasts, similar to the creation account in Genesis 1. Third, the phrase "like a son of man" (כְּבַר אֱנָשׁ) possesses both a resemblance to man as well as disparity to the beasts similar to Genesis 1:26–28. This implies not only distinction, but a hierarchy of man over beast seen in Genesis 1. Fourth, both Adam ("Man") in Genesis 1:26–28 and One like a Son of Man in Daniel 7:13–14 both function as Yahweh's representative on earth, subduing the earth and exercising dominion over the animals. Fifth, the beastly kings of Daniel 7 sought to usurp God's design for man's dominion, like the serpent in Genesis 3.[53] In picturesque imagery that recalls the creation mandate in Genesis, Daniel's vision in chapter 7 vividly portrays the Davidic King's future dominion and rule over beastly wicked empires. Daniel's picture of the last Adam's dominion continues to have the same characteristics as previous revelation. The Son of Man will receive an enduring and unending dominion in a kingdom that does not pass away (7:14; cf. 2:44–45), whereas Gentile kings only have transitory dominion and a temporary kingdom that is taken away (2:36–45; 4:28–37; 5:30–31; 7:1–8, 11–12, 23–27; 8:20–22; 11:1–45).

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[50] Paul R. House, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, ed. David G. Firth, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (London: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 127.

[51] André LaCocque, *The Book of Daniel*, trans. David Pellauer, Second Edition. (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), 153, 163–64.

[52] James M. Hamilton Jr., *With the Clouds of Heaven: The Book of Daniel in Biblical Theology*, ed. D. A. Carson, vol. 32, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL; England: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2015), 90.

[53] Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven*, 90–93; Joe M. Sprinkle, *Daniel*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander, Thomas R. Schreiner, and Andreas J. Köstenberger, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), 398.

Daniel adds to the compounding picture of an earthly eschatological dominion over the world developed through previous revelation that describes the last Adam fulfilling the creation mandate in the same realm as the first Adam's failure.

Christ's First Advent—The Gospels

The Gospels show that Jesus is the promised Davidic King of the Old Testament (John 5:39; 20:30–31; Luke 24:25–27). At His first advent, Jesus offered the kingdom (Matt 4:17) while teaching, preaching, and performing miraculous acts (4:23–24). These supernatural acts validated his Messianic role and proved His deity.[54] Miracles also showcased the "powers of the age to come" (Heb 6:5), illustrating kingdom conditions (Matt 11:2–5) through the personal presence of the King.[55] Jesus healed the sick, cast out demons, raised the dead, and did miracles involving nature, showing authority over the earth and the animal kingdom. The nature miracles of Christ focus on the environment and animals in the course of His teaching and preaching ministry. They include calming the storm on the winds and waves of the sea (Matt 8:23–27; Mark 4:36–41; Luke 8:22–25), walking on the sea (Matt 14:22–23; Mark 6:45–51; John 6:15–21), a fish with a coin (Matt 17:27), fish and loaves of bread for 5,000 (Matt 14:13–21: Mark 6:32–44; Luke 9:10–17; John 6:1–13), fish and loaves of bread for the 4,000 (Matt 15:32–39: Mark 8:1–10), and a fig tree (Matt 21:18–22: Mark 11:12–14, 20–24). Additionally, although not a miracle, the unbroken colt which Jesus uses for His entry into Jerusalem (Matt 21:1–9: Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:29–38) would also be an interaction with an animal, demonstrating His dominion as He entered Jerusalem. These all raise the question, "what kind of man is this?" (Matt 8:27), evoking images of the Davidic King who will have dominion over the earth. Eugene Merrill notes that "Jesus was exercising the God-given authority of Adam, an authority designed for the entire human race, forfeited by sinful Adam, and restored in and through Christ (cf. also Ps 8)."[56] Thus, what Jesus displayed in His sovereign control over the earth and animal kingdom is a foretaste of the coming kingdom when He will rule and have dominion over everything on this earth, ruling over this earth, from this earth.

The dominion Jesus exercised in the first advent was done on a limited basis, in one geographical area (Israel), and for a limited time (while on earth). Some theologians assert the creation mandate was fulfilled through Jesus' earthly ministry at His first Advent and/or currently through the church.[57] However, the fulfillment of the creation mandate in all its particulars must still be future in an earthly kingdom

[54] MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 284.

[55] McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God,* 272–3.

[56] Eugene Merrill, "Covenant and the Kingdom," *Criswell Theological Review* 1, no. 2 (1987), 300–1; Michael Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever*, 294.

[57] For example, see Richard P. Belcher Jr, "The Davidic Covenant," in *Covenant Theology: Biblical, Theological, and Historical Perspectives,* ed. Guy Prentiss Waters, J. Nicholas Reid, and John R. Muether (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 181–89; Roy E. Ciampa, "Genesis 1–3 and Paul's Theology of Adam's Dominion in Romans 5–6," in *From Creation to New Creation: Biblical Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Daniel M. Gurtner and Benjamin L. Gladd (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2013), 103–22; Harrison Perkins, *Reformed Covenant Theology: A Systematic Introduction* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2024), 166–71; Sam Storms, *Kingdom Come: The Amillennial Alternative* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2013), 99–109.

for several reasons. First, Jesus' display of dominion at His first Advent was selective and limited. The creation mandate's fulfillment in the eschatological kingdom requires a global and unlimited exercise of dominion over all the earth and all the animal kingdom. The details of the passages surveyed cannot be dismissed lightly. Second, the conditions described in connection with the creation mandate and the coming kingdom are a reversal of the curse seen in blessing, peace, harmony, abundance, and flourishing upon the earth and extending to the animal kingdom. However, in this present age there is sin, disease, death, and disharmony in the earth that also extend to the animal kingdom.[58] The creation mandate still awaits a fulfillment in the same realm and sphere. Third, Scripture describes Christ's dominion as a future reality in His second advent. Christ points to a future dominion in Matthew 19:28, describing the act of ruling and judging "in the regeneration." The book of Hebrews notes that all things are not subjected to Him yet (2:8), but He has sat down at the right hand of the Father "until" His enemies are a footstool for His feet (10:12–13). Paul echoes this future kingdom reality by quoting Old Testament passages of dominion and linking them to Christ's future kingdom rule. He quotes Psalm 8 in 1 Corinthians 15:25–28. Christ must reign until all enemies are defeated, including death. Paul also quotes Isaiah 11:4 in connection with Christ's return and destruction of the Antichrist by "the breath of His mouth" in 2 Thessalonians 2:8. Moreover, Revelation 3:21; 5:10; 20:6 all use future tense verbs in connection with ruling and exercising dominion over the earth. Finally, the fulfillment of the creation mandate must encompass the particulars of the directive to the first Adam. Adam failed in the garden to exercise dominion plunging the world into sin and chaos. The last Adam came to this world and succeeded where the first Adam failed in obedience and righteousness. The first Adam brought sin and death through disobedience upon the earth and the last Adam reverses this through His redemptive work in time and space, upon the earth. The last Adam must successfully subdue and have dominion over the earth, from the earth in order to fulfill the stipulations of Genesis 1:26–28.[59] Exegetical and theological consistency demand an earthly eschatological fulfillment. All of these point to the necessity of a future earthly kingdom reign of the last Adam in the same way and same sphere that the mandate was given.

Conclusion

The compounding prophetic picture of the Davidic King exercising dominion from the earth and over the earth is a major component of the biblical storyline from Genesis to Revelation. Genesis 1, Numbers 24, Psalms 8, 72, and 110, Isaiah 11, and Daniel 7 show the fulfillment of the creation mandate by the Davidic King who ushers in an unprecedented time of Edenic peace, harmony, and abundant flourishing upon the earth and over the animals that accomplishes God's mandate for mankind. The exegetical data shows a compounding picture of the last Adam exercising dominion successfully upon the earth where the first Adam failed. The correspondence of the first Adam's failure and the last Adam's success requires fulfillment in the same domain. Christ accomplished His salvific work in the same

[58] Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God*, 294.
[59] Vlach, *Premillennialism: Why There Must Be A Future Earthly Kingdom of Jesus*, 69–71.

realm as Adam's failure. Theological consistency in the first and last Adam motif necessitates that Christ will successfully fulfill the creation mandate in the same realm as Adam's failure, accomplishing what he failed to accomplish as king over the earth for God's glory. All of these strengthen a premillennial view of Christ's dominion over the earth from the earth at His second advent. Jesus Christ as the last Adam must rule in righteousness, peace, and harmony as the Davidic King over the earth, to the ends of the earth, exercising dominion over everything in the earth including geopolitical realities and the animal kingdom. Anything short of this necessary earthly kingdom reign leaves a global hole in the biblical storyline and a gap in the reversal of Adam's failure.

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ARE YOUR TEMPTATIONS LIKE JESUS' TEMPTATIONS? YES AND NO!

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* * * * *

The words of the author of Hebrews, that Jesus "has been tempted in all things like we are, yet without sin," stir controversy regarding the nature of Jesus' temptations. Some utilize this statement as a vindication of the moral difference between the desire to sin and the act of sin, arguing that only the latter is condemned in Scripture. They argue that because temptation comes through our desires, and Jesus was tempted as we are, then desires for sin cannot be sinful because Jesus never sinned. However, this article refutes that claim by demonstrating that none of Jesus' temptations came from within, that is from a sinful nature. Scripture never indicates that Jesus had a desire to commit sin. Rather, Jesus was tempted by that which was external to Him, by Satan, for good gifts fulfilled through sinful means.

* * * * *

Introduction

According to the Bible, Jesus was truly tempted, as we are, yet without sin (Heb 4:15). But does this mean that all our temptations are the same as Jesus' temptations? Thomas Aquinas wrote of Jesus' wilderness temptation in *The Summa Theologica*,

> As the Apostle says (Heb. iv. 15), Christ wished to be tempted in all things, without sin. Now temptation which comes from an enemy can be without sin: because it comes about by merely outward suggestion. But temptation which comes from the flesh cannot be without sin, because such a temptation is caused by pleasure and concupiscence; and, as Augustine says (*De Civ. Dei* xix.), it is not without sin that "the flesh desireth against the spirit." And hence Christ wished to be tempted by an enemy, but not by the flesh.[1]

[1] Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica* (London: R. & T. Washbourne, 1914), 203–04.

Thomas appealed to Augustine from his book *The City of God* to argue that there are two forms of temptation in Scripture: one from the flesh and one from an enemy. Christ was only tempted by an enemy, not by the flesh. This teaching is not unique to Augustine and Thomas.

According to Phillip Melanchthon, Martin Luther's successor, in *The Apology of the Augsburg Confession* of 1530*,* he argued that the church, ever since the First Century, taught that the flesh and all its motions are sin.[2] The Roman Catholic Council of Trent in 1563 argued the same.[3] During the Reformation, the difference between Roman Catholics and the Protestants concerning the doctrine of sin was not about the nature of sin, but about what sin was in the baptized or in those who have faith. Every Protestant reformer and confession of the Reformation taught that the flesh and its motions are sin. This teaching was then carried forward to today by the confessions of the Reformation and Post-Reformation, and by Protestant Reformed theologians like Jonathan Edwards, Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, James P. Boyce, Charles Spurgeon, Herman Bavinck, and Louis Berkhof.[4]

Yet, within evangelicalism today, a surprising number of Christians argue that since Jesus was tempted and yet was sinless, therefore, all temptation cannot be sin. Contrary to the Bible and the teachings of church history, they believe that there is only one form of temptation, inner temptation.[5] This article will argue that when

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[2] Philip Melanchthon, "The Apology of the Augsburg Confession," in *The Book of Concord or The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Henry Eyster Jacobs (Philadelphia: General Council Publication Board, 1916), 81–82.

[3] Hubert Jedin, *The First Sessions at Trent, 1545–47*, vol. 2 of *A History of the Council of Trent*, trans. Dom Ernest Graf (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1958), 150–54.

[4] See my dissertation where I argue that Christianity has always taught that the flesh and its motions are morally culpable sin. Jared Heath Moore, *A Biblical and Historical Appraisal of Concupiscence with Special Attention to Same-Sex Attraction* (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019), 20–129, https://repository.sbts.edu/bitstream/handle/10392/5996/Moore_sbts_0207D_10574.pdf.

[5] For example, in a panel discussion on reparative therapy with Denny Burk and Heath Lambert at the Evangelical Theological Society in 2015, Robert Gagnon, commenting on James 1:14, said, "The text says, 'Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own desire.' Okay, so you have to be carried away by it. First, to be carried away by the desire, it has to present itself to you. The moment it presents itself to you, you have not sinned. But, if you're carried away by it, and fall into the enticement to it, then it says, 'Then, when the desire has conceived,' which in the context means you've been carried away by it, and have been brought under its controlling influence, then it gives birth to sin. But, not prior to that point and time." Robert Gagnon, "Panel Discussion, Robert Gagnon, Heath Lambert, Denny Burk, Discussion Q and A, Why Reparative Therapy Is Not an Evangelical Option" (Mp3 of lecture, 67th Annual Meeting (2015) of the Evangelical Theological Society, Atlanta, November 17, 2015), http://www.wordmp3.com/details.aspx?id=21498, (03:47–04:27). Then, a few minutes later, Gagnon argued: "There's obviously internal temptation for Jesus. When you are being crucified on the cross and nails are being put into your hands. Okay. And you are suffering excruciating death, if your body at that point isn't crying out for some sort of relief, right? 'Give me an alternative to this.' To me, that's just striking. It's not, we don't have this image of a Docetic Jesus. He actually does experience internal desires to the contrary. Unless you're a masochist, you're gonna want to get off the cross at that point. But the fact is that he experiences that internal temptation and yet rejects it. So, of course there's no sin in him in that sense. He's also fully human in addition to him being fully God. We don't want to leave out that dimension either." Robert Gagnon, "Panel Discussion, Robert Gagnon, Heath Lambert, Denny Burk, Discussion Q and A, Why Reparative Therapy Is Not an Evangelical Option" (Mp3 of lecture, 67th Annual Meeting (2015) of the Evangelical Theological Society, Atlanta, November 17, 2015), http://www.wordmp3.com/details.aspx?id=21498, (10:22–11:10). Gagnon still holds these views today. What he fails to realize is that Christ did not want to die precisely because, according to God's design,

Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, the Garden of Gethsemane, on the cross, and as our High Priest, He was never tempted from within, only from without.

To prove this thesis, I will interact with a couple current online Christian magazines: *Christianity Today* and *Mere Orthodoxy*. For *Christianity Today*, I will rebut an article by A. J. Swoboda, Professor of Bible, Theology and World Christianity at Bushnell University, and Nijay K. Gupta, Professor of New Testament at Northern Seminary. They argue that Jesus doubted God and His Word and did not sin. And for *Mere Orthodoxy*, I will rebut an article by Matthew Lee Anderson, Assistant Research Professor of Ethics and Theology at Baylor University's Institute for Studies in Religion, who argues that Jesus desired to disobey His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane but did not sin because He did not *intend* to sin.[6]

Christianity Today and Mere Orthodoxy

In April of 2021, *Christianity Today* ran an article titled, "Jesus Was the God-Man, Not the God-Superman: His Moments of Doubt and Temptation Attest that We Can Follow Him through Our Own,"[7] written by Swoboda and Gupta. They write,

> In the history of Christianity, the incarnation of God teaches us that Jesus was born into…the complete mortal experience, warts and all…. He breastfed as an infant. He learned to walk. And the Messiah…went through puberty…. What Jesus brought with him into our world was his *godness*, which included a deep trust and faith in his Father; part of what he received from us in his humanness was our ability to doubt—and doubt he did…. And Jesus was so committed to entering humanity that he dared to enter human doubt as well.[8]

Swoboda and Gupta argue that Jesus in the incarnation took on true humanity, "warts and all." And what are these warts? They list breastfeeding, walking, puberty, and doubts. Of course, one of these is not like the others. Breastfeeding, walking, and puberty are not inherently sinful but are rather stages of development that Adam and Eve's children would have experienced if they had never sinned. But, doubt, on the other hand, is what Adam and Eve had in their hearts that caused them to trust the serpent over God and His Word.[9] The Apostle Paul in Romans 14:23 taught that

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death was unnatural for Him. He should not want to die, but He should want to do His Father's will, which is exactly what He prayed in Gethsemane. Jesus desired everything His Father desired, and therefore it was natural for Him to want to obey the Father's will even unto His death, while at the same time recoiling in holy horror from the experience of the Father's wrath. Both were holy desires for Jesus (cf. Matt 26:39; Luke 22:42). While praying with agony over the fury of the Father's wrath (Heb 5:7), Christ voluntarily went to the cross and did not seek to deliver Himself (Isa 53:7; John 10:17–18).

[6] Robert Gagnon makes the same argument as Anderson, and Anderson appeals to him when making his case. See Robert Gagnon, "Panel Discussion, Robert Gagnon, Heath Lambert, Denny Burk," (18:42–19:28).

[7] A. J. Swoboda and Nijay K. Gupta, "Jesus Was the God-Man, Not the God-Superman: His Moments of Doubt and Temptation Attest that We Can Follow Him through Our Own," *Christianity Today*, April 1, 2021, https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2021/april-web-only/jesus-god-superman-doubt-temptation-holy-week.html.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning: The Opening Chapters of Genesis* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1984), 140–41.

doubt condemns because whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. Doubt is the opposite of faith, according to Paul.[10] This is why doubt of God and His Word in the hearts of Adam and Eve led to them eating the forbidden fruit, causing the fall of all mankind into sin and the curse of all creation.[11]

Yet, Swoboda and Gupta argue that Jesus had doubts, but do they prove it with Scripture, and is this what Scripture teaches about Jesus? No. The authors point to four examples in Jesus' life to argue that He had doubts: His temptation, His prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane, His Cry of Dereliction, and His identity as our truly human high priest.

Jesus' Temptation in the Wilderness

The first passage Swoboda and Gupta believe demonstrates that Jesus had doubts is His temptation by the devil in the wilderness in Matthew 4:1–11. The text reads,

> Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

In this passage, they say that Jesus doubts several times. Let us consider their claim and offer a response.

Claim One: Jesus Doubted in the Wilderness

Swoboda and Gupta write about Jesus in the wilderness, "There, he has to wrestle with the Devil's words: 'If you are the Son of God' (Matt. 4:3). These words place seeds of doubt in Jesus' head. One wonders if they played like a tape in his mind at points where he suffered or experienced loss because of his ministry."[12] It is

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[10] Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 862, fn. 82.

[11] Blocher, *In the Beginning*, 141.

[12] Swoboda and Gupta, "Jesus Was the God-Man, Not the God-Superman," https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2021/april-web-only/jesus-god-superman-doubt-temptation-holy-week.html.

pure speculation to wonder if the devil's words planted seeds of doubt in Jesus' mind. The text says nothing of Jesus considering the devil's words as an option. To believe the devil, even for a moment, Jesus would have had to trust the devil more than God and His Word.

Then, Swoboda and Gupta argue,

> What we learn here is that…Jesus could be tempted—though he did not sin. Indeed, temptation is not a sin. And we learn that…Jesus comes face to face with doubts about his identity. But hearing and even having these doubts is not the same as buckling under their weight. By the end of the temptation story, we witness Jesus' resilience and determination. Soon, the angels come to care for him.… Jesus may have needed spiritual reassurance of God's presence as well. Jesus passes the test, but his faith may have taken a heavy beating.[13]

Again, claiming that Jesus had doubts, leaving His faith damaged is pure speculation. Scripture does not say or even imply that Jesus ever doubted His identity or that He ever had less or more faith. Only the devil walks away defeated from Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. But, if Swoboda and Gupta are mistaken that Jesus had doubts during His temptation, what is the biblical way to understand His temptation in the wilderness?

Responding to Swoboda and Gupta's First Claim

First, the devil tempted Jesus only with good things. Jesus' first temptation was to work a miracle to make bread from stones, and to eat the bread. Having been led into the wilderness full of the Holy Spirit, Christ fasted for forty days and was tempted. Naturally, He was hungry (Matt 4:1–3). And what is hunger but a desire for food? Jesus desired food. And the devil knew it. He sought to persuade Christ to sin and fall like Adam, tempting Him with food first (Matt 4:4).

Food is a good gift from God (Gen 1:29–30). Jesus was tempted by a desire for a good gift from God that was offered through an evil means.[14] The devil did not use evil things to tempt Jesus, for he could not. For King David, the devil tempted him with laziness, adultery, and murder, and he fell for it (2 Sam 11:1–12:15), but he tempted the True David, Jesus Christ, with food. The devil tempted Jesus, who was hungry, with bread, encouraging him to do a miracle for His own benefit in obedience to the devil rather than to fulfill God's will (Matt 4:1–4).[15]

Instead of having fleshly desires, Jesus desired to always fulfill His Father's will (cf. Heb 10:5–10). He desired His Father's food. He was hungry. He later taught the

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[13] Swoboda and Gupta, "Jesus Was the God-Man."

[14] Henri Blocher writes, "Thus, in the temptation of Jesus, the devil offered him things which by right belonged to the Son of God; but he invited Jesus to invert the order established by the Father." Blocher, *In the Beginning*," 141.

[15] Walter Liefield, *Luke*, Expositor's Bible Commentary 8 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 863. Also, see John A. Broadus, *Commentary on Matthew*, An American Commentary on the New Testament, ed. Alvah Hovey (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1886), 63. As well, see Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 156–62.

disciples to pray to God the Father, "Give us our daily bread" (Matt 6:11), which is a good desire that Christ's Father would fulfill in due time. Neither Christ nor the reader would be presumptuous to assume God would provide for Him food, because He is truly human, to keep Him alive so that He could fulfill His Father's will. Yet, the devil tempted Him by claiming the food was his, not God's, to give. Jesus did not hesitate but immediately rebuked the devil with Scripture (Matt 4:4).

In the devil's second effort to tempt Jesus to sin in the wilderness, he told Him to prove that God would protect Him with His angels. Jesus desired to do His Father's will, which would entail enjoying the protection of His angels: again, a good desire. Yet, the devil tempted Him by commanding Christ to enjoy the protection of His Father's angels by submitting to the devil's will for Him to throw Himself off the pinnacle of the temple. Again, Christ replied immediately with Scripture, rebuking the devil, with no contemplation, doubt, or compromise.

Finally, in the devil's third attempt, he tempted Jesus with the kingdoms of man. Jesus desired His Father's future gift to Him of the kingdoms of the world, to rule and reign with all authority and glory: again, a good desire.[16] Yet, the devil tempted Him by offering these kingdoms before Christ had earned them, in a truly human way, by fulfilling His Father's will. And yet again, Jesus rebuked the devil immediately with no doubt of God or His Word, or consideration for what the devil offered.

With these three objects of temptation, the devil took good things and added evil to them. He took good things and offered them through evil means. This detail matters because it shows that Jesus' temptation was void of an internal fleshly desire arising from a sinful nature—His temptation was external.[17] The objects the devil offered belonged to God. They were intrinsically good, but Jesus did not desire them from the devil. The devil tempted Christ with the things the Father had already told Him would be His, whether in eternity past, through the prophets, through the Holy Spirit, or all three (cf. Ps 2:8; Isa 53:12). Yet He did not desire to submit to the devil's will, but only to His Father's will. As Jesus said, "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of Him who sent me" (John 6:38).

The devil offered God-designed objects through his own evil means, which, if desired and accepted by the devil's means, the objects then would cease to be God's design. God designed not only food, angel protection, and the kingdoms of the world; He also designed the means to gain these things, and the means to gain every other object in His creation. If you remove God's means, you remove God's design. As James 1:13–15 says, for sin to take place, an evil lust must lure and entice, and conceive actual sin, and then bring us to death. Inner lust cannot produce walking in

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[16] Liefield, *Luke*, 864. Also, Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, 160–62.

[17] Theologians have often described Jesus' temptation with the verbiage found in John's first epistle, "desires of the flesh, and the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). However, this usage of flesh differs from the sinful flesh which Jesus did not possess. There are many times in the New Testament when the word translated "flesh" (σάρξ) refers to the human body, or state of humanity (Luke 3:6; John 1:14; 17:2; Acts 2:31; etc.). However, in other occurrences σάρξ connotes a theological meaning, describing the sin nature (Rom 7:18; 8:5–13; etc.). This usage in 1 John likely refers to the flesh (the physical body), not the sinful nature. Therefore, it could be said that Jesus was tempted in the flesh (bodily need for food), but not according to the flesh (sinful desire from the sin nature). See John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 273.

the Spirit. Inner lust cannot conceive God's design. And inner lust never ends in life and holiness.

Jesus' temptations lacked fleshly desire but were entirely external. He was tempted only from without and not from within. Desire for evil neither entered Jesus' heart, nor was willed by Him. Indeed, Jesus, being the Divine Son united and acting through His human nature, could not desire anything evil. As Augustine argued, if Jesus was going to desire something inherently evil, something contrary to God's law, He would have to will this desire since God was his Father, not Adam.[18] For Jesus to be tempted toward sin from within, He would have to choose to desire the devil's offers *from the devil* because He had no original sin from Adam. And Jesus never desired to receive anything from the devil.

When We Are Tempted Like Jesus Was in the Wilderness

Therefore, Christians are tempted like Jesus only when we are offered inherently good things through an evil means. If we desire the good things because God has created them good or has promised them to us, and we reject the evil means entirely, then we have not sinned. We have been tempted like Jesus. But inherently evil things, things that are forbidden by God, can never be desired without sin, and therefore, they can never be compared to Jesus' temptations.

James and Paul tell us that inner temptation occurs when we, with our flesh, desire something that is contrary to God (Jas 1:13–15; Rom 7:25). God cannot tempt us because it is against His nature to tempt us (Jas 1:13). Thus, our inner temptation is contrary to God's nature and God's design and is therefore sin. When Christians face inner temptation, the question is not if we will sin, but how much we will sin. For the first desire from our hearts that is contrary to God is the beginning of fleshly desire. Will we feed this desire and let it consume us, or will we starve it and let it burn itself out to no effect?

Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

Another passage from Jesus' life that is often used to justify inner temptation is Jesus' temptation in the Garden of Gethsemane. Swoboda and Gupta claim that Jesus had doubts as He prayed in Gethsemane (Matt 26:36–46).[19] Similarly, Matthew Lee Anderson believes that Jesus desired to disobey His Father's command in Gethsemane.[20] Yet, the Bible says neither of these assumptions. The text (Matt 26:36–46) reads,

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[18] Augustine, "Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian," in *Answer to the Pelagians, 3*, part 1—Books, vol. 25 of *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Roland J. Teske (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 1999), 436–37.

[19] Swoboda and Gupta, "Jesus Was the God-Man, Not the God-Superman," https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2021/april-web-only/jesus-god-superman-doubt-temptation-holy-week.html.

[20] Matthew Lee Anderson, "Sex, Temptation, and the Gay Christian: What Chastity Demands," accessed August 24, 2024, https://web.archive.org/web/20231001162846/https://mereorthodoxy.com/sex-temptation-gay-christian-chastity-demands.

> Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray." And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."

Does the text indicate that Christ had doubts or wanted to disobey His Father? Let us consider the claims of Swoboda and Gupta, and Anderson and offer a biblical response.

Claim Two: Jesus Doubted in Gethsemane

> Swoboda and Gupta write about Jesus,
>
> He is alone. His disciples are asleep. And he is about to enter the final crucible of his earthly journey. What does Jesus do? He starts getting cold feet: "If it is possible, may this cup be taken from me." A moment later, of course, he shakes this off and confesses, "Yet not as I will, but as you will" (v. 39). But this is not faith *replacing* doubt; it is faith moving forward *in spite of* doubt. Jesus didn't want to take that cup of suffering, but he still did.[21]
>
> Anderson makes a similar statement about Jesus in Gethsemane, writing,
>
> There is nothing wrong or bad with desiring to *not* undergo the suffering and death required to be the Savior of the world—unless, that is, one *is* the Savior of the world. Given the peculiarities of Christ's vocation and His position within God's command, not undertaking the work of the cross would have been morally bad for Him (not to mention damning for us!). Christ may have "never desired something his Father had forbidden…" but he seems to desire to *not* do something his Father commands.

[21] Swoboda and Gupta, "Jesus Was the God-Man, Not the God-Superman," https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2021/april-web-only/jesus-god-superman-doubt-temptation-holy-week.html.

Anderson argues that Christ desired to disobey His Father in Gethsemane, that He desired something that "would have been morally bad for Him," and that this desire was not sin, for to desire sin is only sin if your desire is intentional.[22]

Are these fair interpretations of Jesus' prayers in Gethsemane? Absolutely not. Then, how should we understand Jesus' prayers in Gethsemane?

Responding to Swoboda and Gupta's Second Claim

Contrary to Swoboda and Gupta, Jesus did not get cold feet or doubt. James explicitly commands his hearers not to doubt in James 1:5–8:

> If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

If a Christian doubts when he prays, James says he is "driven and tossed by the wind," and he should not expect God to answer His prayer because he is a "double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." Thus, to say that Jesus doubted when He prayed, Swoboda and Gupta must also say that Jesus was double-minded and unstable in all His ways, or that James was wrong.

Responding to Anderson's Claims

Claim One: Jesus Desired to Disobey God

First, contrary to Anderson, Jesus did not desire to disobey His Father. Luke summarized Jesus' prayers in Gethsemane in Luke 22:42: "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." Jesus prayed for God's will to be done first. Then, He asked if God would permit His cup of wrath to pass from Him. Doing God's will is what Christ was born for, what He lived for, and what He continues to live for even to this day (John 6:38).

Second, Jesus' inclination to turn away from the experience of God's wrath cannot be described as a desire to disobey. In this one instance, obedience to the Father's will meant abandonment and wrath, rather than fellowship and blessing. In every other instance of obedience—the rest of Jesus' obedience and all of ours—obedience is the choice of fellowship with God and enjoyment of His blessing. The fact that Jesus immediately follows His holy inclination away from wrath with the resolve to obey no matter what ("not as I will, but as You will") demonstrates His unbroken pattern of holy desires. After His prayers in Gethsemane, He endured the betrayal of Judas, His arrest, beating, scourging, mocking, and beard-plucking that

[22] Anderson writes, "Christ's temptation announces in practice the moral salience of the distinction between an *intention* and a *desire*…" Anderson, "Sex, Temptation, and the Gay Christian," https://web.archive.org/web/20231001162846/https://mereorthodoxy.com/sex-temptation-gay-christian-chastity-demands.

resulted in His humiliation, suffering, pain, and death. At Pentecost, Peter described Jesus' death as both God's holy will and man's sinful will: "This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men" (Acts 2:23). Christ's death was both God's definite plan and the work of lawless men. Jesus' agony in Gethsemane indicates His understanding of these two realities at work in His coming death—God's holy will and man's sinful will.

After all, when Jesus finished praying in Gethsemane, He said to the disciples, "See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand" (Matt 26:45–46). The angel God sent in Luke 22:43 evidently strengthened Christ, God the Son Incarnate, to endure the evil will of man, but Christ's obedience to God's will through His human nature, desires, and actions was never in question. Jesus desired God's will but did not desire man's evil.

Third, should Jesus have desired to become sin (2 Cor 5:21)? Should He have desired to be forsaken by His Father, to drink the cup of His Father's wrath (Matt 27:45–46)?[23] The words Jesus used were precise. He requested that the "cup of wrath" be removed from Him (Luke 22:42). The cup of wrath refers to God's wrath while also referring to the suffering Jesus was about to experience.[24] Since Jesus is holy Man, He should not experience an unhesitating delight at the prospect of bearing our sin, of being forsaken by His Father, or having to drink the cup of His Father's wrath.[25] Christ should and did desire to do His Father's will, which is exactly what He prayed, beginning His prayer with, "Father, if you are willing" (Luke 22:42).

Fourth, God the Father approved of Jesus' prayer since the text says that an angel came from heaven to strengthen Him (Luke 22:43). With Luke emphasizing where the angel came from, one must understand that God the Father sent the angel to strengthen His Son—not because His Son was trying to get out of doing His will. On the contrary, the Son's obedience to His Father peculiarly required Him to want to do His Father's will, even while not eagerly reveling in having to endure the evils of the crucifixion.

Claim Two: Jesus Wanted to Do Something Morally Bad for Him

Additionally, Anderson claims that when Christ desired not to go to the cross, He desired something that "would have been morally bad for Him," for He seemed "to desire to not do something his Father" commanded.[26] But what command does Anderson think that Christ desired to disobey? There is nothing in Christ's prayer that indicates that He desired not to be obedient to the law or the additional commands revealed in Scripture in the eternal covenant of redemption (John 6:38–39; Eph 1:3–

[23] Stephen Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 460.

[24] Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, New American Commentary, ed. David S. Dockery (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 558.

[25] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 215–17. Also, see Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, 574–75.

[26] Anderson, "Sex, Temptation, and the Gay Christian," https://web.archive.org/web/20231001162846/https://mereorthodoxy.com/sex-temptation-gay-christian-chastity-demands.

5; 2 Tim 1:9–10; 1 Pet 1:20). After all, Christ starts His prayer with, according to Luke, "If you are willing" (Luke 22:42).

Plus, we have already seen that Jesus desiring God's wrath to pass from Him is not disobedient. Since He was not a sinner, never desired to sin, and never actually sinned, Christ did not deserve God's wrath. However, those who have desires of the flesh, like all sinners, deserve God's wrath. It would be unjust for God to permit His wrath to pass from sinners without payment for their sin because they are in rebellion against Him. God's wrath is upon sinners because they deserve it. But God's wrath was on Christ at the cross because of His definite plan, His covenant of redemption, and Christ's voluntary obedience.

In other words, a person who has fleshly desires is in violation of God's commands in Scripture (Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21; Rom 6:12–13; 7:7–25), and is deserving of God's wrath, but Christ is not in violation of any command by desiring God's cup of wrath to pass from Him. Therefore, Anderson cannot use the instance of Jesus asking for God's wrath to pass from Him to justify a man's sinful desire that brings God's wrath upon Him.[27]

To compare Jesus' prayer request not to have to drink God's cup of wrath with an inner desire for evil within us is blasphemy. Neither Scripture nor logic follows. As a matter of fact, because Christ is God the Son Incarnate, perfectly holy, and perfectly one with His Father, it is a holy desire for Him to *not* want to drink the cup of His Father's wrath even as He *wants* to do His Father's will. Yet, it is a purely wicked and evil desire for us to want anything that is contrary to God's design or law (Rom 1:26–27).

A Final Response to Swoboda and Gupta, and Anderson

Finally, for Swoboda and Gupta to argue that Jesus got "cold feet" about the cross and for Anderson to argue that Jesus had an immoral desire when He asked for God's cup of wrath to pass from Him, they must argue that Jesus had various points in His life when He was less holy and points when He was more holy. How can God the Son Incarnate be sinless, as the Bible teaches (2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 1 John 3:5), and simultaneously, at various points in His life, be less holy and more holy? It would be presumptuous of any person to suggest that Jesus could have had a holier desire or response in Gethsemane to His imminent death.

For these reasons, Jesus' response in Gethsemane was not one of doubt or desiring to do something against His Father's command or immoral. Instead, as the perfect holy human, Jesus agonizingly obeyed His Father's will in His heart and actions. Jesus was, desired, and did exactly what His Father required of Him, including His prayers in Gethsemane. By Luke summarizing Jesus' prayers as starting with, "If you are willing," and ending with, "Not my will, but yours, be done" (Luke 22:42), Jesus proved His trust in His Father's sovereign plan, even as He in His perfect righteousness did not desire to become sin or endure His Father's wrath or man's lawlessness.

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[27] Anderson, "Sex, Temptation, and the Gay Christian."

When We Are Tempted Like Jesus Was in Gethsemane

Jesus models for each believer what agonizing obedience and submission to God's providence look like. Far from doubting or desiring to disobey His Father, Jesus trusted God and sought to faithfully accomplish His will. He communicated this desire to obey His Father as He prayed three different times (Matt 26:44). At night and all alone, Jesus sought to please His Father by desiring His will, without desiring 1) His wrath, 2) to become sin, and 3) man's evil. In other words, He always desired holy things and never desired anything unholy.

Jesus is the perfect example of obedience to God from the heart during difficult providence. His words in Gethsemane show us how to be faithful to God when we face difficult circumstances. For example, my mother passed away in 2022 from Parkinson's disease. She suffered greatly for over seventeen years. Based on the Bible, I should want God's will to be done, even as I should not want my mother to suffer with Parkinson's. Both desires are true, and both are good desires, not evil. Similarly, I should want my mother to go to heaven, even though I should not want her to leave us. Again, both are good desires. The next time you face difficult providence, remember Christ's prayers in Gethsemane.

Jesus' Cry of Dereliction

A third passage Swoboda and Gupta believe demonstrates that Jesus doubted is the Cry of Dereliction in Matthew 27:45–46. The text says, "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" Jesus was obviously in great pain, but did such pain cause Him to doubt His Father? Consider Swoboda and Gupta's claim, followed by my response.

Claim Three: Jesus Doubted on the Cross

Swoboda and Gupta write, "In that moment, Jesus does not call out to Abba, Father. He does not feel like the superhero Son of God. He is all alone, crushed by the weight of human sin and suffocating in doubt. There is no response from heaven, no descending dove or clarion voice—only silence as the blood drains from his still-warm body."[28] For Swoboda and Gupta, when Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" He was expressing that He was "suffocating in doubt." But is there any evidence suggesting that Jesus had any doubt in this moment?

Responding to Swoboda and Gupta's Third Claim

Like Swoboda and Gupta's statements before, their arguments are not from the text but from assumptions. They assume, without any warrant from Scripture, that

[28] Swoboda and Gupta, "Jesus Was the God-Man, Not the God-Superman," https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2021/april-web-only/jesus-god-superman-doubt-temptation-holy-week.html.

Jesus must have been "suffocating in doubt" to cry out as He did. Perhaps they project doubt upon Jesus because that is how they or others would respond in similar circumstances. The issue is that these verses say nothing about Jesus having doubts.

After all, should Jesus have said, "Father, please pour out your wrath on Me!"? What is the alternative to asking God why He has forsaken Him in this moment? Should Jesus have praised God for forsaking Him? No. Jesus should not want to be forsaken by His Father. Jesus cries out as He does because He does not want to be forsaken by His Father, and He wants to do His Father's will. Both are morally right and holy.[29]

Furthermore, Jesus' cry is a quote from the beginning of Psalm 22, which ends with triumph for the righteous sufferer. And His love and trust for His Father is confirmed in His final statement from the cross: "*Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit*" (Luke 23:46). But what does Jesus mean that He was forsaken by God?

To begin, persons do not act apart from their natures. Persons act through their natures.[30] Church history has distinguished these divine Persons according to their eternal relations among the Trinity: the Father eternally begets the Son; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son. These three divine Persons are one God, subsisting in one Nature.

In the incarnation, the second Person of the Trinity, God the Son, took on a truly human nature, "the likeness of men" (Phil 2:7; cf. Luke 2:52; Gal 4:4; Col 1:22), into union with His divine Person. He became the God-Man, one divine Person subsisting in two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, united in one and the same Son, without mixture or separation.[31]

Inasmuch as the Triune God subsists in one divine Nature,[32] when Jesus cries out, "My God, My God, Why have You forsaken Me?"—in this cry, Jesus is speaking of being forsaken by virtue of His human Nature; He cannot be forsaken of God by virtue of His divine Nature, because it is the identical divine Nature in which the Father Himself subsists. It is similar to when the Bible says that Jesus learned (Luke 2:52), suffered, and died (1 Pet 3:18). These are all things that God *qua God* cannot do. By virtue of His divinity, God cannot learn, suffer, or die. But, by virtue of the Son's human Nature, the second Person of the Trinity did all these things. His being forsaken by the Father is similar. He is forsaken by virtue of His human Nature, not by virtue of His divine Nature.

Therefore, it is right to say that Christ was forsaken by virtue of His humanity even as He was not forsaken by virtue of His divinity; just as we say that Christ died by virtue of His humanity but never died by virtue of His divinity. Christ understood

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[29] David L. Turner, *Matthew,* Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 669.

[30] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 425–29. Also, Herman Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, vol. 3 of *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 306.

[31] This is a summary of the Chalcedon definition that was forged at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. See Henry Bettenson and Chris Maunder, eds., *Documents of the Christian* Church, Third Edition (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 56–57. Also, R. L. Reymond argues that the Council of Chalcedon's creedal labors produced the Christological definition that fixed the boundaries for all future discussion; R. L. Reymond, "Incarnation," in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed., ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 601.

[32] Augustine, "On the Trinity," in Part I, Books, vol. 5 of *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill (Brooklyn: New City, 1991), 195.

that He was forsaken by His Father, by virtue of His human Nature, because God the Father treated Christ as a sinner on the cross (2 Cor 5:21).[33]

We Are Not Tempted Like Jesus on the Cross

The same Greek word that Christ used that is translated "forsaken" is also used by the author of Hebrews, in Hebrews 13:5–6, which reads, "Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we can confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?'"

Through the author of Hebrews, God said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." This is a quote from Joshua 1:5, "No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you." Just as God did not leave Moses or Joshua, He will not leave us, since we too are people of faith in Yahweh and His promises. We have trusted in Christ for our salvation. The Father, in a way that is incomprehensible to us, turned His back on Christ for a temporary time on that cross so He could never forsake us for all of time.[34]

And Christ was willing to be forsaken (John 10:17–18). He submitted to His Father's will, trusting Him continually (Phil 2:8). Jesus never doubted God or His word. He desired everything He was designed by God to desire: wanting His Father's will and *not* wanting His Father's wrath. Both were holy desires for Jesus. Therefore, Christ's cry of dereliction is incomparable to when Christians have an inner desire for evil, because desiring evil is never holy, nor can it be, for desiring evil is sin.

Jesus, Our Truly Human High Priest

The final verse that Swoboda and Gupta reference is Hebrews 4:15. Not only do they believe Jesus doubted God and His Word, but they also believe that such doubt was essential for Jesus to be our truly human High Priest. The author of Hebrews writes, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15). Jesus was truly tempted, and this temptation was essential for Him to be our truly human sympathetic High Priest, but was doubt also essential for Jesus to be our High Priest?

Claim Four: Jesus Doubted as the Truly Human High Priest

According to Swoboda and Gupta, Jesus must have had doubt if He was fully human. They reason that Jesus could only sympathize with His people in their weakness if He had doubt. They argue, "Is it possible to truly follow someone who

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[33] For a more detailed explanation of God the Son willing simultaneously through His two natures, see Daniel David Scheiderer, *Eternal Covenant: The Trinitarian Shape of an Historic Baptist Doctrine* (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2022), 147–53, https://repository.sbts.edu/bitstream/handle/10392/6763/Scheiderer_sbts_0207D_10729.pdf.

[34] John F. MacArthur Jr., *Matthew*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 4:270.

has not endured the human experience of doubt? We think not. Because Jesus endured true humanity—because he 'has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin' (Heb. 4:15)—he can be fully followed."[35]

They continue by clarifying that they understand doubt to be a temptation rather than a sin: "Jesus was tempted. He did not sin. Therefore, temptation cannot be understood as sin. Likewise, Jesus doubted. Yet he did not give in to unbelief or give up on God. Likewise, doubt cannot be understood as sin."[36] But does the author of Hebrews intend to say that Jesus doubted God and His word, and that this qualifies Him to be our eternal high priest?

Responding to Swoboda and Gupta's Fourth Claim

Swoboda and Gupta's comments miss the mark in several ways. To begin, it is remarkable that they distinguish between doubt and unbelief, when doubt and unbelief have the same nature. To doubt God is to not believe Him (Jas 1:5–8). But for Swoboda and Gupta, doubt aims at unbelief and becomes unbelief if not resisted, yet it does not have the same nature as unbelief. They say that doubt is a temptation, while unbelief is a sin. However, the tenth commandment, Jesus, and James all tell us that to aim at sin is coveting, adultery, or lust (Deut 5:21, Matt 5:27–30; Jas 1:13–15).[37]

Swoboda and Gupta also misunderstand what Hebrews 4:15 means when it says "in every respect [Jesus] has been tempted as we are." This does not mean that Jesus was tempted with every sin of man under the sun. If that is the case, then He was not only tempted with every sin you and I are tempted with, but He was also tempted with sins that we are not tempted with; especially heinous and evil sins, even sins we believe are unthinkable. The author of Hebrews did not say that Jesus was tempted by sin or by every conceivable temptation. And he certainly did not say that Jesus ever doubted or lacked faith.[38]

To understand this phrase "in every respect," we must understand the context of Hebrews 4:15, which is connected to Hebrews 2:14–18.[39] The author of Hebrews writes,

> Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death

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[35] Swoboda and Gupta, "Jesus Was the God-Man, Not the God-Superman," https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2021/april-web-only/jesus-god-superman-doubt-temptation-holy-week.html.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Moore, *A Biblical and Historical Appraisal of Concupiscence with Special Attention to Same-Sex Attraction*, 153–98.

[38] Donald A. Hagner, *Hebrews*, New International Biblical Commentary, ed. W. Ward Gasque (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 79.

[39] William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8,* Word Biblical Commentary 47A, eds. David A. Hubbard, Glenn W. Barker, and John D. W. Watts (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 114. Also, F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on The Epistle to the Hebrews*, of New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 84–85. As well, Thomas R. Schreiner*, Commentary on Hebrews*, Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation, eds. T. Desmond Alexander, Andreas J. Kostenberger, and Thomas R. Schreiner (Nashville, TN: B & H, 2015), 153.

> were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted (Heb 2:14–18).

The author of Hebrews says that since God's children, human beings, are flesh and blood, Jesus took on Himself the same things so that He might free them from the evil one who has the power of death. The devil has the power of death because he controls sinners through their sin, and the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23), but God the Son took on a human nature to free God's children from our slavery to sin, and thus, from the fear of death from the evil one (1 Cor 15:56–57).[40]

Jesus had to be made like His brothers, like God's children, in every respect concerning suffering and temptation, so that He might mature into a merciful, full of pity, and faithful, holy in trial and temptation, High Priest, to make propitiation for the sins of God's people. Since Jesus suffered when tempted, yet without sin, He can help God's children when we are tempted.[41]

Now, consider Hebrews 4:14–16,

> Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The author begins by pointing to Christ passing through the heavens, referring to Christ's ascension into heaven (Acts 1:6–11). God the Son Incarnate, the Second Person of the Trinity united to a human nature, passed through the heavens by ascending to God's throne room in heaven. He atoned for the sins of all believers and sat down at His Father's right hand (Heb 9:11–28, 10:11–14).[42] As a result, since our High Priest, Jesus Christ—to whom we are united by His Holy Spirit (Eph 2:4–6)—is in heaven, we can draw near to the throne of grace, finding mercy and grace to help in our time of need.

Jesus can sympathize with our weaknesses because He is truly human and was truly tempted. God cannot be tempted (Jas 1:13), but God the Son Incarnate can be and was. This is the weakness to which the author of Hebrews refers, that God cannot be tempted but the God Man can be, and was, and yet was without sin even in His humanity.[43]

Therefore, Jesus is like all the high priests that have come before Him in that He is truly human. And He is also *not* like all the high priests who have come before

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[40] Lane, *Hebrews 1–8,* 61.
[41] Hagner, *Hebrews*, 53–54.
[42] Hagner, 78–79.
[43] Lane, *Hebrews 1–8,* 114–15.

Him in that He is without sin, and He is God (Heb 1:1–4). Jesus faithfully endured temptation, the weakness of humanity, for us so that He could deliver us from our sin and provide us an example.

Also, Jesus is a better covenant head of a better covenant than the old covenant heads and the old covenants (Heb 1–4:13; 8:1–13). The author of Hebrews wrote to persuade Jewish Christians not to return to the old covenant along with its high priests, priesthood, and sacrifices because Christ is the best High Priest, is of a better Priesthood, and is the ultimate sacrifice, who sympathizes with our humanity or weakness (Heb 4:14–10:18).

Jesus is the God-Man. For, He was truly tempted like us, yet without sin. He was tempted by good things offered through evil means and rejected the evil means entirely. Having lived our weakness by being tempted as truly human, He can be our sympathetic High Priest. And having passed through temptation sinless, without any inner desire for evil, He is able to be our perfect High Priest, not having to atone for His own sin (Heb 7:26–28), but able to atone for our sin and intercede for us.[44]

When We Are Tempted Like Jesus the Great High Priest

If our doubts and inner temptations are not like Jesus' temptations, then whose temptations are they like? Inner doubt or evil desire is like the temptations of David or Peter, not Jesus, because they were tempted from within by their flesh for inherently evil things: David with selfishness, lust, deception, and murder (2 Sam 11) and Peter with denying Christ (Luke 22:54–62). James tells us that inner temptation occurs when our flesh desires something that is contrary to God and lures and entices us. God cannot tempt us because it would be sin for Him to tempt us (Jas 1:13). Thus, our inner temptation is contrary to God's nature and God's design and is therefore sin.

When Christians face inner temptation, the question is not if we will sin, but how much we will sin. For the first inclination from our hearts that is contrary to God is the beginning of the lust of the flesh. Will we feed it and let it consume us, or will we starve it and let it burn itself out to no effect? Our flesh tempts us with what we find tempting. And the more we deny the flesh and walk in the Spirit, the more the flesh is starved and killed (Rom 8:12–13).

Jesus went to the cross to take our sin away, not to send us running to the mirror. He persevered through temptation to justify us with His righteousness being credited to us through faith. He was not tempted so that we could look at His temptations and justify our inner evil desires. Why are Christians trying to justify themselves by appealing to Hebrews 4:15 when Christ has actually justified us through His precious blood?

Christians saying, "I'm being tempted like Jesus," does not take our sin away. Rather, God takes our sin away through repentance and faith in Christ. If we understand Hebrews 4:15 in context, we will run to Jesus Christ, our perfect High Priest, like the very next verse, Hebrews 4:16, says: "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." If

[44] Bruce, *Commentary on The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 85–86.

we do not understand Hebrews 4:15 in context, we will try to justify our doubts, our lusts of the flesh, by looking in the mirror and saying, "I'm like Jesus."[45]

Conclusion

Swoboda and Gupta, along with Anderson, are committing a serious error. The life of Jesus cannot be used to justify Christians doubting God or "unintentionally" desiring to disobey Him. Christ was consistently faithful in His actions *and* His desires as our perfect High Priest, whether He was in the wilderness, in Gethsemane, or on the cross. If Jesus doubted God and His Word, as Swoboda and Gupta argue, or if He desired something contrary to God's command, something that was immoral for Him to desire, as Anderson argues (like Adam and Eve did), then He sinned in His heart, and all His disciples are still in their sins.

Finally, if we follow Swoboda and Gupta's, and Anderson's logic that internal desires that are contrary to God's commands are not sin, this also means that Jesus and the church will doubt God and desire things contrary to God's commands for all eternity. If not, why not? If these desires that are contrary to God are not sin, and Jesus had them, then what will keep us from doubting God and desiring to disobey God's commands in eternity? This sounds more like fallen creation and hell than the new heavens and new earth. After all, if Jesus had these doubts and desires that Swoboda and Gupta, and Anderson claim, we must call them holy; and thus, we must call all desires to doubt God and His Word and desires *not* to do what God commands, holy.

[45] Anderson writes, "The pure in heart see God within the man Jesus' vulnerability in the Garden because they, too, know the deep humanity of wanting to enjoy goods that they are tasked with renouncing. The mature in the faith experience this form of temptation precisely *because* of their sanctity, not its absence." Anderson, "Sex, Temptation, and the Gay Christian," https://web.archive.org/web/20231001162846/https://mereorthodoxy.com/sex-temptation-gay-christian-chastity-demands.

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AN INTERVIEW WITH IOSIF J. ZHAKEVICH: THE JOHN MACARTHUR PUBLISHING GROUP

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This conversation between Corey Williams and Iosif J. Zhakevich, director of the John MacArthur Publishing Group, introduces the purpose and plan of this publishing endeavor. They discuss the value of producing biblical books and the actual projects they are currently working on. Zhakevich explains that the ultimate goal is to expound Scripture and to help believers be conformed to the image of Christ.

* * * * *

Corey Williams (hereafter **CW**): *What is the John MacArthur Publishing Group or JMPG?*

Iosif J. Zhakevich (hereafter **IJZ**): Our mission statement really captures the reason JMPG exists: "The John MacArthur Publishing Group exists to produce biblical resources that bring the transforming truth of God's Word to the lives of His people." We could even condense it to a brief statement: "Equipping Believers with Transforming Truth." That's our goal! To produce and distribute books that explain Scripture and that sanctify believers.

CW: *There are plenty of Christian publishers out there. Why start another one? What unique value can this one bring to the church?*

IJZ: JMPG was launched to provide trusted resources for those who want to know Christ and to understand His Word more deeply. Sure, there are fine publishers. But there's a rising trend to publish works that are more superficial and less biblical.

We've also seen publishers reject solid, biblical works even from best-selling authors.

When Dr. MacArthur proposed his newest book, *The War on Children*, there were leading Christian publishers who said no to the idea. Some of them said the topic was too controversial, even though parents are yearning for wisdom on protecting and raising their children in this dark generation.

So, our goal is to be bold and to proclaim the truth. In fact, the Board decided to call this publishing platform the "John MacArthur Publishing Group" because the Board wants this publisher to stand boldly, the same way Dr. MacArthur has for over five decades. We want to proclaim the Word of God for those seeking to know the truth.

CW: *What kind of books and resources will this publishing group focus on in the coming years?*

IJZ: The books JMPG has already released reflect the kind of resources we want to provide.

Dr. MacArthur's *The War on Children* looks at our culture that is anti-children, anti-family, and anti-God, and offers biblical instruction on how to be a godly family in this godless society. We released the book in print, Kindle, and audio, so that people could get the version that works best for them.

The MacArthur Old Testament Commentaries on *Zechariah* as well as on *Jonah & Nahum* explain each book devotionally and expositionally. Whether you're a pastor, a shepherd, or a new believer, these commentaries explain God's Word, instruct us how to live as Christians, and draw us near to Christ.

The next commentary is on the book of *Daniel*. It looks at those amazing stories of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace, Daniel in the lions' den, and the prophecies of the end times. The seventy weeks, the Tribulation, and the Antichrist are all explained in this commentary. Even though *Zechariah* and *Daniel* are difficult books, the beauty of the commentaries is that they're written so everyone could understand them—they feed our Christian soul.

Let me mention one more project we're working on—a series called The Great Chapters of the Bible. The first book is on our bodily resurrection from 1 Corinthians 15 (*The Triumph of the Rising*). Another work describes the love of God towards us from Romans 8 (*The Triumph of Love*). We're also working on a book about the supreme prayer of Christ from John 17 (*Our Savior Who Prays*). Finally, we're finishing the manuscript on Daniel's prayer for Israel and the seventy-week prophecy from Daniel 9 (*Christ Triumphs over Sin and Death*). These are taken either from the MacArthur New Testament Commentaries or the MacArthur Old Testament Commentaries, and are done in a way that anyone can read them and delight in the beauty of God.

CW: *Why should Christians continue to write and publish books? Aren't there enough books out there already?*

IJZ: This is such a good point; even three thousand years ago Solomon said, "The making of many books is endless" (Ecclesiastes 12:12). Millions of books are published every year, but how many of them are truly edifying—eternally? There's so much godless noise around us—degenerate movies, blasphemous music, or any

form of foul entertainment. We're constantly bombarded with the depravity of this world. The goal of JMPG is to counter this and produce books that will nourish believers with truth and draw them closer to Christ.

This is why we've launched this publishing venture: to display a high view of Scripture and a high view of God. A. W. Tozer said: "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." Of course, the Bible is the most important book to read to see who God is. But when someone wants to study the Bible, we want to provide the resources that help Christians focus on specific portions of Scripture and dive into God's Word.

John MacArthur
PUBLISHING GROUP

The War on Children

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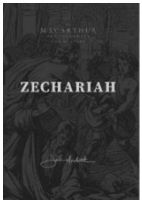

Zechariah

(MacArthur Old Testament Commentary)

Zechariah shows that the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the focus of God's plan in redemptive history.

Jonah & Nahum

(MacArthur Old Testament Commentary)

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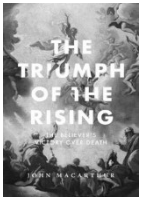

The Triumph of the Rising

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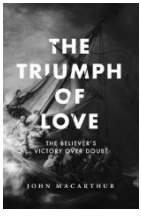

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JESUS' LOVE FOR HIS OWN: THE REMNANT IN JOHN[1]

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Remnant theology in John centers on John's presentation of Jesus as the Good Shepherd and His followers as His sheep. John demonstrates that Jesus declared Himself to be the hope of the remnant—the ultimate Shepherd about whom the Old Testament prophesied. This Good Shepherd offers the promise of eternal life to the remnant, secured by His work of redemption for the remnant. Upon redeeming His own, He regathers them together as one flock under one Shepherd, protecting them, and giving them an eternal purpose—that they would know Him and glorify Him.

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Introduction

Remnant theology, or Jesus' love for His own, is a profound theme weaved throughout the Gospel of John. Akin to passages in the Old Testament[2] as well as

[1] This article has been adapted from a breakout session at the 2023 Shepherd's Conference, titled "Jesus' Love for His Own." The full sermon is available online at: https://www.gracechurch.org/sermons/20918.

[2] The Old Testament theological concept of the remnant is most fully developed by the Latter Prophets in light of the historical event of the exile. The nature of the exile for Israel, whereby a remnant was left in the land and a remnant of the exiled remained faithful to Yahweh, demonstrated the historical reality of a remnant. That remnant was within the ethnic nation of Israel; though there were many who were faithless, a few remained faithful to their covenant-keeping God. This difference between the many and the few, or the remnant preserved through judgment, builds the theology that Paul unpacks in Romans 9–11. For further discussion of the Old Testament theology of the remnant, see D. M. Morgan, "Remnant," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, eds. Mark J. Boda and J. Gordan McConville (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 658–64; Gottlob Schrenk and Volkmar Herntrich, "λεῖμμα, ὑπόλειμμα, καταλείπω (κατά-, περί-, διάλειμμα)," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, eds. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 4:196–209.

portions in the New Testament (e.g., Rom 9–11; Rev 12; etc.),[3] John contributes to the picture of the remnant by depicting the remnant as a righteous people belonging to God. In describing this remnant, John presents seven aspects of remnant theology: the character of the remnant, the identity of the remnant, the promise to the remnant, the regathering of the remnant, the redemption of the remnant, the protection of the remnant, and the purpose for the remnant.

The Character of the Remnant

Of central significance in the Gospel of John is John's declaration that the remnant of God demonstrates continual belief in Christ: the follower of Christ believes and continues to believe. In John 20:30–31, John conveys this message in the purpose statement of his Gospel, writing, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." Thus, John wrote his Gospel specifically to provoke continuous faith in Jesus as Messiah.[4]

In so doing, John described active faith that is anchored particularly in Christ. Throughout the Gospel of John, the root behind "believe" (πιστεύω) is always a verb, and of its 98 occurrences, 93 set Jesus as the object of belief.[5] This manner of faith appears to be the thrust of the first occurrence of πιστεύω as well—Jesus as the object of faith. The purpose statement, in effect, can be seen in two parts: 1) belief in Christ ("so that you may believe [πιστεύ[σ]ητε] that Jesus is the Christ"); and 2) ongoing belief ("that believing [πιστεύοντες] you may have life in His name"). The first half is messianic, or Christological, focusing on the faith in Jesus Christ. The second half emphasizes the nature of the faith and accentuates discipleship. This second use of

[3] In Romans 9–11, the nouns for "remnant" are ὑπόλειμμα and λεῖμμα, and each occurs only once in the New Testament in Romans 9:27 and 11:5 respectively. Regarding the book of Revelation, Lester V. Meyer mentions allusions to the remnant in the Synoptic Gospels, and direct references to it in Revelation, however, he avoids the Gospel of John entirely. See Lester V. Meyer, "Remnant," in *Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5:671. Likewise, Mark W. Elliott gives attention to its occurrences in the Synoptic Gospels, Revelation, and Paul (Rom 9–11), but he does not expand this study to the Gospel of John. See Mark W. Elliott, "Remnant," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, eds. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 2000), 724–25.

[4] Significant scholarly debate surrounds John's first use of πιστεύω in John 20:31, "that you may believe." The first occurrence of πιστεύω occurs either as a present subjunctive (πιστεύητε) or as an aorist subjunctive (πιστεύσητε), and these two options suggest two divergent purposes. The present subjunctive supports John exhorting believers to persevere in faith, whereas the aorist subjunctive would support the purpose of incipient faith in Jesus as the Christ, an evangelistic aim. The textual evidence is split evenly with regard to whether πιστεύω occurs as an aorist or a present tense, forcing the determining factor to be apart from manuscript data. Metzger writes, "Both πιστεύητε and πιστεύσητε have notable early support…in view of the difficulty of choosing between the readings by assessing the supposed purpose of the evangelist (assuming that he used the tenses of the subjunctive strictly), the Committee considered it preferable to represent both readings by enclosing σ within square brackets." See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007), 219–20; and see discussion in Mark Zhakevich, *Follow Me: The Benefits of Discipleship in the Gospel of John* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021), 4.

[5] In contrast to the Gospel of John that has 98 cases of πιστεύω, the Synoptics use πιστεύω 34 times cumulatively. See discussion in Zhakevich, *Follow Me: The Benefits of Discipleship in the Gospel of John*, 43, fn. 9.

πιστεύω (πιστεύοντες), translated "believing," is a present tense participle conveying ongoing belief. What John is trying to accomplish through the purpose statement is to provide a portrait of a Christological disciple, declaring that a true disciple of Christ believes and continues believing.

The Identity of the Remnant

As the remnant demonstrates this persevering belief in Christ, John shows that the remnant's identity is established in Christ. In John 10, the central chapter for remnant theology, John defines the remnant by associating them with Christ, depicting the remnant as the sheep and Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Referring to His sheep, Jesus calls them "His own sheep" (10:3) and later simply as "His own" (10:4; 13:1) or "My own" (10:14). This usage of "own" (ἴδιος) creates a marked contrast with John's first usage of the term in John 1:11 to describe those who rejected Christ ("He came to His own [τὰ ἴδια], and His own [οἱ ἴδιοι] did not receive Him") and Jesus' use of this word in John 10 to describe those who followed Christ.[6] John, in other words, identifies two categories: "His own" whom Jesus came to but who rejected Him (1:11, i.e., not the remnant), and truly "His own" who receive Him and follow Him (10:3–4, 14, i.e., the remnant). This distinction between the two groups echoes the remnant theology of the Old Testament—a group of people preserved by God who remain faithful and are preserved in the midst of judgment.

A fundamental distinctive that defines the remnant is that they experience eternal life in the present.[7] Life, and specifically eternal life, is offered by the Good Shepherd (John 10:10, 28). In verse 10, Jesus refers to the sheep mentioned in 10:7–9 and exclaims that He came so that His sheep may have (ἔχωσιν) abundant life. In verse 28, He explicitly states that He offers "eternal life." In 17:3, Jesus defines eternal life as follows: "This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." Eternal life, therefore, is defined as a relationship with God the Father and God the Son. Developing this in chapters 14–16, John shows that

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[6] J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 721. The term ἴδιος occurs 15 times in the Gospel of John, however, of those occurrences, 5 are found without an attached noun, leaving the term undefined (1:11 [2x]; 10:4; 13:1; 15:19). Thus, the surrounding context is necessary to identify each usage: 1) in 1:11, τὰ ἴδια as neuter likely refers to his "things" (either the world or his home; see D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John,* Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England: Apollos, 1991), 124; Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 37), whereas 2) οἱ ἴδιοι demonstrates a subcategory of the world that should have received Christ, but instead rejected Him (ethnic Israel); 3) in 10:4, τὰ ἴδια represents the sheep who belong to the Shepherd, given its occurrence in 10:3, but not those to whom Jesus was directly speaking, given His words in 10:26; 4) in 13:1, τὰ ἴδια represents either the faithful disciples in the Upper Room (Köstenberger, *John*, 402) or the full body of disciples whom Jesus loves (Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 721); 5) in 15:19, τὸ ἴδιον refers to the ones who belong to the world and whom the world loves. When ἴδιος is used by itself in John, it differentiates between the remnant and a group of those outside the remnant (the world and its disciples).

[7] As J. G. van der Watt notes, ζωή occurs 36 times in John's Gospel. However, over half of these references are void of the qualifier αἰώνιος. Yet van der Watt argues that even when αἰώνιος is absent, "eternal life" is still in view in the mind of John. See the appendix in J. G. van der Watt, "The Use of αἰώνιος in the concept of ζωή αἰώνιος in John's Gospel," *Novum Testamentum* 31, no. 3 (July 1989): 227–28, for a full breakdown of the uses of ζωή.

this relationship is empowered by the Holy Spirit within the believer (e.g., 14:15–24). In the Synoptics, eternal life is a future reality; but in the Gospel of John, eternal life is a present reality—a relationship with God that the believer experiences today.

John carefully distinguishes between eternal life and resurrection. While eternal life is the present reality of a relationship with God and Jesus Christ, the resurrection is an extension of that life into eternity.[8] In John 6:54, Jesus states: "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." The verb ἔχει ("has") is present tense, indicating a current reality. In contrast, ἀναστήσω ("I will raise") assures the reader of a future resurrection, indicating a difference between the eternal life that believers enjoy in the present and the resurrection that awaits the believers in the future.[9] In this way, John provides both a qualitative and a quantitative aspect to the concept of eternal life. As John describes the identity of the remnant, he demonstrates that they experience eternal life—or a relationship with God—even in their life on earth.

The Promise to the Remnant

With the remnant's belief and identity in Christ, the remnant receives the promise of adoption as children of God. In John 1:11, John writes, "He [Jesus] came to His own" (τὰ ἴδια; "His own"), but part of "His own" rejected Him. Stating that some of Christ's "own" rejected Christ, John then specifies a subset of "His own," declaring, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (vv. 12–13).[10] The remnant, therefore, who does obtain the promise of becoming the children of God consists of those who accept Christ.

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[8] As Richard Bauckham states, "Eternal life in John is much more than the goods of earthly, mortal life, but it is certainly not less than them. It surpasses them by including them, not leaving them behind…it is the renewal of the whole of life through participation in the divine life." Consequently, eternal life begins in the present and extends into the future. As one abides in Christ, he comes to participate in the divine life, possessing eternal life even now. See Richard Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 71.

[9] This difference between the present and the future is often referred to by scholars as realized eschatology (present) and unrealized or final eschatology (future). Though the eating and drinking should not be understood to be a reference to the Eucharist, the present tense verb suggests that eternal life includes the present, extending into the future. See Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John: I–XII*, Anchor Bible Commentary (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 292, and Carson, *The Gospel According to John,* 295–97, for a refutation of the Eucharist view of this passage. However, contra Brown, the present eternal life is not the reality of the kingdom of God but rather the "featured benefit that is derived from membership in the divine family. Eternal life can be defined as the ability and quality of relating within the divine family." See Zhakevich, *Follow Me: The Benefits of Discipleship in the Gospel of John*, 58–59, 71.

[10] Morris and Klink note the difficulty of translating ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν ("But as many as received Him"), yet both conclude that its function and unique structure highlight the identity of the ones who receive Christ in contrast to the disbelieving people to whom Jesus came. See Edward W. Klink III, *John*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 103–04; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 86–87.

The chiastic structure of John's prologue emphasizes this promise all the more (1:1–18), with the focal point spotlighting the concept of adoption as children of God.[11]

A Word with God (1:1–2)
B What came to be through the Word: Creation (1:3)
C What we have received from the Word: Life (1:4–5)
D John sent to testify (1:6–8)
E Incarnation and response of the World (1:9–10)
F The Word and His own (1:11)
G Those who accepted the Word (1:12a)
H Those who became children of God (1:12b)
G' Those who believed in the Word (1:12c)
F' The Word and His own (1:13)
E' Incarnation and Response of the Community (1:14)
D' John's Testimony (1:15)
C' What we have received from the Word: Grace (1:16)
B' What came to be through the Word: Grace and Truth (1:17)
A' Word with God (1: 18)

Within this chiasm, John 1:11–13 is at the apex, and 1:12b is the centerpiece.[12] This verse reads, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name." As the chiastic structure above shows, the central statement within this chiasm is the clause: "to them He gave the right to become children of God." This is God's promise to the remnant—that they would become children of God. This promise of adoption and sonship is the same promise Paul demonstrates in his remnant theology in Romans 9 (e.g., Rom 9:6–8).[13] Paul writes, "But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel; nor are they children because they are Abraham's descendants, but through Isaac, your descendants will be named. That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants." As John, Paul uses "the children" image and

[11] Compare to Köstenberger's chiasm and see his defense of a chiastic structure in the prologue in *John*, 20–21.

[12] In his criteria for discerning an extended chiasm in the text, Blomberg writes, "The center of the chiasmus, which forms its climax, should be a passage worthy of that position in light of its theological or ethical significance." See Craig Blomberg, "The Structure of 2 Corinthians 1–7," *Criswell Theological Review* 4, no. 1 (1989): 7. This, along with several of the other features of a chiasm, is true of John 1:1–18, with the emphasis being on the unique statement "to them He gave the right to become children of God," a statement that bears significant family language in the whole of John's Gospel.

[13] Scholars are divided on whether υἱοθεσία in Romans 9:4 bears the same theological significance as it does in Romans 8:15 and 23 as it refers to the adoption of believers. Moo argues for a difference in meaning, given that adoption is "the Spirit-conferred status of all those who have been justified by faith in Christ." He argues that Paul would not use this language in reference to Israel, given the significant number of unbelievers within the nation. See Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 562. However, Schreiner objects, stating that the adoption of Israel may demonstrate a spiritual reality without requiring "that every single individual will be saved." See Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 483–84.

links it to remnant theology.[14] In that way, Paul and John are aligned in their understanding that to become a child of God, to be adopted and become a son of God, is to be part of the remnant.

In addition to this chiastic structure, John also focuses on this promise of adoption or sonship for the remnant through an inclusio.[15] John's inclusio features adoption language at both the beginning of the book (1:12) and at its conclusion (20:17; 21:5).[16] At John 1:12, John depicts the followers of Christ as "children of God," and then at 20:17 and 21:5, respectively, John refers to God as the Father of His followers, and to the disciples as children. At 20:17, at the end of Jesus' time on earth, Jesus gives an imperative to Mary, "Go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'" This is the first time in John that Jesus calls his disciples "brothers" and God as their "Father," because the cross had established a relationship between the disciples and God as their Father. Then, at 21:5, Jesus addresses his disciples as "children," thereby implicitly associating them with a father, and in this context, God the Father, since they would commit their lives to glorifying God (cf. v. 19).

Significantly, this image also appears at the transition in Jesus' ministry—from Jesus' public ministry (John 1–12) to His private ministry (13–21). At 12:36, at the end of Jesus' public ministry, Jesus exclaims to the crowd, "While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light." Though the language is slightly different ("son of Light" compared to "child of God"), the imagery is consistent, bringing out the importance of the theme of adoption in the Gospel of John and in the ministry of Jesus. Thus, John emphasizes that those who believe in the Light will receive the promise of adoption, know God, and participate in eternal life (cf. John 1:4–5, 9–10). Then, at 13:1, at the beginning of Jesus' private ministry, John writes, "Having loved His own [τοὺς ἰδίους] who were in the world, He loved them to the end." Even beyond the reference to "His own," the statement "who were in the world" suggests that they are no longer in the world, thus indicating their identity as the remnant (cf. 17:6, 16).

But in this transition of John's Gospel, between John discussing the promise of adoption (12:36) and the remnant who receives that promise (13:1), John incorporates

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[14] Just as John uses a single term ἴδιος (His own) to refer to two groups (His own who rejected Him [John 1:11] and His own who were His sheep [10:3–4]), Paul uses children and seed, with each of these terms having two distinct groups (children of the flesh [Rom 9:8] and children of God [9:8]; seed that is not of God [9:7] and seed that is of God [9:8]). This distinction echoes remnant theology in that, of the larger group who is judged by God, there is a smaller remnant preserved through judgment. Furthermore, in Paul's theology, being called "children of God" is closely associated with the work of adoption as sons (Rom 8:16, 17, 21), further connecting adoption as a blessing the remnant experiences. See Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 577.

[15] John prefers familial language, rather than the language of sonship throughout his Gospel. As is noted, John uses the word for "son" (υἱός) only in reference to Jesus: "the believers are not called children of the *Father* or born of the *Father*, but rather children of God and born of God." See Zhakevich, *Follow Me: The Benefits of Discipleship in the Gospel of John*, 30 (emphasis original).

[16] The Greek word used in John 1:12 is τέκνον, different from the word used in 21:5, παιδίον. However, Brown suggests that these two words be viewed as interchangeable within Johannine writings, given the evidence of 1 John 2:12–14. See Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John: XIII–XXI*, Anchor Bible Commentary (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 1070.

a key Old Testament text depicting remnant theology: Isaiah 6.[17] Beginning first with Isaiah 53:1 and then proceeding to Isaiah 6:10, John writes in John 12:37–40:

> *This was* to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and be converted and I heal them."

John uses this text to explain the difference between the remnant who received the promise and the larger group who rejected it. Though Jesus had worked many signs in front of the people, they would not believe in Him. At the shift from Jesus' public ministry to His private ministry, John uses this text from Isaiah to distinguish the believing remnant from those who rejected the truth. The broader context of Isaiah 6 alludes to the future remnant who would believe upon hearing the preaching of the truth, and Isaiah refers to this remnant as "the holy seed" (Isa 6:13). Thus, though many refuse the Light of the world, there will be a remnant who would believe in the Light and receive the promise of adoption.

The promise of adoption is also carried along in John's Gospel by language pertaining to Jesus' love and choosing of the disciples. In John 13:1, John focuses on Jesus' love for the remnant, saying: "Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end."[18] Jesus' love for the disciples results in their separation from the unbelieving world, because Jesus loved and chose the disciples as the believing remnant. In John 15:19, Jesus states, "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you." While the world loves its own, Jesus loved His own and chose His own from the world. Because Christ loved and chose His own to be the believing remnant, the world hated the remnant, as 17:14 reiterates: "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."[19] This love that separates the disciples is the result of Christ's choosing His followers. In John 6:70, Jesus exclaims, "Did I myself not choose you?" In 13:18, He

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[17] For a discussion of this passage in light of the remnant motif, see Gerhard F. Hasel, *The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah,* Andrews University Monographs 5 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1974), 238–50.

[18] Analysis of ἀγαπάω and φιλέω in John suggests that the two verbs operate interchangeably. For example, John speaks of the disciple whom Jesus loved, using both verbs as qualifiers (20:2 uses φιλέω, while 13:23; 19:26; and 21:7 use ἀγαπάω). Though Bauckham limits the interchangeability of these two terms to the love of friends, some texts suggest otherwise. For example, John uses both verbs on different occasions to state that God loves the Son (3:35 uses ἀγαπάω while 5:20 uses φιλέω). Or, John uses both verbs to state the Father loves His own (his disciples) (14:23 has ἀγαπάω while 16:27 has φιλέω). See Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology*, 64–65.

[19] Dodd observes that the theme of love (ἀγαπάω and αγαπη) saturates the Farewell Discourse (John 13–17) in a manner altogether different than the first half of the Gospel (John 1–12). He observes that whereas ἀγαπάω and αγαπη occur only 6 times in the first 12 chapters, they occur 31 times in the Farewell Discourse. See C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 398.

says, "I know the ones I have chosen." In 15:16, He states, "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit…" This element of choosing is introduced specific to His disciples, thus accentuating this theme of the remnant theology in John. There is a selection by Jesus connected to His love that gives to His disciples the promise of adoption.

The Regathering of the Remnant

Furthermore, John's remnant theology develops the theme of the regathering of the remnant. This regathering is the logical extension of the promise of adoption. Though the believing remnant would be scattered, they would one day be regathered by Christ. In John 11, John remarks on Caiaphas' prophecy about the death of Jesus and explains "that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad" (11:51–52). Certainly, when Caiaphas mentions "the nation" in 11:50, he is referring to the ethnic people of Israel in the land of Israel. However, at the time of John's writing, the Diaspora had already occurred and the Jewish people had already been scattered throughout the Roman Empire.[20] Therefore, when John comments upon Caiaphas' prophecy, he applies the statement to all the believers of Israel—those within the land and those scattered abroad—declaring that God would gather them all into one fold.

Indeed, this dispersion and regathering of Israel was also prophesied by Ezekiel in Ezekiel 34, which John depends upon and alludes to throughout John 10.[21] In Ezekiel 34, Ezekiel deploys four different words that describe the scattering of the sheep.[22] In 34:4 and 16, Ezekiel employs the term "scatter" (נדח), emphasizing the dispersion of a flock.[23] In 34:6, he uses "wander" (שׁגה), which carries the nuance of straying from the place of habitation.[24] In 34:5, 12, and 21, Ezekiel uses "dispersed" (פוץ; also translated "scattered" at times). Finally, in 34:12, he uses "spread out" (פרשׁ), which denotes the idea of separation.[25] Thus Ezekiel communicates a central point that the Lord's sheep will one day be scattered. However, while prophesying this message of doom, Ezekiel also records in the midst of this prophecy God's promise of hope for the people of Israel. In 34:15, God says, "I will feed my flock

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[20] Karen H. Jobes, *John through Old Testament Eyes* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2021), 195.

[21] For a study on the relationship between John and Ezekiel, see William G. Fowler and Michael Strickland, *The Influence of Ezekiel in the Fourth Gospel: Intertextuality and Interpretation* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

[22] For a list of Ancient Near Eastern documents using shepherding and regathering language, see Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25–48*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 290–91.

[23] See T. Kronholm, "נָדַח," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament,* ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. John T. Willis, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, David E. Green, and Douglas W. Stott (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 9:236.

[24] The parallel position of שׁגה ("wander") with פוץ ("disperse, scatter") may suggest the involvement of the wicked shepherds of Israel in the dispersion of the people (cf. 34:21). See T. Seidl, "שָׁגָה/שָׁגַג," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament,* ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. John T. Willis, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, David E. Green, and Douglas W. Stott (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 14:400.

[25] For text critical questions concerning פרשׁ / פרשׂ in Ezekiel 34:12, see Block, *The Book of Ezekiel 25–48*, 286, fn. 71; Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48* (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 157.

and I will lead them to rest." God will not allow this dispersion to perpetuate but He will Himself bring it to an end. He declares in 34:11, "Behold, I Myself will seek My sheep and care for them." God will regather His people into one unified flock.

This image of regathering is the very image John uses in developing his remnant theology as well. Just as God refers to His remnant as "My sheep" in Ezekiel 34:11, 12, and 31 (cf. "My flock" in 34:6, 8, 10, 15, 17, 19, 22), so also Jesus refers to His followers as "My sheep" in John 10:26 and 27 (cf. 21:16, 17; and "My own," "His own" in 10:3–4, 14). Jesus indicates that His sheep are the remnant who hear His voice, who follow God, and who receive the blessing of adoption and eternal life. In other words, John takes the shepherding and regathering theology of Ezekiel 34 and applies it to the remnant theology he develops in John 10. In this way, he reminds his readers of the hope Israel has in the future Shepherd (John 10:16; cf. Ezek 34:23–24). The remnant will be regathered under the staff and rod of their one Shepherd, the Good Shepherd (John 10:14; cf. Ezek 34:23). This Shepherd will express care for the one flock of God, as John demonstrates in John 10:16 and throughout his Gospel (see 11:52; 17:11, 21, 22, 23).

Examining this theme of regathering in John, Karen Jobes notes that this regathering includes not only Israel but all those who believe in Jesus' name (cf. John 1:12).[26] The remnant is a global reality in the theology of John. As John alludes to this global and scattered remnant in John 10:16, he records Jesus stating, "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock *with* one shepherd." The implication is that Gentiles who believe will also enter the fold and join the flock of the Shepherd, thereby also becoming children of God (cf. Rev 1:7).

This raises an important question for the theology of the remnant: How is it possible that the remnant will be regathered?

The Redemption of the Remnant

In order for the remnant to be regathered, the remnant will need to be delivered from sin, which is yet another aspect of John's remnant theology—the redemption of the remnant. In the Gospel of John, the regathering of the remnant is at times paired with the redemption of the remnant. At John 11:39–52, for example, Caiaphas' prophecy implies the substitutionary nature of Jesus' death, and John then affirms this and states that Caiaphas "prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation" and for "the children of God who are scattered abroad" (vv. 51–52). Moreover, Jesus Himself declared that His death would be sacrificial and substitutionary. In John 10:15, Jesus says, "I lay down My life for the sheep…" and then in 10:17, He reiterates, "I lay down My life…" (cf. 10:11, 18; 15:13; 1 John 3:16). Significantly, between these two statements, in 10:16 Jesus declares His determination to gather His sheep, stating, "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock *with* one

[26] Jobes, *John through Old Testament Eyes*, 195. Jesus dying for "the nation" (11:51) should not cause issue regarding the nature or application of Jesus' death. It is acceptable to read Caiaphas' statement, not primarily as a remark about the extent of the atonement, but as a political prophecy about the state of the nation in the context of the Roman Empire. See Carson, *The Gospel According to John,* 522.

shepherd." With the hope of regathering the remnant, Jesus demonstrates the importance of the work of redemption to securing the remnant's future regathering.[27] The regathering of the remnant, therefore, cannot be separated from the death of Jesus Christ.

John's Gospel nuances the redemption of the remnant further by suggesting yet again that the Gentiles will also be included in this redeemed remnant. When a group of Greeks came to see Jesus (John 12:20–22), Jesus responded by turning His attention to His coming death and saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" (John 12:23, 27; 13:1). Whereas the hour had been delayed throughout the Gospel (2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20), Jesus declared that the hour had arrived particularly when the Greeks came to see Him. After stating that His death will bear much fruit (12:23–31), Jesus referred to the remnant in an inclusive sense and explained that "I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself" (12:32). Commenting on this pericope, Andreas Köstenberger explains that after His death, "Jesus will draw 'all people,' including Gentiles, to himself (cf. 10:16; 11:51–52)."[28] These Greeks are the other sheep who are Jesus' own but who are not of the fold. Yet, when they come to Him, Jesus speaks of His death and then indicates that they too will become part of one flock under one Shepherd. However, for this to occur, Jesus needed to complete the work His Father had given Him, to secure His own by His work of redemption.

This leads to another question concerning John's remnant theology: Is the redeemed remnant secure in being regathered unto Christ?

The Protection of the Remnant

Jesus' work of redemption for the remnant secures their regathering because He is the protector of the remnant. The imagery of protection is found in John 10—the central chapter on John's remnant theology. In portraying Jesus as the Good Shepherd, John shows that one of the blessings of Christ's shepherding is His protection of His flock. John 10:27–30 reads, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one." The language of sheep hearing the voice of the Shepherd evokes similar imagery that appears in Old Testament remnant theology. Psalm 95:7 states, "We are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would hear His voice…" Using this imagery, the psalmist describes the people, or sheep, listening to the voice of the shepherd and being kept in the shepherd's hand. Being in the hand of the shepherd affords great surety to the sheep, indicating that their redemption is firm. Nobody slips through His fingers (cf. John 6:37–40). The promise is that God and Christ, the Father and the Son, will protect the flock. They offer eternal life—a life, in the words of John 10:10, that is abundant. This eternal life promised to the remnant is fully satisfying.

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[27] Cf. Brown, *The Gospel According to John: I–XII*, 398; Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds After My Own Heart*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 216.

[28] Köstenberger, *John*, 384–85, 388.

This idea of abundance also hearkens back to the imagery present in Old Testament promises of fullness for His sheep. In Ezekiel 34:14 and 26, God promises to feed His sheep with good pasture.[29] Undoubtedly, this promise is ultimately fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom when the flock of God is one and when it has one shepherd under the reign of King Jesus (Ezek 34:23–24). Additionally, this abundance is described in Jeremiah 23 as a particular blessing for the remnant shepherded by the Lord. God says, "Then I Myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and bring them back to their pasture, and they will be fruitful and multiply" (Jer 23:3). This promised prosperity will coincide with the coming of the Davidic Branch, a king who reigns wisely and justly in the land (23:5). His rule will result in the security of the sheep (23:6). These realities attend the sheep of the Good Shepherd, who protects the sheep from the thief that seeks only to kill and destroy (John 10:10). Though the remnant was scattered, they will one day be redeemed and regathered, and upon being brought together by Christ, they will be afforded a secure abundance.

Beyond this description of the protective role of the Shepherd, John also indicates that the protection of the remnant becomes a task entrusted to under-shepherds serving the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:2–4). At the conclusion of John's Gospel, Jesus commissions Peter with the charge of taking care of the sheep (John 21:15–17).[30] Yet even in this commission, as Jesus entrusts the sheep to Peter, He reminds Peter of the security that these sheep possess because they are "My sheep" (21:16–17; cf. 21:15, "My lambs"). The sheep are given by the Father to the Son (10:29) and are secure in Him (cf. 6:37, 39; 17:2, 9, 24; 18:9). The remnant cannot miss out on the protection of which they are assured. Rather, they have eternal life and are given this unwavering confidence in their future resurrection.

With their safety guaranteed, the climactic question remains: What is the purpose for which God acquires a remnant for Himself?

The Purpose for the Remnant

The purpose for the remnant in the Gospel of John is for the sheep to know the Shepherd, which results in glorifying Him. The language of knowing the Lord is essential to the theology of this book, as manifested in John's use of οἶδα 84 times and γινώσκω 63 times, both of which convey the experience of knowing.[31] Just before John announces that Jesus came to His own, he says in 1:10, "And the world did not know Him." Bringing resolution to this problem of not knowing Christ, John states in 1:18, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." To explain God is to make Him known, as Jesus says in John 17:3: "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." This then is the purpose of the remnant—to know God and to experience eternal life.

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[29] Köstenberger, *John*, 304.

[30] Aside from John 2:14–15 which describe the presence of literal sheep being sold in the temple, John uses "sheep" (πρόβατον) only in John 10 and 21, both occurrences serving as a metaphor to describe those whom the Father has given Him (John 10:29).

[31] These two terms in Greek are interchangeable in the Gospel of John. See Table 2.1 in Zhakevich, *Follow Me: The Benefits of Discipleship in the Gospel of John*, 55.

John's emphasis on the knowledge of God is a theme that is also embedded in the theology of Ezekiel. Ezekiel writes, "And they [the sheep] will be secure on their land. Then they will know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bars of their yoke and have delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them" (Ezek 34:27). God will redeem His sheep and keep them secure so that they will come to know Him. Just as Ezekiel indicates that the knowledge of God is the ultimate purpose of the remnant, so also John develops this theme in his Gospel.[32]

Expounding this theme of knowing the Shepherd, John first indicates that the sheep hear the Shepherd's voice (10:4–5, 14). John, in fact, explains that this is the fundamental distinction between the remnant and the unbelieving ones—that the remnant recognizes and responds to the Shepherd's voice (10:24–27).

Secondly, John shows that the sheep understand the true identity of the Shepherd—that He is God. John quotes Jesus saying: "Believe the works, so that you may know and understand [lit. continue knowing] that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father" (10:38). Accurate knowledge of the Shepherd amounts to understanding that the Shepherd is the Anointed One who is God and who is one with the Father (cf. 10:30–36). The remnant knows that Christ has a unique, abiding relationship with the Father. John explains that this is the ultimate purpose for this remnant—ongoing knowledge of the relationship between the Father and the Son.

Thirdly, John shows that the true remnant recognizes the Shepherd as King. The shepherd-king imagery in John is also the continuation of Ezekiel's imagery. In Ezekiel 34, Ezekiel uses Davidic language to describe the coming Shepherd who will compassionately rule over His people. However, in Ezekiel 37, this language becomes more pronounced with royal overtones, as God states: "My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd…" (37:24). This Shepherd is a royal figure. Jesus declares that His sheep, the remnant, will have one Shepherd, a King who is coming.

This theme of the royal Shepherd who is recognized and acknowledged as such by the remnant is developed throughout the Gospel of John.[33] Nathaniel encounters Jesus and proclaims that He is the "King of Israel" (1:49). This language demonstrates His deity and displays His righteous acting on behalf of the righteous remnant (Zeph 3:15).[34] As John continues his narrative, Jesus encounters Nicodemus, with whom He converses about the kingdom of God (John 3). The crowds later

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[32] The statement in Ezekiel 34:27, "Then they will know that I am Yahweh" (וְיָדְעוּ כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה), and others like it occur more than 70 times in the book of Ezekiel and are foundational to Ezekiel's theology. See John F. Evans, *You Shall Know that I Am Yahweh: An Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Ezekiel's Recognition Formula*, Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplements 25 (University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2019), 1. This theology factors into Ezekiel's shepherding imagery, in turn influencing John's discussion of the Good Shepherd.

[33] See full discussion in Zhakevich, *Follow Me: The Benefits of Discipleship in the Gospel of John*, 129–53.

[34] In Zephaniah, the title "King of Israel" is found at the conclusion of the book, detailing Zephaniah's proclamation for the remnant of Israel. Notably, in that context Zephaniah describes the hope for the remnant by using the imagery of pasturing and stating that the people are shepherded by their Shepherd-King (Zeph 3:13–15). See O. Palmer Robertson, *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 331–32; Kenneth L. Barker and Waylon Bailey, *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 491–95.

recognize Jesus' right to kingly authority and attempt, though unsuccessfully, to make Him king by force (6:15). Jesus then enters into Jerusalem in kingly fashion on a donkey, further referencing Old Testament messianic theology (John 12:12–16; cf. Zech 9:9).[35] At the end of His life, in His interaction with Pilate, Jesus shifts from speaking of the "kingdom of God" to "My kingdom" (John 18:36). In fact, standing before Pilate, Jesus says plainly, "You say *correctly* that I am a king" (John 18:37). Thus, when Pilate delivers Jesus over to be crucified, he states, "Behold, your King!" (19:14).

However, this King operates differently than any other king before Him. Unlike every other king in human history, this Good Shepherd-King lays down His life for His sheep. The remnant experiences the blessing of Jesus' kingship being distinct in the whole of human history.[36] No other king sacrificed Himself to redeem a remnant in the past, the present, and the future. As John presents this theme of the royal Shepherd, he shows that the remnant will know and confess this reality about the Shepherd (John 17:3). In effect, the royal Shepherd is glorified in His remnant (17:10). In the end, the reign of this King will culminate in the remnant worshipping Him and thus fulfilling the purpose for which they are redeemed and regathered (Rev 7:9–17).

Conclusion

John's remnant theology is centered on the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd who shepherds His sheep (John 10). He shepherds His sheep, that is, His remnant, specifically for the purpose that they would know Him and glorify Him. In the present time, the Chief Shepherd has entrusted this task to the under-shepherds, or pastor-teachers, who are to take up the mantle of shepherding the remnant, under the authority of the Good Shepherd, who laid down His life for His own.

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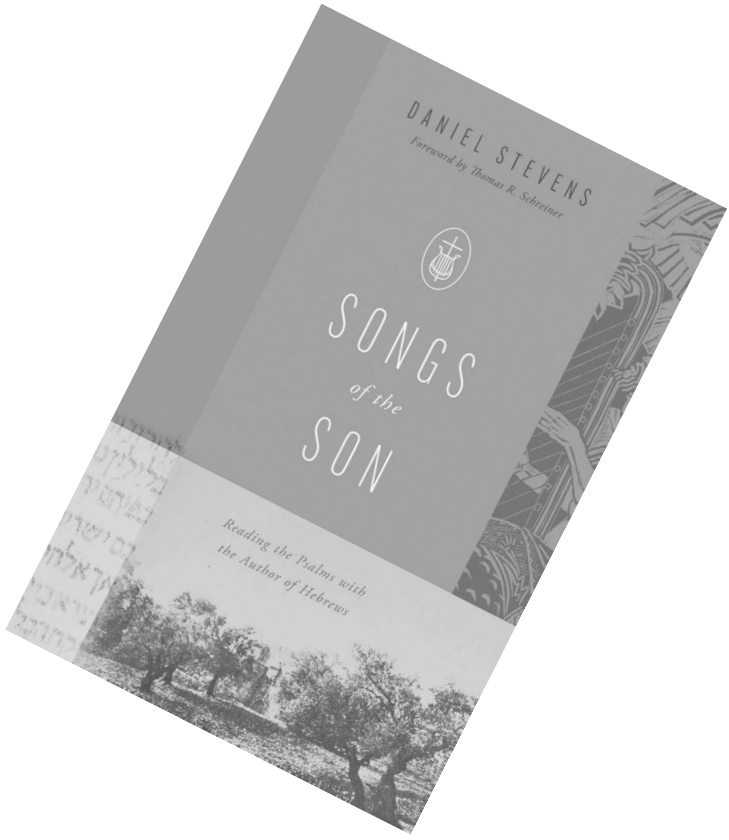
[35] Jobes, *John Through Old Testament Eyes*, 200.

[36] Cassius Dio, *Roman History: Books 56–60,* Loeb Classical Library 157, trans. Earnest Cary (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924), 137 (57.10.5); Suetonius, *The Life of Tiberius*, in *Suetonius: Volume 1*, Loeb Classical Library 31, trans. J. C. Rolffe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 359 (32.2); and see Zhakevich, *Follow Me: The Benefits of Discipleship in the Gospel of John*, 111–27.

READING THE PSALMS WITH THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS



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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DIVINE NAME IN PETER'S PENTECOST SERMON

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One of the reasons that the personal name of God is usually left out of translations of the Old Testament is its absence in the New Testament. However, the New Testament authors' application to Jesus of the traditional Greek substitute for the Tetragrammaton (κύριος) reveals that they had a unique theological reason for doing so that is less clear when the divine name is missing from Old Testament translations. Peter's use of OT Yahweh texts in Acts 2:14–36 exemplifies this unique application of texts about Yahweh to Jesus. This study of Yahweh texts in Peter's Pentecost sermon reveals that the NT writers used κύριος to refer to two concepts at once in order to emphasize that Jesus is both Yahweh and the Master (κύριος, אדני) who must be obeyed.

* * * * *

Introduction

Exodus 3:15 records God telling Moses that His name is Yahweh (יהוה) and that He wants His people to remember His name forever.[1] Yet that name is surprisingly absent from the New Testament (NT). This is true even when the NT quotes Old Testament (OT) texts containing the divine name in the Hebrew. Bowman and Komoszewski explain:

> The New Testament, written in Greek, also uses the Greek words for *Lord* and *God* and never the tetragram, not even in direct quotations from the Old Testament. We have over 5,700 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament varying in length from scraps containing a couple of verses or so to codices

[1] For an explanation of the significance and meaning of the divine name, see Aaron Valdizan, "The Significance of the Divine Name: An Analysis of Exodus 3:14–15," *TMSJ* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2024): 53–74.

> containing the entire New Testament. These manuscripts include papyri dating from at least the second century—possibly even the late first century—that have "Lord" (*kurios*) in direct quotations of Old Testament texts that use the name YHWH.[2]

This replacement of the divine name with "Lord" can be traced back to the translators of the oldest Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (the Septuagint or LXX). They used the Greek word κύριος (meaning "lord" or "master") as their primary substitute for the divine name as early as the 3rd century bc. This practice reflects the Jewish tradition of pronouncing the Hebrew word for "lord," *Adonai* (אדני), instead of the divine name when reading the Hebrew Scriptures. The adoption of this substitutionary practice by the NT writers is one of the primary reasons why most English Bible translators replace the divine name in the Old Testament with "the LORD." Translators often assume that the NT's use of κύριος in place of the divine name when quoting OT Yahweh texts[3] set a precedent for future OT translations.[4]

However, it will be seen that the NT writers had a unique theological purpose for not using the divine name in their writings that is diminished when God's name is missing from OT translations. The NT writers not only retained the LXX practice of using κύριος as a replacement for the Tetragrammaton, even in quotations of Yahweh texts, but also frequently used the term to refer to Jesus. Through numerous quotations, allusions, and echoes to Yahweh texts,[5] the NT writers equated God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit with Yahweh.[6] The use of Yahweh texts with reference to Jesus is particularly common. Porter and Dyer remark,

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[2] Robert Bowman, Jr., and J. Ed Komoszewski, *Putting Jesus in His Place: The Case for the Deity of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2007), 159.

[3] Capes defines a "Yahweh text" as "a New Testament quotation of, or an allusion to, an OT text in which the tetragrammaton occurs" (David B. Capes, "Jesus' Unique Relationship with Yhwh in Biblical Exegesis," in *Monotheism and Christology in Greco-Roman Antiquity* [Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2020], 86).

[4] For example, Schreiner writes, "when quoting Old Testament texts that include an occurrence of *YHWH*, the New Testament renders *YHWH* with the word *kurios*, which is a title (Lord) rather than a personal name. With this precedent in hand, most English translators have chosen to render *YHWH* as 'LORD' rather than 'Yahweh'" (Thomas Schreiner, "Q&A: Translation Decisions for the Christian Standard Bible," January 2017, https://csbible.com/wpcontent/uploads/2017/01/Translation-Decisions-QA.pdf).

[5] Capes defines these three terms as follows: "A quotation is often introduced by a citation formula (e.g., 'for it is written,' Gal 3:10; 'for the scripture says to Pharaoh,' Rom 9:17) and contains a high degree of verbal correspondence with the source text. An allusion does not typically begin with a citation formula and is characterized by a slighter degree of verbal correspondence. In fact, allusion may consist primarily of just a few key words from a text that, to the insider, conjure up some sort of prior scriptural story, character, or insight. An echo is the least distinct of the three. It may consist of only a word or a phrase that signals the alert hearer to form a connection with a prior text" (David B. Capes, *The Divine Christ: Paul, the Lord Jesus, and the Scriptures of Israel* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018], 85–86).

[6] Paul cites a Yahweh text (Exod 34:34) in 2 Cor 3:15–18 in order to equate Yahweh with both Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Hurtado states, "Paul's statement "when one turns to the Lord the veil is lifted" (2 Cor 3:16) adapts phrasing from Exodus 34:34, where the *kyrios* is Yahweh, to refer to Christ. This application of *kyrios* to Christ is not simply wordplay but indicates that Paul sees Christ as the *kyrios* in divine terms. The following verses confirm this, where Christ the *kyrios* is linked with the (divine) Spirit (*see* Holy Spirit) and is referred to as the source of transforming "glory" (Gk *doxa* = Heb *kāḇôḏ*), one of the most important attributes of Yahweh in the OT and here borne by Christ" (Larry W. Hurtado, "Lord,"

> In the New Testament, we can see that the affirmation that Jesus is Lord means much more than simply that he is one to be respected. Of course Jesus is to be respected, but this is because he is exercising the divine prerogatives of the God of the Old Testament. This occurs to the point that what is said about the God of the Old Testament can be said of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. The biblical authors cite passages in the Old Testament that refer to the Lord God acting, but they indicate that they believe that Jesus Christ is that figure in his own actions and even person. The connection of Jesus to God is therefore made implicitly by applying the title κύριος to Jesus in contexts in which it had previously been applied to God. This divine status is reinforced by the combination of other titles or traditions with κύριος, especially when the New Testament authors combine κύριος with another designation of divinity, such as "Son of God" or "God."[7]

For example, the writings of Luke emphasize that Jesus is κύριος. Indeed, "The term *kyrios* is the most frequently used Christological title in all of Luke-Acts, used almost twice as frequently as the term *Christ.* Of 717 occurrences of *kyrios* in the NT the vast majority are to be found either in Luke-Acts (210) or in the Pauline letters (275)."[8] The Gospel of Luke contains much use of κύριος to refer to Jesus.[9] For example, as early as in the first chapter Elizabeth calls Mary, "the mother of my Lord" (ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου, Luke 1:43). The angels also call Jesus "Lord" when announcing His birth to the shepherds in Luke 2:11. Hurtado states that "much more frequently than in other canonical Gospels Luke refers to the earthly Jesus as 'the Lord.'"[10] Luke freely speaks of Jesus as κύριος (cf. Luke 7:13, 19; 10:1, 39, 41; 11:39; 12:42; 13:15; 16:8; 17:5–6; 18:6; 19:8; 22:61; 24:3, 34).

Luke continues his preference for calling Jesus κύριος in his second volume. Witherington notes 104 occurrences of κύριος in Acts, "with at least eighteen of these occurrences referring to God, forty-seven referring to Jesus, four referring to secular masters, owners or rulers, and the remainder referring to either Jesus or God, though in these instances it is not clear who is meant."[11] It is also in Acts that the expression "the Lord Jesus" (ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς) first appears (Acts 1:21).[12] Acts also contains the record of Peter's first sermon (Acts 2:14–36), which cites several OT texts with κύριος in place of Yahweh and applies them to Jesus. As such, it is a prime example of the apostolic practice of applying OT Yahweh texts to Jesus while substituting κύριος for the divine name.

Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993)], 564).

[7] Stanley E. Porter and Bryan R. Dyer, *Origins of New Testament Christology: An Introduction to the Traditions and Titles Applied to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023), 19.

[8] Ben Witherington, III, "Lord," *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments,* ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 669.

[9] Ben Witherington, III, and K. Yamazaki-Ransom, "Lord," *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels,* ed. Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin. 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 531.

[10] Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 345.

[11] Witherington, "Lord," 668.

[12] Witherington and Yamazaki-Ransom, "Lord," 533.

The fact remains that the Tetragrammaton is wholly absent from the NT. If God wanted His name to be remembered, can the NT be contradicting His expressed will in Exodus 3:15? The following discussion of Peter's Pentecost sermon in Acts 2 reveals this not to be the case. The NT writers had a specific theological reason for not using God's name in their writings, even when quoting the OT, and that reason becomes clearer when the divine name is retained in OT translations.

Context and Overview of Acts 2

Peter's sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2:14–36) is a superbly strung necklace of OT pearls that includes Yahweh texts and culminates in the declaration that Jesus is both Lord and Messiah. Peter spoke these words in response to the crowd's reaction to the Holy Spirit filling the apostles. Vlach explains,

> The stimulus for Peter's first speech in Jerusalem after Jesus' ascension involved Jesus' followers being filled with the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:4) and speaking various languages (see Acts 2:5–12). Many in the crowd were amazed, but others mocked the apostles, claiming they were drunk with sweet wine (Acts 2:13). Peter explained that they were not drunk; instead, what occurred was predicted by the prophet Joel (Acts 2:16).[13]

Peter began his sermon by quoting Joel 2:28–32 in order to explain the phenomenon that had just taken place (Acts 2:1–13).[14] Thus the first theme of his sermon is about the coming of the Holy Spirit being an indicator that the day of the Lord is near. By beginning the Joel quotation with "in the last days" (ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις) instead of the LXX's "after these things" (μετὰ ταῦτα), Peter interprets the prophecy to indicate that the arrival of the Holy Spirit was a sign that "the last days" before the day of the Lord had begun.[15] He then ends the quotation with Joel's reference to calling on the name of the Lord (Joel 2:32), thereby introducing the second and main theme of Peter's sermon: an explanation of Jesus.[16] Marshall notes, "This second theme becomes in fact the dominant one in Peter's speech with his identification of the risen and exalted Jesus as the Lord and Messiah through whom salvation is offered to his audience."[17]

In the rest of the sermon, Peter quotes Psalms 16:8–11 (Acts 2:25–28, 31), 132:11 (Acts 2:30), and 110:1 (Acts 2:34–35) in order to show that the resurrection

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[13] Michael J. Vlach, *The Old in the New: Understanding How the New Testament Authors Quoted the Old Testament* (The Woodlands, TX: Kress, 2021), 85.

[14] John Mark Tittsworth, "Luke's Use of the Minor Prophets in Luke-Acts" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 93.

[15] Ibid., 102.

[16] Carl Judson Davis, *The Name and the Way of the Lord: Old Testament Themes, New Testament Christology*, JSNTSup 129 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 124.

[17] I. Howard Marshall, "Acts," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 533.

of Jesus proved that He is both Lord and Messiah,[18] and that Peter's audience must call upon that Lord to be saved (Acts 2:21, 34, 36).[19] Marshall summarizes,

> The sermon thus becomes essentially an explanation of who this "Lord" is. Having noted that Jesus was attested by God through mighty works (echoing Joel 2:30, cited in v. 19), and having mitigated the opposing impression given by his death by insisting that it fell within the plan of God, Peter describes how God raised Jesus from the dead because he could not be held by it. What happened is interpreted by reference to Ps. 16 which, it is argued, cannot apply to David himself because he died (and did not rise); but God had promised a future ruler as a descendant of David (Ps. 132), and so Ps. 16 applies to this ruler. Now Jesus had been raised from the dead, and the Spirit had been poured out by him. It follows that he has been exalted to God's right hand, as prophesied in another psalm (Ps. 110), which again could not be applied to David himself. It follows also that Jesus is now the Lord who grants salvation to all who call upon him.[20]

Peter's Use of Joel 2:31–32 in Acts 2:20–21

The first significant Yahweh text quoted in Peter's sermon is Joel 2:31–32 (MT/LXX 3:4–5). It is not only part of the first and longest OT quotation in Acts (Joel 2:28–32 in Acts 2:17–21),[21] but Joel 2:32 also plays a key role in Paul's argument for the availability of salvation to all peoples (Rom 10:12–13).[22]

Original Context of Joel 2:31–32

Joel first recounted the recent devastation caused by a locust swarm and called Israel to repent before the even more destructive "day of Yahweh" (Joel 1:15). He then followed this up with additional warnings of impending doom (Joel 2:1–11) and God's gracious offer to spare those who repent (Joel 2:12–17). Marshall summarizes the content of Joel 1–2 as follows:

> The context of the prophecy is Joel's summons to the people to true repentance after they have been subjected to an invasion of locusts, a harbinger of worse things to come on "the day of the Lord." Yet the Lord promises to take pity on his people and to restore the land to its former prosperity. Then comes the prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit as part of the events preceding the coming of the day of judgment. In the prophecy the coming of the Spirit is only a part of the event; it is accompanied by wonders in the sky and on the earth.

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[18] Bowman and Komoszewski, *Putting Jesus in His Place*, 160–61.

[19] G. V. Trull, "Peter's Interpretation of Psalm 16:8–11 in Acts 2:25–32," *BSac* 161, no. 644 (2004): 433–34; Tittsworth, "Luke's Use of the Minor Prophets in Luke-Acts," 95.

[20] Marshall, "Acts," 532.

[21] Tittsworth, "Luke's Use of the Minor Prophets in Luke-Acts," 90.

[22] Marshall, "Acts," 536.

> And there will be the opportunity of deliverance for all who call on the name of the Lord before the judgment falls upon them.[23]

The latter part of Joel 2, containing the text under discussion, describes God's gracious acts for the repentant people. Davis summarizes the rest of the book as follows:

> God further promises restoration of the land in 2.19b-27 and that he will pour out his Spirit on all flesh transcending age, sex and class distinctions (2.28–29[3.1–2]). Joel 2.30–31 [3.3–4] points to heavenly harbingers of doom which will proceed the day of the LORD. Yet in the midst of these portents, Joel promises that those who 'call on the name of the LORD' will be saved. Joel 3.1–8[4.1–8] promises the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem while 3.9–11a[4.9–11a] pledges judgment on Tyre and Sidon.[24]

The promise of escape from the destruction of the day of Yahweh for "everyone who calls upon the name of Yahweh" appears "at the tail end of an apocalyptic vision containing God's declaration that he will restore his people ([MT/LXX] 2:13–3:5)."[25]

Meaning and New Testament Application of Joel 2 Expressions

The NT writers quote two important expressions that occur in this part of Joel: (1) "the day of Yahweh" (i.e., "the great and awesome day of Yahweh" in 2:31) and (2) "call on the name of Yahweh" (2:32). Regarding the former expression, Fee states,

> One of the ways the prophetic tradition spoke of God's eschatological future was with the expression "the Day of the Lord," a "day" that included both divine judgment and salvation. Indeed, in this tradition a day of the Lord that held promise for a bright future was seen first as a day of impending doom.[26]

Although the OT prophets consistently used "the day of Yahweh" to refer to "a time of God's own special action of deliverance or judgment,"[27] the NT authors applied the phrase specifically to the future return of Jesus. When Peter quotes Joel 2:31 in Acts 2:20, he makes "the day of the Lord" an expression of "Jesus' eschatological appearance in glory."[28] Although Peter quotes all of Joel 2:28–32 in his Pentecost sermon with the introduction, "this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel" (2:16), he later speaks of "the day of the Lord" as a future event (2 Pet 3:10). This

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[23] Marshall, "Acts," 533.

[24] Davis, *The Name and the Way of the Lord*, 108.

[25] C. Kavin Rowe, "Romans 10:13: What Is the Name of the Lord?" *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 22, no. 1 (2000): 153.

[26] Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 568–69.

[27] Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 181.

[28] Hurtado, 179.

indicates that he considered that day to be yet future and thus not all of the Joel text he quotes in Acts 2 was fulfilled at that time.[29]

Paul also considered "the day of the Lord" to refer to the eschatological return of Jesus. This can be seen in how he also calls that day "the day of Christ" (Phil 1:10; 2:16), "the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil 1:6), and "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:8).[30] Even when using the original phrase, "the context makes it clear that the *kyrios* whose 'day' is coming is Christ" (cf. 1 Cor 5:5; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Thess 2:2).[31]

As for the expression "call on the name of Yahweh," Hurtado considers it to be "a frequent biblical expression for worship of *Yahweh*, and it usually involved sacrifice in the sacred precincts of a sanctuary/temple."[32] The phrase basically means "to invoke God by his name Yahweh"[33] and is especially associated with prayer, so much so that the LXX renders this phrase using the verb ἐπικαλέω, which was "well entrenched in Greek thought for invoking God in prayer."[34] This expression also "involves cultic activity such as altar building and sacrifice, prayer and petitions, worship and praise."[35] Davis cites the association of this phrase with altar building in Genesis 12:8, 13:4, and 26:5 to posit that "the biblical narrative associates this phrase with the heart of Israel's religion."[36] Passages like Isaiah 41:25, Jeremiah 10:25, and Psalm 79:6 further suggest that calling on the name of Yahweh was "an activity indicative of one's inclusion in the people of God."[37] God's people are distinguished as those people who call on His name.[38]

Drawing on this OT tradition, the NT writers used this expression with reference to Jesus as the Lord whom one calls on. In Acts 2, Luke records Peter associating "calling on the name of the Lord" with knowing that Jesus "is both Lord and Christ" (2:36) and repenting of one's sins (2:38). As "calling on the name of Yahweh" had indicated that someone was a member of God's people in the OT, calling on the name of Jesus became distinctive of Christians. For example, Ananias refers to Christians as "all who call on your name" when speaking to Jesus about Paul (Acts 9:14, cf. 9:17). Paul also mentions calling on Jesus' name when recounting his own conversion (Acts 22:16).[39] Paul even refers to the Christian community as "all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:2).

Regarding the invocation of Jesus in Acts, Hurtado states, "There can be no doubt that this phrase was adopted to refer to the specific invocation of the name of Jesus, both in corporate worship and in the wider devotional pattern of Christian

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[29] Vlach, *The Old in the New*, 86.

[30] Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 46; Capes, *The Divine Christ*, 65–66.

[31] Hurtado, "Lord," 564.

[32] Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 142.

[33] Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 25.

[34] David B. Capes, "Yhwh and His Messiah: Pauline Exegesis and the Divine Christ," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 16, 1 (1994): 133.

[35] Capes, *The Divine Christ*, 116. For examples of worship acts associated with this expression, Capes cites Gen 12:8; 13:4; 26:25; 1 Kings 18:24–26; Isa 12:4–6; Psalms 105:1; 116:4, 13, 17. See also Davis, *The Name and the Way of the Lord*, 105–106.

[36] Davis, *The Name and the Way of the Lord*, 104.

[37] Davis, 106.

[38] Capes, *The Divine Christ*, 116.

[39] Davis, *The Name and the Way of the Lord*, 128–29.

believers (e.g., baptism, exorcism, healing), as the subsequent chapters of Acts show."[40] Yeago summarizes the Christian application of "calling on the name" as follows:

> The Trinitarian faith was embraced in the *practice* of the church already in the very earliest days of the Christian movement when Christians—and Jewish Christians at that—began to *call on the name of Jesus* in worship—an astonishing thing for *any* group of Jews to do. There is every reason to believe that the earliest Christians were vigorous Jewish monotheists determined to worship no God but YHWH. Nevertheless, they began to focus their worship of the God of Israel on the figure of Jesus from a very early date—indeed, so far as anyone can tell, from the very beginning. They solemnly invoked Jesus' name, addressed praise and petition and acclamation to him, and appealed to him as *mareh* or *kurios*, thus associating him with the holy name of YHWH.[41]

Peter's Application of Joel 2:32

In Peter's quotation of Joel 2:32, as well as in the LXX and Paul's use of the text in Romans 10:13, the phrase "the name of the Lord" (τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου) is an exception to the rules of Greek grammar. The lack of an article with κυρίου indicates that the word is functioning as a name—a substitute for the Tetragrammaton in the LXX. Bauckham explains:

> When *kurios* was written in manuscripts as the substitute for YHWH, it was usually differentiated from other uses of *kurios* by its lack of the article, indicating that it was being used as a proper name. In a phrase such as 'the name of the Lord,' this is particularly clear, since its Greek form in the Septuagint (*to onoma kuriou*) breaks the normal rule that in such a construction either both nouns should have the article or both nouns should lack it.[42]

This special use of κύριος without the definite article to replace the divine name is remarkably consistent in the LXX, especially in the Pentateuch. Hurtado states:

> This clear dominance of the anarthrous *kyrios* as Greek equivalent of YHWH, a dominance exhibited already in the Pentateuch (which were the earliest Hebrew Scriptures translated), suggests strongly that it had become a widely-used oral substitute for YHWH among Greek-speaking Jews. I.e., the anarthrous *kyrios* served as virtually a proper name for God, a reverential substitute for YHWH.[43]

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[40] Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 182.

[41] David. S. Yeago, "The New Testament and the Nicene Dogma: A Contribution to the Recovery of Theological Exegesis," *STRev* 45, no. 4 (Michaelmas 2002): 373. Emphasis in original.

[42] Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 190.

[43] Larry Hurtado, "YHWH in the Septuagint," *Larry Hurtado's Blog: Comments on the New Testament and Early Christianity (and related matters)*, August 22, 2014, accessed December 6, 2023, https://larryhurtado.wordpress.com/2014/08/22/yhwh-in-the-septuagint/

Since many among the first audience to hear or read the NT were either Jewish or had been exposed to the Jewish Scriptures, they would have recognized that the divine name was being referred to with anarthrous κύριος even though κύριος itself is not technically a name.[44] Davis states with regard to the NT use of Isaiah 40:3 and Joel 2:32, "Jews of the day would understand it as the spoken replacement of God's proper name."[45] By quoting this Yahweh text and emphasizing that Jesus is Lord at the end of his sermon, "Peter makes the explicit connection between YHWH and Jesus when he juxtaposed the name of YHWH and the name of Jesus in whose name alone there is salvation."[46] Unlike the Jews of Peter's day, who would easily have heard this connection, it is not so clear today with the modern English usage of "the LORD" in Bible translations, especially when read aloud, which leaves no audible difference between "the Lord" and "the LORD." The presence of the English definite article also makes the expression read like a title instead of a name.

Peter, and later Paul, quoted the reference to calling on the name of Yahweh in Joel 2:32 and equated it with calling on Jesus for salvation. This means that, "Jesus is integral to and shares in the identity of the one and only God, who identified himself by name to Israel as YHWH."[47] Bauckham further states, "Jesus himself is the eschatological manifestation of YHWH's unique identity to the whole world, so that those who call on *Jesus'* name and confess *Jesus* as Lord are acknowledging YHWH the God of Israel to be the one and only true God."[48] The fact that Peter used the end of his Joel 2 quotation to transition to an explanation of Jesus that began in the next verse makes clear that he was equating both occurrences of "Lord" in Joel 2:31–32 with Jesus.

Peter's Use of Psalms 16:8–11 and 132:11 in Acts 2:22–32

After transitioning from talking about the arrival of the Holy Spirit to explaining who Jesus is, Peter applied parts of Psalms 16 and 132 to Jesus. Although the passages he quoted are not technically Yahweh texts because the Hebrew for those verses lacks the Tetragrammaton, Yahweh is clearly the one being addressed in Psalm 16:8–11 and the one speaking in Psalm 132:11.

Peter recognized that when David wrote Psalm 16, he was speaking prophetically of the Messiah (Acts 2:25).[49] Therefore, all first-person references and

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[44] The Jews even made a distinction in Hebrew pronunciation when reading אדני in place of the divine name and when reading an original occurrence of the title אדני. Moule explains, "When it appears that the first person singular suffix in the form 'my lords', then the Massoretic pointing always indicates the sacred Name by using the pausal form with a *long* 'a' (*qāmeṣ*) [אָדֹנָי] instead of the normal *short* 'a' (*pathaḥ*) [אֲדֹנַי]. Thus 'my lords', when a human lord is meant will be *ʾadōnāy*, but when the word represents the sacred Name it will be *ʾadōnāy*" (C. F. D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977], 38–39).

[45] Davis, *The Name and the Way of the Lord*, 135.

[46] Kolakunnail Alias Eldhose, "Trinitarian Interpretation in Light of the Identity of YHWH as the Triune God" (Ph.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2017), 133.

[47] Daniel Block, "Who do Commentators say 'the Lord' is? The Scandalous Rock of Romans 10:13," in *On the Writing of New Testament Commentaries: Festschrift for Grant R. Osborne on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2013), 190n59.

[48] Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 193. Emphasis in original.

[49] Vlach, *The Old in the New*, 192; Davis, *The Name and the Way of the Lord*, 124.

the phrase "Holy One" in Peter's quotation of Psalm 16 refer to Messiah Jesus, but all second-person references and "the Lord" (יהוה translated as τὸν κύριον in the LXX and Acts 2:25) refer to Yahweh. In contrast to Peter's earlier quotation from Joel 2, which designated Jesus as Yahweh, here Peter quotes a passage that makes Jesus distinct from Yahweh. Peter then implied in Acts 2:29 that David must have been speaking of the Messiah because David's body decayed, as evidenced by the existence of his tomb centuries after his death.[50] What Peter implies in verse 29 he states explicitly in verses 30–32: Jesus is Yahweh's Holy One whom Yahweh raised from the dead before his body had time to decay in the grave.[51] Yahweh did not allow him to remain dead ("abandon…in Hades"), but brought him back to life.

Peter's allusion to Psalm 132:11 in Acts 2:30 further distinguished Jesus from Yahweh by designating him as the descendant of David whom God had promised to set on David's throne. This passage refers to the Davidic Covenant and Peter recognized that Jesus is the promised Davidic king who fulfills it.

Peter's Use of Psalm 110:1 in Acts 2:34–35

After stating in Acts 2:33 that Jesus' resurrection resulted in both His exaltation to God's right hand and His receiving and giving of the Holy Spirit to His people, which took place earlier in Acts 2, Peter then applies Psalm 110:1 to Jesus. This psalm stands out as the most quoted or alluded to OT text in the NT and its first verse is the most quoted OT verse.[52] Edwards finds this text referred to thirty-three times in the NT,[53] twenty-one of which are the first verse.[54] Bauckham notes that "the participation of Jesus in the unique divine sovereignty was understood primarily by reference to one key Old Testament text (Ps 110:1) and other texts brought into exegetical relationship with it."[55] Only four of those quotations contain the first part of the verse, which is the part that originally contained the Tetragrammaton and qualifies this text as a Yahweh text.[56] This part of Psalm 110:1 is quoted by Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42) and later used by Peter in his sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2:34), making it an important text about Jesus for the Gospel writers and early church.[57] Capes notes,

> In particular, Jesus's quotation of Ps 110:1 proves instructive.… The question posed and explanation offered by Jesus imply an indirect messianic claim. The frequent Christological use of Ps 110 by NT writers demonstrates they interpret

[50] F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 260.

[51] Marshall, "Acts," 539.

[52] Vlach, *The Old in the New*, 87.

[53] James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 376n58.

[54] Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 22.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Although the author of Hebrews quotes Psalm 110:1 several times, those quotations do not contain the part of the verse that has the Tetragrammaton in the Hebrew. Therefore, those quotations in Hebrews are not Yahweh texts and will not be addressed here.

[57] Vlach, *The Old in the New*, 176; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, WBC 33B (Dallas: Word Incorporated, 1993), 650; Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 500.

> this psalm as describing something of Jesus's messianic and transcendent significance (e.g., Acts 2:34; 1 Cor 15:25; Heb 1:3).[58]

Original Context of Psalm 110

The superscription of Psalm 110 designates David as its author and Jesus confirmed this when he introduced the quotation (Matt 22:43; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42).[59] This psalm has been classified as a "royal psalm" that describes the coronation of a Davidic king or even David specifically crowning his son Solomon.[60] However, the lofty language of the psalm has strong messianic implications. For example, David calls this future king his "master" (אדני), thereby designating this individual to be his superior.[61] Lane notes, "The point made is that David himself distinguished between his earthly, political sovereignty and the higher level of sovereignty assigned to the Messiah. The Messiah is not only 'son of David;' he is also, and especially, his Lord."[62] In the same verse, David then records Yahweh telling this king to sit in the authoritative position at His right hand. Regarding the messianic nature of this psalm, Blomberg writes,

> No king of Israel was ever so close to God that he could normally be described, even metaphorically, as sitting at God's right hand. … This "king" embodies an eternal priesthood (110:4), whereas legitimate Israelite kings in the line of David came from the tribe of Judah, not the tribe of Levi, from whom priests had to descend. And in 110:5 Yahweh is said to be at this king's right hand, rather than vice versa, as if God and king were interchangeable! Finally, this monarch will do what God alone is described elsewhere as doing: judging the nations and crushing the rulers of the whole earth (110:6).[63]

Vlach summarizes Psalm 110 as follows:

> In Psalm 110, David is given a glimpse into the encounter between the LORD (*Yahweh*) and David's Lord (*Adonai*). The LORD summons David's Lord, the Messiah, to a session at the LORD's right hand in heaven. This session is to occur from a time "until" the LORD makes the enemies of David's Lord (the Messiah) a footstool for His (the Messiah's) feet. This involved a reign from Zion (i.e., Jerusalem) on earth as verse 2 indicates. … According to verse 4, this King is also a priest according to the order of Melchizedek. In sum, David's Lord (the Messiah) will have a session at the right hand of Yahweh in heaven for a time until David's Lord reigns from Jerusalem on earth.[64]

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[58] Capes, *The Divine Christ*, 11.

[59] Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 829.

[60] Mark L. Strauss, *Mark*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 550–51.

[61] R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 487.

[62] William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1974), 437–38.

[63] Craig L. Blomberg, "Matthew," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament,* ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 83.

[64] Vlach, *The Old in the New*, 175–76.

The Synoptic Gospels record Jesus drawing upon such language to imply that He is its messianic fulfillment.

Relating to the topic at hand, the key issue is the opening statement, "An announcement of Yahweh to my master" (נְאֻם יְהוָה לַאדֹנָי), which the LXX and NT translate with forms of κύριος for both "Yahweh" (יְהוָה) and "my lord/master" (לַאדֹנָי). Here Yahweh is distinguished from the Messiah, whom David calls his master. Morris explains,

> *"The Lord"* refers to God himself (the Hebrew is יהוה); the psalm is proceeding to give a divine utterance. When David says that God spoke *"to my Lord,"* he is clearly referring to someone greater than himself (Knox translates, "the Lord said to my Master"), and this is surely the Messiah. David is recording a prophecy of the greatness of his descendant, whom he recognizes as greater than he.[65]

The clear distinction in the Hebrew between the Tetragrammaton and the title "lord/master" became less clear with the Jewish practice of divine name avoidance. Nevertheless, some early NT manuscripts differentiate between the two uses of κύριος by making the first anarthrous to mark it as a proper name, and this is the reading adopted in the standard critical text (NA28). As mentioned earlier, this use of anarthrous κύριος was the primary means the Septuagint translators employed to indicate when they were using κύριος as a substitute for the divine name.

As for the early Jewish interpretation of this text, the association of the Messiah with the line of David was not only rooted in the Hebrew Bible (2 Sam 7:14–17; 23:1–7; Psalms 89:29–37; Isa 9:6–7; 11:1–10; Jer 23:5–8; 30:9; 33:14–18; Ezek 34:23–24; Dan 9:25; Mic 5:2), but can also be found in some Second Temple period Jewish literature (*Ps. Sol*. 17:23, 36; 18:6, 8; 4QFlor 1:11–13; 1QS 9:11; 4 Ezra 12:32).[66] "Son of David" is also the standard title for the Messiah in rabbinic texts.[67] Lane notes, "The Davidic sonship of the Messiah was a scribal tenet firmly grounded in the old prophetic literature."[68] Furthermore, the fact that Jesus referred to Psalm 110 to imply His messianic status to the Pharisees indicates that it must have been considered a messianic text at that time. Edwards states, "That Son of David and Messiah were correlated in the first century is strongly suggested by the fact that every early Christian writer who mentions Psalm 110 interprets it messianically. Jesus' question in [Mark 12:]36 indeed rests on such an assumption."[69]

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[65] Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 566.

[66] David W. Pao and Eckhard J. Schnabel, "Luke," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament,* ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 372; David E. Garland, *Luke*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 815; Strauss, *Mark*, 549; France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 485–86.

[67] Garland, *Luke*, 816; I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Exeter, England: Paternoster Press, 1978), 747.

[68] Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, 435.

[69] Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 375–76.

New Testament Application of Psalm 110:1

As mentioned earlier, the Synoptic Gospels quote Jesus using Psalm 110:1 to teach the Pharisees. The issue that stumped them was not the Davidic lineage of the Messiah, but His heavenly status as the divine Messiah.[70] Porter and Dyer note that Jesus' use of this Psalm text had three implications that kept the Pharisees from answering His question:

> The first is that this quotation from the Psalms depicts the Lord, God in the Old Testament, saying to another Lord that he is to sit as his fellow judge while he conquers and subjects the second Lord's enemies. In other words, the second Lord is depicted as God's equal, sitting at the right hand (the place of judgment) while God exercises his divine prerogatives. The second implication is that, because the Messiah is the Son of David, and this messianic figure of the psalm is placed in the position of equality with God, the Messiah is to be seen as a divine figure. The third implication … is that Jesus clarifies that the Son of David is not an inferior to David (which is indicated by his messianic status as well) but is in fact Lord. What once may have been simply a form of address is now clearly a title of one equal with God—the second Lord equal with the Lord God.[71]

The answer that Jesus implied in questioning the Pharisees about this passage is that "the Messiah is not simply David's son; he is God's Son."[72] Hagner states, "The point of the question addressed to the Pharisees is apparently to elevate the concept of Messiah from that of a special human being to one who uniquely manifests the presence of God—and thus one whom David has also to address as his lord."[73] This connection between the second κύριος and the concept of ruling authority is emphasized by the rest of the quotation. To sit at Yahweh's right hand means that this second κύριος is "the one who participates in the cosmic rule of YHWH."[74] Furthermore, Yahweh putting this individual's enemies under His feet emphasizes their utter subjection to that authority. Morris states,

> The prophecy refers to the Messiah as sitting on the right hand of God, that is, in the highest place of all, in the place where it counts above all. And while he sits there, God himself will defeat all his enemies; that they are to be put under his feet indicates that they are to be thoroughly subjugated to him.[75]

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[70] Blomberg, "Matthew," 83.

[71] Porter and Dyer, *Origins of New Testament Christology*, 9.

[72] Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 377.

[73] Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 651.

[74] Jang Ryul Lee, *Christological Re-reading of the Shema (Deut 6.4) in Mark's Gospel* (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2011), 113.

[75] Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 566.

Osborne concurs,

> If David is indeed the author of the psalm (as the superscription states, and there is no reason to doubt it), then "to my Lord" (τῷ κυρίῳ μου) cannot be David himself but must refer to the Messiah. So the quote establishes two things: the royal glory and power of the Messiah ("sit at my right hand") and the victory of the Messiah over his enemies (as demonstrated in Jesus' victory in the controversy narratives of [Matthew] 21:23–22:46).[76]

Thus Jesus and later Peter cite Psalm 110:1 to declare that Messiah Jesus is the Master (אדני, κύριος), the Sovereign Lord.

Peter's Application of Psalm 110:1

When Peter quotes Psalm 110:1 in his Pentecost sermon (Acts 2:34–35), he uses it with a different emphasis than Jesus did in the Synoptics. While Jesus quoted the text to teach that the Messiah is superior to David and has divine authority, "Peter quoted Psalm 110:1 to show his Jewish audience that Jesus is the resurrected Messiah now at the right hand of God."[77] Peter uses the text to explain "the significance of the resurrection and the exaltation of Jesus as the Lord of all."[78] By connecting the Messiah's authority with Jesus' resurrection, Peter shows that "the resurrection stands as the climactic event that inaugurated Jesus' sovereign reign as the *kyrios.*"[79] Peter's climactic declaration of Jesus being both Lord and Christ in the next verse (Acts 2:36) further emphasizes Jesus' status as the resurrected Master.

Being the most frequently quoted OT verse in the NT, Psalm 110:1 is "*the* main scripture which communicates Jesus' exaltation and participation in the divine cosmic sovereignty."[80] Jesus and Peter use Psalm 110:1 to designate Him as David's master (אדני, κύριος) who sits at the right hand of Yahweh. This text functions as Jesus' self-attestation to being the ultimate Master of all. Osborne concludes,

> Jesus is the Messiah and more; he is the royal Messiah, the Son of David, but he is also the Son of God, David's Lord. This is high Christology and climaxes the section with the nature of this Jesus who has so decimated his opponents on points of law. It constitutes the second time in which he overcomes his "messianic secret" and reveals himself to the public as "Lord" of all.[81]

To summarize, in the second part of Peter's sermon (Acts 2:22–36) he has argued that God raised Jesus from the dead in fulfillment of Psalm 16. In doing so, God exalted Jesus as the promised descendant of David who would fulfill the Davidic

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[76] Osborne, *Matthew*, 829.

[77] Vlach, *The Old in the New*, 176.

[78] Walter L. Liefeld and David W. Pao, "Luke," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Luke–Acts (Revised Edition)*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 302.

[79] Capes, *The Divine Christ*, 49.

[80] Lee, *Christological Re-reading of the Shema (Deut 6.4) in Mark's Gospel*, 113. Emphasis in original.

[81] Osborne, *Matthew*, 826.

Covenant mentioned in Psalm 132:11. Indeed, God exalted Jesus to the point that even the great King David called him "lord/master" in Psalm 110:1. God also gave Jesus authority to send the Holy Spirit to his people at Pentecost. Therefore, Peter concludes, all Israel must know that "God has made Him both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

Throughout his sermon Peter followed the Septuagint practice of using forms of the same term, κύριος, to refer to two concepts: the divine name and the title "the lord/master" (אדני). In the first half of his sermon he designated Jesus as Yahweh, but in the second half he designated Jesus as the Master who is distinct from Yahweh. This ability to use one term to express both truths about Christ may be the primary reason why the NT writers substituted κύριος for the divine name in their writings.

Theological Significance of Peter's Use of κύριος for יהוה in Acts 2

The preceding examination of Peter's use of OT Yahweh texts in his Pentecost sermon has evidenced that the NT writers not only retained the traditional practice of using κύριος for both the divine name and the title "lord/master" when quoting OT Yahweh passages, but also used κύριος in an innovative manner for theological reasons unique to the purposes of the NT—they applied both uses of the term to Jesus.

Peter used a chain of OT quotations in his Pentecost sermon to indicate that through Jesus' incarnation, death, and resurrection, God the Father had designated Jesus as both Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:36). By quoting Yahweh texts, Peter indicated that "Lord" here is Yahweh. However, Peter's follow-up command to the crowd implies that this "Lord" is also the Master to whom one must submit by repenting and being baptized in his name in order to be saved (Acts 2:38). Peter's sermon shows that Jesus is not only the promised Messiah, but also Yahweh and Master.

Peter's sermon shows that the NT writers used the single word κύριος to indicate that Jesus is both Yahweh and Master/Lord/אדני. He is both the Creator Yahweh of texts like Isaiah 40:3 and Joel 2:23, and the Sovereign Messiah whom David calls his "master" in Psalm 110:1. Case explains,

> The LXX's use of *kurios* was paving the way for a seamless, convenient, intelligible way to connect Jesus with Yahweh. … The ability to use the same word seamlessly for Yahweh and Jesus throughout the NT made the overlap natural and more apparent. It facilitated a high Christology, and effortlessly infused the statement "Jesus is Lord" (Rom 10:9) with a double meaning. This double meaning is made possible because *kurios* was doing double-duty as *Lord* and *Yahweh.* The lack of distinction ironically made it easier to distinguish Jesus as the one true God, Yahweh himself.[82]

The Hebrew Bible itself gives precedence for this lexical development. The title-name combination "Lord Yahweh" (אדני יהוה) occurs 292 times in the Hebrew Bible with the vast majority of occurrences in prophetic texts (272 times, including 217 in

[82] Andrew Case, *Pronouncing & Translating the Divine Name: History & Practice* (Independently Published, 2022), 44–45.

Ezekiel). Oswalt notes, "With this use of the term *ʾădōnāy* in conjunction with the divine name, these prophets are witnessing to their conviction that Yahweh is characterized by sovereignty. The "I Am" is indeed lord of the universe."[83] Although God is referred to as "Lord" and Yahweh in different contexts in order to emphasize different aspects of His character, the 292 times the words are paired together give precedent for the NT writers to use κύριος to refer to both at once. There are also passages in which "Lord" is equated with Yahweh (Psalm 110:5).

Peter and the NT writers did not just affirm the historical shift from Yahweh to κύριος in the LXX by retaining it in their OT quotations. They actually capitalized on the dual use of κύριος for Yahweh and "Lord" in order to show that Jesus is both Yahweh and Master. The NT writers could affirm this historical shift from Yahweh to κύριος because of the OT precedent mentioned above. I have shown elsewhere that this dual meaning for κύριος can be seen in various places throughout the NT.[84]

It is important to note that this Christological reason for the NT writers to use κύριος for the divine name does not apply when translating the OT on its own. Just as the Holy Spirit inspired the NT authors to use κύριος for the divine name in the NT, so also did He inspire the OT authors to use Yahweh and "Lord" as separate terms within the OT. If the divine name is retained and made distinct from "Lord" in an OT translation, then readers will more easily be able to see the connection between the name and the title. God ordained for the NT writers to retain the LXX tradition of using κύριος for Yahweh in order to show that Jesus is both the manifestation of Yahweh and the Lord of lords.

[83] John N. Oswalt, "God," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, ed. Mark J. Boda and Gordon J. McConville (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 289.

[84] Aaron Valdizan, "'His Name Is Yahweh': The Importance of Using the Divine Name" (PhD diss., The Master's Seminary, 2024).

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CONVERSATIONS WITH JESUS: JESUS AND SAUL

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Though Jesus has ascended to heaven, Acts makes it clear that He is continuing to build His Church. One narrative that depicts this clearly is Saul's theophanic vision on the road to Damascus. Saul, a murderer, is stopped in his tracks by the Lord of those Saul was seeking to persecute. Saul's encounter with the resurrected Christ puts Saul on his face, so that Jesus may then put Saul on His mission. This arresting narrative teaches the reader that Jesus is sovereign over His Church, that His grace transforms the vilest of sinners, and that His saints belong to Him.

* * * * *

Introduction[1]

The naming of the book of Acts comes directly from the early church.[2] *Praxis apostolon* is the traditional Greek name found in numerous manuscripts for the book of Acts.[3] But in Acts 1:1–2, there is no listed title in the text; Luke rather offers the following introduction:

> The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up *to heaven*, after he had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom he had chosen.

[1] This article is a revised version of the sermon "Jesus and Saul" (www.gracechurch.org/sermons/22308). For more on God's sovereignty over the Church, see Alan J. Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus: Luke's Account of God's Unfolding Plan* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011).

[2] D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 285.

[3] Darrell Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 1.

"Acts" is not a self-given title, as if from the text itself. Rather, the reader must fill in the gap: whose acts are these? In answering this question, the first verse tells its reader that the book of Acts is Luke's second volume, an extension of his Gospel.[4] The book of Acts informs its audience exactly what Luke intended to do when he wrote his Gospel. Luke essentially writes, "In the former account, I made a few lists of all that Jesus *began* to do and teach." Luke's Gospel was just the first stage of Jesus' works and teachings. Therefore, the implication is that the book of Acts is the second stage of Jesus' works—describing the acts of the risen Lord Jesus and what He *continues* to do and teach. Naming the book "The Acts of the Apostles" is actually insufficient in a significant way. These acts are the acts of the Apostles of the resurrected Lord Jesus, the acts of the followers of Jesus Christ. For as the book opens, Jesus ascends to heaven having commissioned His followers to turn the world upside down with the message of the gospel concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.

This opening reveals that the book of Acts is a distinctly Christ-centered book. This is not a book where the reader learns what happens to the Church now that Jesus is gone. Rather, it is exactly the opposite. This book chronicles the unfolding plan of God, the outworking of God's saving purposes.[5] These purposes began with his calling of Israel, and are now centered on the life and ministry of Christ which continues as the Lord builds His Church from above, directs His Church, and enables His people by His Spirit to serve Him and reflect Him in the world. As His death and resurrection are shown with all their glorious implications, local churches are planted and established and built up through the apostolic preaching of the cross. John came baptizing with water for repentance to restore Israel. And now the Spirit of Christ is baptizing to restore humanity and usher in a new chapter of God's kingdom, made visible in the Church. The earliest followers of Jesus take His message in this glorious book around the world, and they promise everyone they encounter the forgiveness of sins for all who would believe in the Messiah and repent of their sins. They proclaim Christ as the Savior of the world. They proclaim His death and His resurrection and the forgiveness of sins, and they see God bless their efforts as he adds to the Church.

This book challenges its readers and reminds them that the earliest Christians were not without their difficulties. It is a book full of conflict between Christians and the world. It shows what Christianity would look like in the world as it works its way around the world. It shows what happens when believers obey Christ's directives as they await His return. It shows Jesus' power to transform lives through His Word, and few encounters evidence that transforming power more than Jesus' conversation with Saul on the road to Damascus.

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[4] Bock notes five links between the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts found in Luke's opening few verses. These links are Luke's reference to a "former account," Theophilus, John the Baptist, the ascension narrative, and the direction given pertaining to the Holy Spirit. See Bock, *Acts*, 51–52.

[5] Three Greek terms unveil this purpose throughout their repetition in the book of Acts: βουλή/βουλεύω, δεῖ, and ὁρίζω. This plan is presented being worked out geographically through both Luke's Gospel and the book of Acts. The Gospel centers on Jesus' journey to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51) and the events Jesus accomplishes there. From Luke, the book of Acts takes the gospel from Jerusalem to Judaea, then to Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8). See Joel B. Green, "Acts of the Apostles," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, eds. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 17.

This conversation with Jesus is not the same as many of the face-to-face encounters with Jesus in the Gospels, but it still features the voice of Jesus and the response of a man. Jesus speaks directly from heaven to an individual on earth. And like so many of Jesus' other conversations, this rebellious sinner is saved. He is converted and commissioned because of the power of Jesus.[6] The book of Acts is the story of Jesus' power as it unfolds in God's plan that began as a rescue mission in creation. And so, I want to highlight the power of Jesus in His conversation with Saul of Tarsus, by examining three segments of this encounter: Saul on his way, Saul on his face, and Saul on his mission.

Saul on His Way

Luke introduces the encounter by setting the context of Saul's ambitions to persecute the followers of Christ, stating, "Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts 9:1). This is a continuation of the narrative, a narrative that is centered not merely on human activity as the Church grows and spreads. Instead, this is a book that is truly centered on the resurrected Christ's activity in His people as His body. This activity even opens the book, as Acts 1:2 remarks, "until the day when He was taken up *to heaven*, after He had by the Holy Spirit, given orders to the apostles, whom He had chosen." The Christocentric nature of this book shows us at the outset that Jesus is the one who is still in command of His army. He is the one who is guiding and directing the affairs of His people, all the more so as He has now ascended. He is not less involved in the ministry of His emissaries. He is still fully involved, and He is wholly sovereign.[7] The reign of God in the story of the entire Bible is continuing in the ministry of Jesus, as He builds His Church from heaven.

Christ's power from heaven is depicted at the outset of the book. Acts 1:22 says, "Beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these *must* become a witness with us of His resurrection." The first chapter that introduces the book is framed with the ascension of Christ, reminding the reader that Jesus is at the right hand of God the Father.[8] Then when the reader arrives at 2:24, it says, "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power," later quoting David, "I saw the Lord always in my presence, for He is at my right hand so that I will not be

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[6] While some suggest that Paul is commissioned rather than converted (e.g., Krister Stendahl, "Call Rather than Conversion," in *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976], 7–10), Witherup shows that this account possesses features of both conversion to worship Jesus as Lord, and a commission to bring the gospel unto the Gentiles. See Ronald D. Witherup, "Functional Redundancy in the Acts of the Apostles: A Case Study," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 15, no. 48 (Oct 1992), 67; and Philip H. Kern, "Paul's Conversion and Luke's portrayal of character in Acts 8–10," *Tyndale Bulletin* 54, no. 2 (2003): 63–80; Graham H. Twelftree, *Paul and the Miraculous: A Historical Reconstruction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 166–70.

[7] Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 29–37.

[8] As is frequently noted, only Luke's Gospel includes an ascension narrative, which is recapitulated in the opening of Acts. Beyond providing a bridge between Luke's Gospel and the book of Acts, this repeated narrative emphasizes to Theophilus and any reader that Jesus, though not physically present on earth, is still sovereignly carrying out His plan through the Holy Spirit. See John F. Maile, "The Ascension in Luke-Acts," *Tyndale Bulletin* 37 (1986): 29–30, 45.

shaken." The whole paradigm of the book of Acts is that Christ is the Davidic Messiah.[9] He is at the right hand of God "and upholds all things by the word of His power" (Heb 1:3; 8:1). Christ is at the center of this narrative. His voice speaks from the clouds like God's voice did so many times in the Old Testament. He is fully present and the story is fully centered on the work, activity, and will of Jesus.

Not only is Jesus commanding His power from heaven to build His church; He is also pouring out His Spirit on His people. Peter preaches from the book of Joel stating, "'It shall be in the last days,' God says, 'that I will pour forth my Spirit on all mankind, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy'" (Acts 2:17). Then in verse 33, he says, "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear." It is for this reason, that later in the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ (Acts 16:7). So in Peter's preaching about the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the culpability of all those who have yet to confess Him by faith, Luke shows both the early Christians and their enemies that Jesus' Spirit is what is moving this whole narrative along. The Holy Spirit is Christ's Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus, and the Church of Jesus is being built as Jesus pours out His Spirit and fills His people and empowers them for service.

However, Jesus is on display not only in His power at God's right hand or in His giving of the Spirit, but also in His adding to the church.[10] Acts 2:47 declares that "the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved." Luke is not merely telling us that *God* was adding Christians to the Church. He intentionally says that "the Lord" was adding to the Church. This is the title that Peter has just preached about in verse 39: "As many as the Lord our God will call to Himself," making the title "the Lord" synonymous with Jesus Christ (cf. 2:36).[11] When the apostles are baptizing in His name, the earliest Christians are being reminded that it is Jesus who is driving every activity with His people. It is Jesus who is in control of His body, His messengers, the Church. It is Jesus who pours out His Spirit. It is Jesus who is adding to the Church. Thus Peter and the apostles exclaim in Acts 5:32, "And we are witnesses of these things, and *so is* the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him." This witness that they are attesting to is the same witness that is granting forgiveness in verse 31, "He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand, as a Prince and a Savior to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

The ministry and work of Jesus is at the forefront of this entire book. And the earliest Christians are beginning to grow in numbers because of the power of the

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[9] The apostles frequently emphasized that Jesus is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament. See Michael Bird, "Jesus is the 'Messiah of God': Messianic Proclamation in Luke-Acts," *The Reformed Theological Review* 66, no. 2 (Aug 2007): 76–80.

[10] See Craig S. Keener, "The Spirit and the Mission of the Church in Acts 1–2," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 62, no. 1 (2019): 38–42.

[11] Three times prior to Acts 2, Jesus' name is paired with κύριος (Acts 1:6, 21, 22). In 2:17–21, Luke records Peter's sermon on Pentecost and quotes Joel 2:28–32, in which the divine name Yahweh appears in Joel 2:31 and 32 and is then translated as κύριος in Acts 2:20–21. Then, when Peter concludes his sermon, he proclaims Jesus' Lordship by virtue of the resurrection (2:36), assuring those who repent and are baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ" that they will receive the forgiveness of sins. The shift from Lord (Yahweh) to Jesus Christ asserts not only Christ's Lordship but also His deity. See Eckhard Schnabel, *Acts*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 166.

Spirit and the ministry of the Word being preached by the apostles. God raises up bold men like Stephen, and Stephen becomes a preacher and the first martyr of the church. Yet at the end of chapter seven, we first meet this young man named Saul: "When they had driven [Stephen] out of the city, they *began* stoning *him*, and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul" (7:58). Saul was a Roman citizen, educated in the finest institutions in a secular sense. But he was also a Jewish man, a Pharisee, one of the fastidious religious leaders of his day, and he was educated by the Pharisee of Pharisees, Gamaliel (Acts 22:3; 23:6; 26:5; Phil 3:4–6). He was taught both in great secular learning, and he was taught in deep religious devotion. God was raising up this young man, giving him a premier education, preparing him to be one who would be able to accomplish things that others would be unable to accomplish, to go to places where others would be unable to go. However, at this time, because of his exacting devotion to Judaism, he was equally devoted to the destruction of this new sect of Judaism that were the followers of this so-called Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. Acts 8:1 says, "Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him [Stephen] to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles." Saul was not only supporting but also orchestrating this wave of persecution against the early church (cf. Acts 9:1–2). As some devout men buried Stephen and made loud lamentation over him, Saul was ravaging the church, entering house after house, dragging off men and women to imprisonment. The earliest Christians—with their small movement on the massive sea that was Rome, set against the ancient historic religion that was Judaism—immediately encountered intense religious persecution. It is in the midst of this onslaught of persecution, led by Saul, that we find Saul in Acts 9:1.

Describing this context of persecution and its leader, Luke writes: "Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord went to the high priest. And he asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them down to Jerusalem" (Acts 9:1–2). Saul's murderous threats continue after his participation in the stoning of Stephen, after his persecution of these Christians and their arrest (cf. 7:54–8:1). Saul was discontent with the partial elimination of the disciples of the Lord. He was so zealous, so devoted to Judaism, and so serious about the error that he perceived these followers of Jesus to be involved in that he asked for a special mission from the high priest. He requested letters from the high priest to go to the synagogues of Damascus as a stamp of approval to take his efforts in persecution on the road and continue the work he had already begun in arresting followers of Jesus. He believed they were following a lie, that they were a false religion. Because of his devotion to Yahweh (from his perspective; cf. Rom 10:2), he wanted to be fastidious in his commitment to stamping this sect of Judaism out, to ensure no more Jews would be deceived.[12] As hundreds upon hundreds were converted to become disciples of Christ (e.g., Acts 2:41), Saul's zeal became all the more resolute.

[12] Early Christianity was perceived to be a sect of Judaism, not a separate religion. First, several times in the book of Acts a dispute arises between Paul and the Jews, and the dispute is perceived to take place *within* one group (e.g., Acts 18:15). Second, history suggests that Claudius's expulsion of both Jews

Though the believers were following Christ, they were not yet identified as Christians. Rather, Acts 9:2 reads, "If he [Paul] found any belonging to the Way." This phrase, "the Way," occurs five times in the book of Acts describing the group of followers of Christ, and this was their self-given designation.[13] Though most today refer to themselves as "Christians," in the New Testament this was not the ordinary term. The word "Christian" is used in the New Testament only three times.[14] It was likely a pejorative term, a slur or an insult that they were "little Christ people." However, this was not the name Christians took on for themselves. Instead, they called themselves as those belonging to the Way. This was what Saul was looking for—people devoted to the Way.

It seems that Saul would have known what the Christians meant by this identification. He would have been a contemporary of Jesus, as Jesus was just a few years older than him. Though this is conjecture, Saul's religious training would likely have acquainted him with Jesus' ministry when it was at the swell of its popularity. Certainly, many people in Israel had heard about the miracles and teachings of Jesus. Though we do not have any evidence of Saul ever encountering Jesus in His earthly ministry, it is nevertheless reasonable to surmise that he would have known of Jesus' ministry before the church was launched, as recorded in the book of Acts. He presumably would have known that Jesus said to His followers and to the crowds in John 14:6, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Arguably, Jesus' statement in this verse contributed to the Christians calling themselves followers of the Way, the exclusive claims of Jesus to be the way to God. When Apollos appears on the scene in Acts 18:23–28, Aquila and Priscilla pull him aside to accurately explain the way to him individually. In 2 Peter 2:2, Peter says that there is "the way of truth," a synonymous way of talking about following Jesus. In Hebrews 10, referring to the cross, the author says there is "a new and living way" (10:20). So the early Christians used this kind of verbiage to identify themselves as followers of Jesus, followers of His way.[15] Such nomenclature would have been infuriating to Saul because of his religious devotion to the Old Covenant, the Torah, the teaching of Moses, the prophets.

Saul could not stand it and found it to be blasphemous. The Way of Jesus was not the way of Paul. It was not the way of his training and his religious devotion. It was not the way in his mind of the prophets of old. So, he sought to go to Damascus to stop the way of these believers. As Saul was on his way, he followed in the footsteps of some other biblical characters who thought they were serving God. Consider Balaam who intended to go and curse God's people, but he blessed them

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and Jewish-Christians from Rome made no distinction between the two groups. See F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (New York: Doubleday, 1969), 297; and Acts 18:2.

[13] See also Acts 19:9, 23; 24:14, 22; and Bruce, *New Testament History*, 213.

[14] See Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet 4:16. Josephus uses the term as a descriptor of the followers of Jesus, writing "Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man…He was [the] Christ…those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day." Josephus, *Antiquities 18.3.3*, in *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*, trans. William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), 480.

[15] See Wilhelm Michaelis, "Ὁδός, Ὁδηγός, Ὁδηγέω, Μεθοδία, Εἴσοδος, Ἔξοδος, Διέξοδος, Εὐοδόω," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* eds. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 5:88–89.

instead (Num 22–24). Likewise, Saul journeyed to Damascus, intending to arrest and to bind the followers of the Way. Bind (δέω) is the word used in Acts 9:2 to tie them up and drag them to Jerusalem.[16] He would not complain if some of them were killed because in his view they were blasphemers, worthy of capital punishment.

After joining the Way to serve Christ, Paul describes his former devotion to Pharisaical Judaism as sheer loss. He writes, "More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ" (Phil 3:8). Reflecting on his life before he was a follower of the Way, and right before he pens that famous line about the surpassing value of knowing Christ, Paul writes, "we are the *true* circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the Law, a Pharisee, as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless" (Phil 3:3–6).

Paul devoted his former strength to religious zeal, which he expressed in the persecution of the church. Having been highly educated both in the Roman world and in the Jewish world, having risen the ranks, and having been taught and mentored by some of the greatest teachers in Judaism, Saul was now given authority by the synagogues to stamp out this false teaching, and he was on his way. As he makes his journey with passion and fervor, he is suddenly interrupted. Luke writes in 9:3: "As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus. And suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him."

The religious Jews often meditated on theophanies, the appearances of God, in the Old Testament. Perhaps the most studied of all the theophanies, and the most intense, is Ezekiel's vision of God in Ezekiel 1. Ezekiel's vision of God with a throne, and angelic creatures moving in all directions is brilliant and dazzling. It is one of the lengthiest and most descriptive of all the visions of God, except for the scenes we find in the book of Revelation. But in the Old Testament, there is none on the same level as Ezekiel.

Several scholars suggest that Ezekiel's vision was almost a paradigm among the most fastidious Jews.[17] Such Jews likely longed for a similar experience to Ezekiel, because the Jews at this time were in a very similar situation to him. Deprived of their national sovereignty like the Jews in exile under Babylon, they were under the thumb of Rome. They longed for Yahweh to free them and to restore them to their rightful place. The reader can only speculate what Saul was thinking as he was on a long journey on the back of a horse, with the bright sunlight before him. Maybe he was praying that God would reveal Himself to Israel once again. Then, as he was approaching Damascus, "suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him" (Acts 9:3). As Saul is on his way to carry out persecution, he experiences a blinding light

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[16] That δέω is often associated with imprisonment likely hints at Saul's ultimate goal in this persecution. Friedrich Büchsel, "δέω" in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* eds. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 2:60–61.

[17] Joseph Dan, *Jewish Mysticism: Late Antiquity* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1998), xvii–xviii, 33–36; Ben Zion Bokser, *The Jewish Mystical Tradition* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1993), 48–49; Dale C. Allison, Jr., "Acts 9:1–9, 22:6–11, 26:12–18: Paul and Ezekiel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 135, no. 4 (2016): 825, fn. 81.

that evidently accompanied the visions of God in the Old Testament. Imagine what his initial thoughts would have been. Euphoria? Fear? Vindication? However, what Saul was about to experience was far different than what he would have ever expected. Saul on his way quickly becomes Saul on his face.

Saul on His Face

Describing Saul's response to this bright light, Luke states in Acts 9:4–7 that Saul falls to the ground, undergoing a similar response to others who also experienced such divine visions.[18] In almost every theophanic vision, the first instinct of the person who encounters God is to fall on the ground. This is also the same response of many who recognize the deity of Christ in the Gospels. Falling on the ground is precisely what Saul does when this light blinds him from heaven and flashes around him. He falls on the ground, and he hears a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul" (Acts 9:4). This repetition of his name would have also been familiar to a man thoroughly trained in the Old Testament. Often, in God's direct address to his servants, He repeated their name. When the Angel of Yahweh spoke to Abraham, he said "Abraham, Abraham" (Gen 22:11). When God addressed Moses at the burning bush, He called out "Moses, Moses" (Exod 3:4). When Samuel was in the priest's house, God called, "Samuel, Samuel" (1 Sam 3:10).[19] As Saul was on his way to Damascus, the voice of God thundered, "Saul, Saul," underlining his name and captivating his attention. This is not just a bright and blinding light. This is truly a theophanic vision. This is the voice of God Himself, revealed from heaven above. He hears his name, "Saul, Saul," as he is personally being called by Yahweh. This murderer who was on his way to persecute the Christians of Damascus is now on his face in the middle of the desert.

Yet this vision is far from what Saul had expected. Immediately, Saul is asked, "Why are you persecuting Me?" (Acts 9:4). The Christian reader, who is a beneficiary of Paul's writings, may miss the jarring nature of this question. Saul was persecuting "cultish" followers of this offshoot of Judaism. He knew exactly whom he was going after and esteemed himself righteous in doing so. But what God says to him is, "Why are you persecuting Me?" Saul had no intention of persecuting God. He would not dare. He was persecuting Christians. So he has one question in response, as he lies face down in the sand: "Who are you, Lord?" (9:5) Saul's usage of "Lord" in this question is the right thing to say. Jesus' Lordship appears all throughout the book of Acts as Christ's disciples go throughout the world

[18] This response further connects Paul's sight of Christ to Ezekiel's sight of the glory of God in Ezekiel 1. For a fuller treatment of the similarities between these two visions, see Abner Chou, *I Saw the Lord: A Biblical Theology of Vision* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 150–51.

[19] Each of these visions includes a clear demonstration of another person in the Godhead, often referred to as the pre-incarnate Son. Genesis 22 depicts the Angel of Yahweh as the one speaking to Abraham, a figure often associated with Yahweh Himself (cf. Lev 11:45; Judg 2:1). Exodus 3 depicts both the Angel of Yahweh and Yahweh Himself as present (Exod 3:2, 4). And 1 Samuel clearly states that Yahweh has manifested Himself physically as "He came and stood" (1 Sam 3:10). It seems as if in each case, the Second Person of the Godhead is directly involved in these divine communications to man, and in Paul's situation, the divine word is delivered by the incarnate Word, the resurrected Christ; Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 202–203.

proclaiming Jesus as Lord.[20] But Saul does not know the Lord at this point. He is asking this divine voice to identify himself to Saul. The answer he hears in response bears the words that would make him shake and shudder: "I am Jesus" (9:5). Consider the significance of "I AM" (cf. Exod 3:14–15). Paul must have thought he could be consumed at any moment, because this is the very presence of Yahweh (cf. Judg 13:22). But God says, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting." The followers of the way whom Paul persecuted were the true followers of Yahweh, and surely now Paul began to realize just what he had been doing.

The murderer is stopped cold in his tracks by the murdered one. Everything is recalibrated in Saul's mind in this moment as he realizes that this divine vision is indeed a divine vision of the I AM, the self-existent one (cf. John 12:41 and Isa 6:5).[21] This divine God identifies himself as Jesus. With this vision, Paul realizes he is not being ministered to or encouraged in his work. He is being opposed by God (cf. Num 22:22ff; Jas 4:6). Possibly Saul's biggest concern with the Christian movement was their blasphemy because they insisted that Jesus was God. But now he is on his face, halted by the One he thought was dead.

The question Jesus then asks Saul is distinctly appropriate: "Why are you persecuting me?" Who has likely uttered the same question thus far in the book of Acts? Who has cried out that question in biblical revelation? Likely, that question would have been on the lips of all the persecuted who were God's people. Israel would have asked that kind of question to their Egyptian task masters: "Why are you persecuting me?" This question, "Why are you persecuting me," would have fueled their cries as they were removed forcibly 500 miles from their homes during the Babylonian invasion and captivity. As children, women, and families were murdered or forced into exile, they would have constantly been asking this question: "Why are you persecuting me?"

In their more recent history, the Jewish people would have wailed along with the bereft mothers when Herod killed their innocent babies trying to stamp out the Messiah on behalf of Rome. Even in the early church, the Christians cried out under persecution to God. In Acts 4:29, the followers of Christ pray to God to deliver them from the threats of their persecutors. Surely, these Christians contemplated the threats of Paul, which Saul was breathing out against them regularly (cf. Acts 9:1). After Saul encountered Christ and was blinded, the Lord appeared to Ananias and instructed him to find Saul and lay his hands on him so that he could once again see, but Ananias resisted and said: "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name" (cf. 9:13–14). Thus, as the disciples gathered together in prayer, no doubt they thought of Saul as they lamented, "why is he persecuting me?" But now this question finds a place in the mouth of the Lord. Jesus inquires of Saul why he is persecuting Him.

However, Saul still does not know the Lord, as he replies with his own query exposing his confusion: "Who are You Lord?" (9:5). So Jesus responds definitively:

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[20] David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 58.

[21] See Timothy J. Ralston, "The Theological Significance of Paul's Conversion," *Bibliotheca* Sacra 147, no. 586 (Apr–Jun 1990): 210–12.

"I am Jesus whom you are persecuting." This encounter with Jesus affects Saul immensely, so much so that he repeats the account two additional times in the book of Acts (Acts 22, 26).[22] Thus, from Saul on his way, we witness Saul on his face. But after the dust of the Damascus Road, we see a third segment: Saul on His mission.

Saul on His Mission

At this point, Saul is converted and commissioned. At the beginning of Acts 9, he was a man under authority with letters from the synagogues to persecute believers in Jesus. But immediately upon his conversion, he sought not the murder of Jesus' followers but their instruction. He is commanded to rise up and proceed to the city, and rather than carrying out his original mission against Jesus' followers, he would be given a new mission by Jesus' followers to preach the name of Christ. Thus Christ commands him: "Get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do" (Acts 9:6). The word "get up" is used in other passages in the Gospels by Jesus speaking to those who could not walk. When Jesus commands someone to get up, they do not have other options. They get up. That is exactly what Saul does.

On account of this encounter with Christ, Saul's life had been radically transformed. He began on one mission, that of the Pharisees, but he was compelled to continue on another mission, that of the Lord Jesus. He had been on his way to arrest the followers of Jesus, but he was himself arrested by Jesus. He had intended to bind Jesus' followers and lead them by the hand to Jerusalem. Instead, being blinded by the vision of Christ, he was led by the hand to Jesus' followers to restore his sight. In capturing the captor, Jesus demonstrated His absolute authority over the hearts of men, even the worst of sinners (cf. Matt 9:12; Luke 19:10).

Saul of Tarsus, the biggest threat the early church had faced, was now on a mission to proclaim the faith he once determined to destroy. The greatest human adversary the early Christians had faced was going to become their most prolific advocate, all because of the grace of God that is in Jesus. This grace of God that Saul encountered on the road to Damascus would become the theme of his ministry for the duration of his life. But at the end of his life, this same man, a missionary called the Apostle Paul, would stand to await his trial (cf. Acts 25:12). While he had previously sought to put to death the followers of Christ, he himself would be put to death, at the edge of a Roman sword, for following Christ. But he would not die until he would fulfill God's purpose for his life, as he declared in 2 Timothy 4:6–8:

> For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

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[22] For comparative studies of the different accounts, see David Michael Stanley, "Paul's Conversion in Acts," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (Jul 1953): 315–38; Charles W. Hedrick, "Paul's Conversion/Call: A Comparative Analysis of the Three Reports," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 100, no. 3 (Sep 1981): 415–32; Dennis Hamm, "Paul's Blindness and Its Healing: Clues to Symbolic Intent (Acts 9, 22, and 26)," *Biblica* 71, no. 1 (1990): 63–72; Witherup, "Functional Redundancy in the Acts of the Apostles," 67–86.

Application

While Paul's life is worth studying and sharing, the question is: What do we do with this story in our life? Three lessons emerge.

First, Jesus is sovereign over His Church. The Church, growing and being built around the world, is not a human invention. It depends not on good marketing or management but on the sovereign work of Christ in and through the lives of His followers. Christ promised that He would build His Church and He is continually doing so (Matt 16:18). One of the greatest threats to the early church became one of Christ's greatest instruments to build His Church.

Second, God's grace transforms sinners. Saul never sought Jesus. He never searched for salvation. In fact, he was convinced he had salvation even though He was directly opposing the Savior. Nevertheless, God intervened in Saul's rebellion and rescued him solely by His grace—*sola gratia*.

Finally, to be part of the Church is to belong to Christ. Christians were fond of being called followers of "the Way," but such nomenclature did not remain. Instead, Paul referred to the followers of Christ as those who are "in Christ" (e.g., Rom 6:11; 12:5; 16:7, 9, 10). That is what we are inviting people to when we proclaim the gospel to our friends, neighbors, and family. We are calling them not only to follow Jesus but to belong to Him and to identify with Him who will forever identify with us.

As Christ demonstrated His sovereign grace in the conversion of His opponent Saul, so He also put His grace on display in the conversion of an additional opponent in the 18th century—Lord Lyttleton. Lord Lyttleton determined to refute the truth of the Christian faith, and he approached his endeavor by seeking to discredit the conversion of the Apostle Paul. However, as a result of studying Paul's life, Lyttleton not only affirmed the truth of Paul's conversion but also himself committed his life to Christ. Concerning Paul, Lyttleton wrote:

> I shall then take it for granted that he was not deceived by the fraud of others, and that what he said of himself cannot be imputed to the power of the deceit, no more than to willful imposture or to enthusiasm; and then it follows that what he related to have been the cause of his conversion, and to have happened in consequence of it, did all really happen, and therefore the Christian religion is a divine revelation…. It must therefore be accounted for by the power of God. That God should work miracles for the establishment of a most holy religion, which, from the insuperable difficulties that stood in the way of it, could not have established itself without such an assistance, in no way repugnant to human reason: but that without any miracle such things should have happened, as no adequate natural causes can be assigned for, is what human reason cannot believe.[23]

Saul's conversion is an emphatic testimony that no matter the way that a rebellious sinner is on, God can put that sinner on his face and then put him on His mission.

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[23] Lord Lyttleton, *Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of Saint Paul* (London: R. Clay, Bread-Street Hill, 1838), 61–62.

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COLOSSIANS 1:16–17 AND THE THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF CHRIST AS CREATOR AND SUSTAINER

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One of the key passages in the New Testament that proclaims Christ to be both Creator and Sustainer is Colossians 1:16–17. While most published works have treated Colossians 1:15–20 as a complete whole looking at its structure and content as a possible hymn, this present effort focuses on the Creator-Sustainer formula contained within verses 16 and 17. This text articulates this formula by its usage of prepositions combined with variations of πᾶς, its choice and usage of verbs, and the prevailing historical-cultural context. After demonstrating Christ's role as Creator and Sustainer from Colossians 1:16–17, this paper will explore the theological implications of Christ as Creator and Sustainer that are applicable to the Christian's daily life and fellowship with the Triune God.

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Introduction

One of the key New Testament passages that sets forth Christ's transcendent relation to the creation as its Creator and Sustainer is the profound text of Colossians 1:16–17. This passage immediately follows a declaration of Christ as Redeemer (Col 1:13–14), as the God-Man who is "the image of the invisible God" (1:15a), and as the exalted eternally begotten Son of God who is supreme over all creation ["firstborn of all creation"] (1:15b). This last line, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως (1:15b), launches Paul into defending Christ's preeminence, evidenced by the usage of the verb κτίζω and πᾶς in the following verses. In so doing, Paul covers the biblical doctrine of

Christ as Creator and Sustainer.[1] This essential doctrine is not only important to the creation science movement, but also it provides a fuller and more robust understanding of Christ as Redeemer and Head of His Church.

Before focusing on verses 16 and 17 in Colossians 1, it is important to note at the outset that most exegetes and theologians engaging in these verses do so in the context of interpreting Colossians 1:15–20 as a hymnic unit. In this regard, much debate has gone forth as to whether this section of the epistle is an early church hymn that Paul has inserted and reworked. In fact, the ideas concerning the various aspects (wording, strophic structure, etc.) of this section of Scripture and its grammatical nuances are diverse and form a large body of publications with one suggestion even claiming that Colossians 1:15–20 was a social protest hymn against the ideals of the Roman empire.[2] Most scholars do consider Colossians 1:15–20 to have a hymnic structure although a few have dissented and considered this to be a diversion from the key theological points that Paul is making or that the section is a form of poetry with Hebrew origins.[3] The approach of this paper will focus more on the content of

[1] While this present paper is a focus on Christ as Creator within the context of Colossians 1:16, properly understood, creation in the full theological picture was a work wrought by all persons of the Godhead. Though the standard orthodox expression of the agency of the three persons with respect to divine acts has been "from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit," the Leiden Synopsis from the early 17th century in the Dutch Further Reformation diverges slightly and describes this doctrine as follows: "We assign this work of creation jointly to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, because all the workings of God that are called 'outward workings' are indivisible – although, as in other works, so too in the work of creation a different mode and order of operation may be noted. For the Father created the world by himself through the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Son created the world by the Father through the Spirit, and the Spirit created the world by the Father and the Son, as is well known from these passages of Holy Scripture: Gen 1, Job 33:4, John 1:2, 3, 1 Cor 8:6, Col 1:15, etc. Hence this creation of the world is attributed sometimes separately to God the Father (1 Cor 8:6), to the Son (John 1:3, Col 1:16; Heb 1:2,10), and to the Holy Spirit (Job 33:4); sometimes jointly, either to the Father and the Son (as 1 Cor 8:6) or the three persons together (as Gen 1; Ps 33:6)." See Johannes Polyander and Henricus Hamers, "Disputation 10" in *Synopsis of a Purer Theology Vol 1*, William Den Boer and Riemer A. Faber, eds. (Oxfordshire: Davenant Press, 2023), 96–97. Thus, 17th century Puritan Thomas Manton declared in distinctly trinitarian terms, "All things were created for him—that is, for the honour of the Son, as well as for the honour of the Father and the Holy Ghost." See Thomas Manton, *The Complete Works of Thomas Manton Vol. 1* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1870), 438. However, in a more recent synopsis, MacArthur and Mayhue echo the historic position on the workings of the Trinity saying, "God the Father is seen as the source; God the Son is seen as the Mediator of the acts of creation; and the Holy Spirit is seen as the agent of these acts. Each person worked fully and in concert with one another in the creation acts." See John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Biblical Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 214. Therefore, Christ's role in creation within the Trinity is often seen to be that of agency, in that God created through the person of Jesus Christ.

[2] Mark S. Medley, "Subversive Song: Imagining Colossians 1:15–20 as a Social Protest Hymn in the Context of the Roman Empire," *Review and Expositor* 116, no. 4 (2019): 421–35. For other analyses, see James M. Robinson, "A Formal Analysis of Colossians 1:15–20," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 76, no. 4 (1957) 270–80; Wayne McGowan, "The Hymnic Structure of Colossians 1:15–20," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 51, no. 3 (1979): 156–62; Frederick F. Bruce, "The "Christ Hymn" of Colossians 1:15–20," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 141 (1984): 99–110; Eduard Schweitzer, "Colossians 1:15–20," *Review and Expositor* 87 (1990): 97–104; N. T. Wright, "Poetry and Theology in Colossians 1.15–20," New Testament Studies 36 (1990): 444–68.

[3] John F. Balchin, "Colossians 1:15–20: An Early Hymn? The Arguments from Style," *Vox Evangelica* 15 (1985): 65–94. In regard to the beginning of the alleged hymn in verse 15 (ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως), Daniel Wallace notes, "Most scholars now see hymn fragments here and there in the NT, such as Phil 2:6–11; Col 1:15–20; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 1:3–4; etc.

verses 16 and 17, rather than emphasizing their contribution to the structuring of Colossians 1:15–20. As such, these verses unveil Christ in the Creator-Sustainer formula found elsewhere in Scripture which in the New Testament brings forth a fuller revelation of Christ and the Trinity.[4]

Significantly, Colossians 1:16 begins with a ὅτι conjunction that assigns the reason for the preceding statement: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation" (Col 1:15). Louw and Nida express the use of ὅτι as a marker of cause or reason that is based on a previously given evident fact expressing "because, since, for, in view of the fact that."[5] Used here, Paul demonstrates that Christ is the image of God and the firstborn of all creation, because He is the Creator, further expressing the glory of the Godhead. Douglas Moo notes, "Christ's supreme role in creation is now cited as evidence (for*; hoti*) that he is, indeed, the *firstborn over all creation*."[6] G. K. Beale notes that the lead in with the ὅτι from verse 15 to verse 16, "now explains the reason for Christ's preceding titles of divine preexistence, which underscore his sovereignty over the cosmos: Christ is the divine image and ruler over all things because he is the agent of all creation and as such he existed before the creation."[7] The high Christology that Paul espouses is grounded in Christ's work of creation and His sustaining of that creation each moment.

Paul defends Christ's work in creation and the daily providence of sustaining it by employing a variety of prepositions adjoined to some form of πᾶς. Furthermore, he intentionally chooses and then varies the form of his verbs to emphasize Christ's creative and sustaining work. Finally, he does all this within a historical-cultural context that was particularly opposed to the supremacy of Christ. These three components of Paul's argument for Christ as Creator and Sustainer will be examined with application to follow.

Paul's Usage of Prepositions

The extent of Christ's supremacy as Creator is emphasized by the use and development of three key prepositions. Each preposition is paired with a form of πᾶς, attached to κτίζω, and has a form of αὐτός as its object. In this construction, the major variance is the preposition, which significantly influences the meaning of the phrase, building Paul's Christology.

Frequently, such texts begin with a relative clause that has been woven into the syntax of the surrounding prose discourse. Indeed, one of the standard features of Greek poetry is the introductory use of the relative pronoun."; Daniel B. Wallace, Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 340–41; Jeffrey S. Lamp, "Wisdom in Col 1:15–20: Contribution and Significance," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 41, no. 1 (1998): 45–53.

[4] One of the most clear and succinct passages in the OT that gives the Creator-Sustainer formula is Jeremiah 51:15–16; "It is He who made the earth by His power, who established the world by His wisdom, and by His understanding He stretched out the heavens. When He utters His voice, there is a tumult of waters in the heavens, and He causes the clouds to ascend from the end of the earth; He makes lightning for the rain and brings forth the wind from His storehouses."

[5] Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Sematic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 89.33.

[6] Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and Philemon: The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2008), 120.

[7] G. K. Beale, *Colossians and Philemon: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, eds. Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2019), 91.

The first preposition after the introductory 'ὅτι' is 'ἐν' for the initial clause 'ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα.' Translating the preposition 'ἐν' may be difficult in a variety of places throughout the New Testament, and this occurrence is one of them.[8] As Moo points out, the majority of prominent English translations (e.g., KJV, NIV, ESV, NASB, HCSB; etc.) understand 'ἐν' with the usage of instrument: "by him all things were created."[9] This closely aligns with Old Testament passages pertaining to God's work of creation by means of verbal utterance (e.g., His Word; Ps 33:6), or other passages describing God's wisdom in creation (Prov 3:19; 8:27–30). Similar language about creation is used in the New Testament of Jesus Christ (e.g., John 1:3; 1 Cor 8:6; Heb 1:2).[10] However, Moo disagrees with the instrumental usage of ἐν on several grounds. First, understanding ἐν in the instrumental sense would create some redundancy given its overlap with διά (δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται).[11] Second, other New Testament creation passages written by Paul use διά rather than ἐν (1 Cor 8:6).[12] Third, the formula ἐν αὐτῷ in Colossians often signifies the sphere of action.[13] Therefore, Moo, and others, suggest that ἐν be understood in this manner, "in Christ," a conclusion supported by the surrounding context.[14] Gordon Fee concurs, summarizing this passage, "Everything that exists came through the agency of the beloved (eternal) Son, who is expressly identified as the sphere, agent, and goal of the whole created order."[15]

This preposition, ἐν, is paired with τὰ πάντα, expressing the content of Christ's work of creation. This content is spelled out in the following phrase, "that are in heaven and that are in earth" (τὰ πάντα, τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς). The usage of ἐν in relation to heaven extends the argument of the previous phrase, that all things in heaven and upon earth, originated in Christ. The merism in this phrase refers back to Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" with the Hebrew phrase "the heavens and the earth" (הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ) being equivalent to this statement for the entirety of the created order in Greek. Interestingly, ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς occurs approximately 26 times in the NT but only in this case is it used with a comprehensive scope of everything which is in heaven. And as it is used in this clause in juxtaposition to "upon the earth" (ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς), BDAG aptly defines the NT usage for οὐρανός as "the portion or portions of the universe generally distinguished

[8] Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and Philemon*, 120.

[9] Bortone commented, "the most frequent non-spatial sense of ἐν in Biblical Greek is instrumental/causal"; Pietro Bortone, *Greek Prepositions from Antiquity to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Harris helpfully explains how the frequency of the instrumental use of ἐν in Biblical Greek is comparable to the extensive and varied usage of the Hebrew *beth* in the Old Testament; Murray J. Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 119.

[10] Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and Philemon,* 120.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] David W. Pao, *Colossians & Philemon*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 96.

[15] Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 538.

from planet earth, heaven."[16] Additionally, Robertson and Davis note that ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς in this instance employs the use of a preposition like ἐπὶ, "to make plainer the precise aspect of the genitive case involved in [τῆς γῆς]."[17] Heinrich von Siebenthal points out that ἐπὶ + genitive is used mostly of position with other examples involving γῆς being Luke 2:14 (ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη; peace upon earth) and Mark 4:26 (ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς; upon the ground/earth).[18] Blass, Debrunner, and Funk note that the use of the article with γῆ and καὶ ἐπί, as done here in Colossians 1:16 (καὶ ἐπί τῆς γῆς), is also meant as a grammatical form of contrast between that which is on the earth and that which is in the heavens.[19]

The extent of creation is further taken to include that which is visible and that which is invisible (τὰ ὁρατὰ καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα). The word ὁρατός is a verbal adjective of the verb ὁράω (to see or behold) pertaining to the capability of being seen or visible[20] with τὰ ὁρατά being the visible world.[21] Clearly the language of this text is setting the stage for the following statement concerning angelic powers also being created by Christ in addition to the visible cosmos. This comprehensive claim to the totality of the created order is affirmed elsewhere in the New Testament such as John 1:3, "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being"; John 1:9, "and the world was made through Him"; and Hebrews 1:2, "through whom also He made the world." Bruce, in his commentary on Colossians, provides a succinct integrated synopsis of Christ the Creator in light of the preceding verse (Col 1:15) and says, "What is meant is that the Son of God, existing as he did 'before all things,' exercises the privilege of primogeniture as Lord of creation, the divinely appointed 'heir of all things,' and 'He was there when creation's work began, and it was for him as well as through him that it was completed.'"[22]

The extent of the totality of the creation by Christ is further elaborated with "whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers" (εἴτε θρόνοι, εἴτε κυριότητες, εἴτε ἀρχαί, εἴτε ἐξουσίαι). Louw and Nida conclude that, "the series of terms θρόνοι, κυριότητες, ἀρχαί, and ἐξουσίαι in Colossians 1:16 (as well as in Eph 1:21) are understood as being supernatural cosmic powers, whether angelic or

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[16] Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 737.

[17] A. T. Robertson and W. Hersey Davis, *A New Short Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1933), 230.

[18] Heinrich von Siebenthal, *Ancient Greek Grammar for the Study of the New Testament* (New York: International Academic Publishers, 2011), 273. Notably, the New Testament when seeking to describe sphere pertaining to γῆ, γῆ is almost always paired with ἐπὶ, rather than ἐν. In fact, ἐν with γῆ only occurs 3 times in the New Testament (Matt 5:35; 25:25; Luke 12:51), and only one of those occurrences (Matt 25:25) may suggest that the prepositional usage of sphere is in play. Thus the parallelism in meaning of ἐν and ἐπὶ support the contextual usage of sphere for ἐν.

[19] Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 132.

[20] Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature 3rd ed.,* 719.

[21] Franco Mantanari, Ivan Garofalo, and Daniela Manetti, *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 1478.

[22] Frederick F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2020), 74.

demonic."[23] Zerwick and Grosvenor note that this series of plural nouns (θρόνοι, κυριότητες, ἀρχαί, and ἐξουσίαι) preceded by εἴτε (whether/or) also denote "hierarchies of spiritual powers."[24] Thus, this addendum to all things in heaven and earth takes the totality of creation by Christ to entail everything including unseen creatures and powers.

In the conclusion of verse 16 we are further told, "all things were created through Him and for Him" (τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται). This phrase includes the other two prepositions joined to a form of πᾶς and linked to the verb κτίζω (διά and εἰς). The switch from ἐν (by) at the start of the verse to διά (through) in the same sentence helps to express more fully the theme of Christ's deity and supremacy in relation to creation and His person in the Godhead. Whereas ἐν previously expressed the sphere of the work of creation (it was wrought in Christ), now διά expresses the agent of creation (it was wrought by Christ Himself). In my assessment, the use of both ἐν (by) and διά (through) in the same sentence helps to express more fully the larger Pauline theme of Christ's deity and supremacy in relation to creation and His person in the Godhead.

In addition to the emphatic repetition of "all things were created by Him" using διά, we also have the addition of "and for Him" (καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν). Robertson helpfully notes that, "Once more, the variation of the preposition is a skillful way of condensing thought, each preposition adding a new idea."[25] In support, he cites a related verse from Romans 11:36: ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα ("For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things").[26] Here in Colossians 1:16, Christ is not only affirmed as the one through whom the creation came into existence, but He also stands at its end as the goal of the universe. This connects to Ephesians 1:9–10 which asserts that God ordains "according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him [Christ] with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth." It also fits with Christ's statement in Revelation 22:13 in which he claimed, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

All created things are not only by Him as their first cause, but they are also for Him as their last end. God is often represented in Scripture as the first and the last: "Who has performed and accomplished it, calling forth the generations from the beginning? 'I, the Lord, am the first, and with the last, I am He'" (Isa 41:4); and "Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me'" (44:6). And as noted previously, similar statements are applied to the resurrected Christ in the New Testament: "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore" (Rev 1:17); or, "The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life" (2:8); and "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (22:13). These expressions tell us of

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[23] Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Sematic Domains*, 478.

[24] Maximilian Zerwick and Mary Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament* (Rome: Gregorian and Biblical Press, 1996), 604.

[25] Archibald T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in Light of Historical Research*, 567.

[26] Ibid., 567. It is noteworthy that Romans 11:36 directly follows a previous statement on the self-sufficiency of God; "Or who has first given to him that it might be paid back to him again?" (Rom 11:35).

Christ's eternal power and deity because He has been before all creation and shall be when all things in the present world are ended. He is the first sovereign being from whom all things are, and the last end in whom all things are to be fulfilled and consummated.

Thus, this statement of Christ's relationship to creation by Paul is comprehensive in that we can only understand the beginning and purpose of creation in Christ Jesus. These three prepositions, ἐν, διά, and εἰς, demonstrate the supremacy of Christ in creation, and build the Creator-Sustainer formula.

Usage and Forms of Verbs

The Creator-Sustainer formula of Colossians 1:16–17 utilizes two main verbs: κτίζω and συνίστημι. The first verb, κτίζω, occurs twice, bookending verse 16 (ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα…καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται). Its first occurrence as an aorist, passive, indicative indicates not only that the subject ("all things"; τὰ πάντα) was acted upon or created by Christ, but that this creation was a completed and finished work, referring to the six days of creation in Genesis 1.[27]

Another interesting aspect of this final clause in verse 16 is that κτίζω is used again but in a different form. Its second usage occurs as a perfect, middle, indicative as ἔκτισται. The first use of κτίζω as noted above in verse 16, was in the aorist (ἐκτίσθη) indicating a completed past event (e.g., Gen 1) while this usage is in the perfect tense indicating a completed event with ongoing effect and implication.[28] Rogers and Rogers helpfully note that this "emphasizes the duration and persistence of the act of creation."[29] The continuing results in view of the act of creation likely are expressed by the third prepositional phrase (εἰς αὐτὸν). Because every part of creation was completed in and through Christ, everything in both heaven and on earth exists for His glory.

However, the chain of Paul's logic issuing forth from Christ's creative work does not stop with the moment of creation. In the next verse, the act of Christ's sustaining His creation is directly linked to the act of creation. In similar fashion to how he started his exposition of Christ's work in creation, Paul writes, καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν. By utilizing τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ, Paul closely associates the work of *sustaining* to the work of *creating*. Furthermore, the tense of συνέστηκεν is perfect, akin to ἔκτισται. Therefore, the perfect tense of κτίζω transitions the discussion of Christ's role in creation to His present work of sustaining it.

Taking the perfect tense into consideration, we can see that συνέστηκεν is an astute description of Christ's sustaining and upholding activity of what He created in Genesis 1. Barnes aptly notes that this is also "the ascription to Christ of infinite power – for nothing less could be sufficient to uphold the universe."[30]

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[27] Another Genesis creation-based example of the aorist-passive of κτίζω is 1 Corinthians 11:9; "οὐκ ἐκτίσθη ἀνὴρ διὰ τὴν γυναῖκα [neither was the man created for the woman, KJV]."

[28] Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 176.

[29] Cleon L. Rogers, Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic And Exegetical Key To The Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1998), 461.

[30] Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament Vol. 12 Ephesians to Philemon* (London: Blackie and Son, 1847), 250.

Parallel Old Testament passages echo this same truth: that the one who creates is the one who sustains. We are told: "You are the Lord, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and *you preserve all of them*" (Neh 9:6, ESV).[31] Hebrews 1:3 repeats this providential doctrine concerning Christ saying that He "upholds all things by the word of His power," using the verb φέρων for "upholds." Interestingly, φέρων is a present active participle from the verb φέρω meaning "to bring along" or "to carry." Thus, Christ is not only Creator, but He sustains and gives life and carries along the creation through His providential goodness. Christ's work of creation is intimately connected to His work of sustaining His creation.

Historical-Cultural Context

Articulating the role of the Son in creation may seem like an accessory detail for Paul's Christology in Colossians 1; however, this element of Paul's theology was essential for the Colossian church. The theological error at Colossae had permeated the church and so Paul writes to expand their understanding of Christology in a way that was directly applicable to their situation.[32]

While the Phrygian city of Colossae was largely Greek, there was also a Jewish community present which dated from the times of Antiochus the Great (223–187 bc).[33] It is believed that heresies were developing in the Colossian church over elements emanating from both pagan Greek culture and Jewish legalism which included features of Gnosticism, an unhealthy mysticism with speculative views of spirits and angels, and elements of Jewish myths. Frank L. Cross noted that these were certain features "of the Hellenistic and Judaic religion of the period, such as the 'rudiments of elements' (τὰ στοιχεῖα) of the world, angelic mediators, law-keeping, and asceticism, which later filled a prominent place in Gnosticism."[34]

One of the problems with many Jewish writers at the time, including Philo and a few Judean sources, was that they gave higher level angels subordinate divine powers in the role of creation.[35] It is not hard to see how this would have been enticing to Greeks who were prone to mysticism. In this respect, Keener believes that Paul was attempting to combat this view by giving Christ His rightful place as the eternal Creator. Keener helpfully notes that by "using different prepositions, ancient

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[31] The Hebrew verb *mechayyeh* for "preserve" (מְחַיֶּה) from chayah (חָיָה) is a participle in the piel stem (causative) and means to keep alive and to preserve. The NASB 1995 opts for "give life," and similar to the ESV, the KJV uses "preservest."

[32] The nature of the error that was present in Colossae is debated and such discussion presents a wide variety of perspectives on what comprised the issue at stake in Colossae. For an overview, see Andreas Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2017), 684–88.

[33] James D. Douglass (general ed.), *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church Second Edition* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 240–41; James D. Douglass (general editor), *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary Vol. 1* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), 304–5.; Merrill F. Unger, Unger's Bible Dictionary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 214.

[34] Frank L. Cross, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 313.

[35] Craig S. Keener, *IVP New Testament Background Commentary*, 2nd Edition (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 571.

intellectuals often distinguished kinds of causation, including material ('from'), instrumental ('through'), modal ('in' or 'by') and purpose ('for'); Paul employs three of these for Jesus here."[36]

Bruce further notes in a lengthy discourse on the "Colossian Heresy" that this declaration of the preexistence of Christ was necessary due to the heretical confusion having its possible roots and origins as coming from these Jewish sects, Greek pagan philosophies, and even Christian gnostic sources.[37] That the "Colossian Heresy" directly influenced the statement of Christology in Colossians 1:16 may be evidenced by the usage of κυριότητες in Colossians 1:16. In three of the four places where κυριότητες, a derivative of κύριος, appears (Eph 1:21; Col 1:16; 2 Pet 2:10), it seems to be directly related to angelic authorities.[38] Thus, when Paul demonstrates Christ's supremacy as Creator over all things, this statement is not limited to the physical realm. Christ's supremacy is over all created entities in the unseen spiritual realm as well. In this regard, Bruce says,

> Probably with special reference to the "Colossian heresy" it is now emphasized that, if all things were created by Christ, then those spiritual powers which received such prominence in that heresy must have been created by him. The denizens of the upper realms as well as the inhabitants of earth owe their being to his creative power—the invisible forces of the spirit world as well as the visible and material order. Whether invisible or visible, all had Christ as their original creator, and all have him as their final disposer.[39]

Indeed, not only are these fallen angelic powers created entities, but we have the victorious declaration concerning these creatures in Colossians 2:15 that, "When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him."

Concerning religious legalism and angelic powers, Colossians 2 provides the reader clarity on circumcision (vv. 11–14), Christ's defeat of principalities and powers (v.15), food, drink, new moons, sabbaths (vv.16–17), false humility and the worship of angels (v.18), and ascetic measures causing a neglect of the body (vv.19–23). Yet, the reader should note that the clarification on the issues of doctrine and practice occurs after Paul writes the high Christology of chapter 1. Paul's Christology lays the groundwork for his discussion on the false teaching and the practical issues it posed for the Colossian church. Christ's work of creation and sustaining His creation is part of the counter to such issues. Thomas Manton notes,

> The design of God was that the whole creation should be put in subjection to the Word incarnate—not only this lower world, wherein man is concerned, but the

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[36] Keener, *IVP New Testament Background Commentary*, 571.

[37] Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 81.

[38] TDNT states regarding κυριότης, that it denotes "Power or position as lord" and "In the NT its first use is for the members of a class of angels." See Werner Foerster and Gottfried Quell, "Κύριος, Κυρία, Κυριακός, Κυριότης, Κυριεύω, Κατακυριεύω," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by Gerhard Kittle, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 3:1039.

[39] Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 74.

> upper world also. Our Redeemer, who hath bought us, hath an interest in all things that may concern us, that they may be disposed of to his own glory and our good and advantage. All are at the making and at the disposal of our Lord Jesus Christ.[40]

Christ's work of creation gives Him sovereignty over all creation and is the perfect antidote to a heresy that elevates creation beyond its appropriate place.

Theological and Practical Application of Christ as Creator and Sustainer

What are some of the consequences of Christ as Creator and Sustainer? There are four primary applications that develop directly from Colossians 1:16–17 and its teaching on this doctrine. First, because Christ created all things and sustains all things, all things are subject to Him. Second, because all things are subject to Christ, all things must worship Christ. Third, the pinnacle of Christ's creation work is the creation of new life in the dead sinner in the work of regeneration, and His sustaining that sinner for him to grow in the joy that is in eternal life. Fourth, Christ's work as Creator-Sustainer demonstrates His Providence in relation to all things.

All Things Subordinate to Christ

First, because Christ created all things, all things are put in subjection to the Word incarnate, for His own glory and for our ultimate good. We are told in Hebrews 2:8, "You have put all things in subjection under his feet, for in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him…" Notably, this passage emphasizes the preeminence of Christ over angels by opening with the question, "For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking" (Heb 2:5). The author of Hebrews extends the flow of the previous chapter that concerns Christ's supremacy over angels, an argument that begins with the work of Christ as Creator and Sustainer (1:2–3).

In contrast to pagan or open-theist versions of merely the reworking of preexistent materials or the reduction of a primeval chaos to order, the amazing beauty and life of the original creation *ex nihilo* ("out of nothing") is here ascribed to Jesus Christ. What had no existence before the creation and space-time-mass continuum was brought into being through the eternal Son of God. The universe did not exist until God commanded it to be: "He spoke and it was done" (Ps 33:9–11). Every form of matter and life owes its origin to the Son of God.

Paul's words in Colossians 2:18, "Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind," are directly applicable today. The inclination of humans to want to worship angels because of their might and power is both illustrated and rebuked by the testimony of John toward the end of his revelatory experience: "And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. But he said to me, 'Do

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[40] Thomas Manton, *The Complete Works of Thomas Manton,* Vol. 1 (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2008), 438.

not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God'" (Rev 22:9). While angels are noble, powerful, and spiritual creatures, we must also keep in mind that they are the work of Christ's hands. And when Hebrews 1:3 says that Christ "upholds all things by the word of His power," we should take note that the sustaining cause of all, including angels, is Christ. As with all visible creation, the angels also live in a continual dependence upon Christ as their Creator and Sustainer, and without His upholding influence, they would soon be annihilated. Indeed, angels are dependently and constantly in God's worshipful service: "Bless the Lord, you His angels, mighty in strength, who perform His word, obeying the voice of His word!" (Ps 103:20). Every created entity, including angels, is subject to Christ because of His work as Creator-Sustainer.

Worship

A second implication of Christ's supremacy as Creator-Sustainer builds upon the first. Because all things are subject to the one who created them and sustains them, all things must worship that same person. Christ deserves the worship of all creation because of His role as Creator and Sustainer. One must consider the words of John when in Revelation 4:11 he writes, "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created." The elders before the heavenly throne who proclaimed Christ's worthiness, began with His work in creating the universe. This act exhibits His glory in the seemingly infinite complexity of all the systems of the universe in both the biological and physical aspects of creation. Paul said, "His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made" (Rom 1:20).

Honor is rightly due to Christ from His elect who ascribe and acknowledge His perfections and power displayed in the creation because in performing it, He demonstrated His omnipotence and awe-inspiring creativity. And thirdly, we have the reason: "of Your will they existed, and were created" (Rev 4:11). In other words, all things were created for His own good pleasure and according to His own will, not out of necessity, because He is completely self-sufficient (aseity). In fact, the chief verse often cited for God's self-sufficiency also follows the Creator-Sustainer formula: "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things" (Acts 17:24–25). All that exists is of His good pleasure and is done solely according to the counsel of His own will.

Since Christ is above all things, then we should prefer Him above all things. This admonition is of great use to draw our hearts and minds away from all temporal and earthly things that so easily distract and discourage us. We should fix our eyes upon Christ and after Him we should diligently seek, because He is the first and the last, the beginning and the end. It is for an everlasting blessedness and for the enjoyment of an eternal God that our souls were made. Thus, we have the great statement of faith in the Westminster Larger Catechism, "Man's chief and highest end is to glorify

God, and to fully enjoy him forever."[41] And concerning the benefits received through Christ's creation and sustaining of all things, it is imperative upon humanity, created in God's image, to respond in thankfulness. We are the only earthly creatures that verbally can give thanks to Christ. Unfortunately, great swaths of humanity including many professing Christians have few thoughts or care of praise and thanksgiving to God who has numbered the hairs of their heads. For many in this world, God is removed from their sight, because they look for all their perceived needs from the creation and not the Creator. However, a right view of Christ and His care for us will cause praise and thanksgiving to God, who determines the strength of our lives and the length of our days. And we will also acknowledge that every good gift comes from Him who hears our prayers and causes our lives to continue to exist every moment.

Christ as Creator-Sustainer in Regeneration and Sanctification

Third, in addition to Christ's work of creation of the universe and all it contains, Christ's work of creation is evidenced in the work of regeneration and sanctification. The work of regeneration by the power of Christ is fundamentally a new creation, which carries scriptural allegory with God's handiwork in the Genesis 1 account towards His own ends and purposes. Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." Also note the usage of Genesis 1:1 language in 2 Corinthians 4:6, "For God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." Describing regeneration in terms similar to Genesis 1, Paul argues that God's creative power creates life in the dead sinner's heart. In the next chapter of 2 Corinthians, Paul relates the believer's union with Christ to the work of new creation: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature…" (2 Cor 5:17). The Scriptures present Christ's work in salvation as a creative work. What a profound thought to contemplate our regeneration in this light since such an effect comes from Christ who is of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, so that a depraved and fallen man may be recreated with a capacity to love, please, and serve God. What was lost in the first created man, Adam, can only be recovered by Christ our Creator and Redeemer: "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Cor 15:22).

Furthermore, if the fear and reverence of this awesome Creator is the essence and first place of true wisdom, to whom should we seek for more power and wisdom in our ongoing sanctification but from the all-wise Creator Christ? The Scriptures employ the creative work of God as one of the grounds for continued growth in holiness. The parallel letter to Colossians, that is Ephesians, depicts the work of salvation as a creative work that results in sanctification. Paul writes, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works…" (Eph 2:10). This text parallels the words of Colossians 1:16 by employing the passive form of κτίζω and the phrase "in Christ" (κτισθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). Being created in Christ in

[41] Westminster Confession of Faith, The Larger Catechism (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1985), 129.

salvation results in the work of sanctification to good works. Later, Paul continues, "and put on the new self, which *in the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth" (Eph 4:24). Again, Paul uses κτίζω to refer to the state of a new believer. That person is created in the image of Christ, and continues to grow into that image until glorification.

Christ and Providence

Finally, Colossians 1:16–17 demonstrates Christ's activity in working out His Providence. The Scripture is clear, God is the Creator and Sustainer of all things. In this respect, Daniel rebukes Belshazzar, king of Babylon, for his blasphemous idolatry, saying, "But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways, you have not glorified" (Dan 5:23). Paul also sets God forth as Creator and Sustainer in his evangelism to the idolaters at Athens, saying, "Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since *He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things*" (Acts 17:23–25). Moses acknowledges God's providence in delivering and sustaining the Israelites, as he says, "Was it I who conceived all this people? Was it I who brought them forth, that You should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom as a nurse carries a nursing infant, to the land which You swore to their fathers?'" (Num 11:12). Yet, the question Colossians 1:16–17 would have us ponder is, "How often do we consider that our very being, life, and daily operations upon this earth would utterly cease if it were not for the sustaining hand of Christ?" He is truly Lord over all things, but Christ also gives us our very being and existence and does preserve and keep us until we will be taken out of this earth to heavenly glory.

In the doctrine of the Godhead, this respect is due not only to God the Father, but our Lord Jesus Christ as noted in Colossians 1:17. Why must all things subsist and be upheld by Christ our Creator? Primarily, because preservation is a continuance of the creative power that was exhibited during the creation week and a logical extension thereof. Christ's purpose and will in creation brought a thing to exist, but His will and providence in preservation makes it continue to exist. You could also say that the same omnipotency and efficacy exhibited by God in the original creation is necessary also to sustain it. Nothing can come into existence without Christ and the will of God, and nothing can continue to exist without His power and good pleasure.

Christ sustains all life not only directly but also indirectly by providentially providing the means that all creatures need. It is impossible to cut off the dependence of any created entity, whether life or non-life, from Christ because in the final analysis, no created thing has self-sufficiency to maintain and support itself. While devices of mankind's engineering may exist for a season without the engineer, all things in nature depend upon the omnipotent God who made them because they have the entirety of their whole being and continuing function from Him. In fact, at this stage of our scientific understanding of physics, we still do not know exactly what keeps the subatomic particles of atoms from flying apart. Thus, if God were to withdraw His upholding power, the creation would cease to exist because it has no

other being than what God is pleased to bestow upon it. Unless we acknowledge Christ's intimate presence with us and His preservation of all things, the activities of this life will degenerate into a vain and needless superstition. A cold and careless lack of respect toward God concerning our continual dependence on Him every moment leads nowhere but to a practical atheism. Thus, we should establish a practical reverence and regular habit of acknowledging Christ's providential upholding of all things. This brings about trust and dependence in His goodness and care for relief in all our predicaments and necessities. When we relinquish ourselves from all worldly confidences and put all our trust in Him, we will also at all times be constant in prayer and supplication seeing that all things subsist by Him.

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REVIEWS

MacArthur, John. *Jonah & Nahum*. The MacArthur Old Testament Commentary. Los Angeles, CA: The Master's Seminary Press, 2024. 255 pp., $30.00 Hardcover.

MacArthur, John. *Zechariah*. The MacArthur Old Testament Commentary. Los Angeles, CA: The Master's Seminary Press, 2023. 465 pp., $34.99 Hardcover.

Reviewed by Marc Daniel Rivera, Independent Reviewer.

The MacArthur Old Testament Commentary Series has officially launched with its inaugural volumes, featuring comprehensive studies on the books of Jonah, Nahum, and Zechariah. These groundbreaking volumes mark not only the beginning of this new series but also stand among the first publications from the John MacArthur Publishing Group through its imprint The Master's Seminary Press, a publisher dedicated to producing biblical resources that bring the transforming truth of God's Word to the lives of His people.

Authored by bestselling Bible teacher John MacArthur, this series represents a significant advancement in biblical scholarship. The MacArthur Old Testament Commentary Series is designed to provide an exhaustive, verse-by-verse exploration of the Old Testament Scriptures, ensuring that readers gain a deep understanding of each text's historical and theological content.

Jonah & Nahum

John MacArthur's commentaries on Jonah and Nahum reflect his steadfast commitment to the faithful exposition of Scripture. The book of Jonah is widely known for its narrative of a prophet swallowed by a great fish, but this volume dives deeper into the theological implications of Jonah's mission to Nineveh. MacArthur carefully explains that Jonah's story is not just about obedience or disobedience but also about God's boundless grace. He highlights how Jonah's reluctance and eventual proclamation to the Ninevites reveals God's desire to extend salvation beyond the boundaries of Israel, to Gentiles, and to all who repent and believe.

MacArthur's expository approach meticulously details the prophetic symbolism in Jonah's narrative, drawing parallels to the work of Christ. The text expounds on how the sign of Jonah foreshadows Christ's death and resurrection, offering salvation to all who acknowledge their sinfulness and turn to God in repentance. This

interpretation aligns with MacArthur's theological stance that the Old Testament consistently points toward the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ, making the book of Jonah a significant precursor to the New Testament's message of redemption.

The volume then transitions to Nahum, a sequel to Jonah's story, set over a century later. Here, MacArthur contrasts the themes of grace and judgment. While Jonah celebrates the repentance of Nineveh, Nahum delivers a sobering message of divine justice. The Ninevites' return to wickedness and their subsequent downfall exemplify God's righteous judgment against sin. MacArthur's analysis is precise and engaging, emphasizing that God's patience and mercy do not negate His justice. Nahum's prophecies provide a theological counterbalance to Jonah, reminding readers that God's character encompasses both grace and righteousness.

Zechariah

The commentary on the book of Zechariah offers a comprehensive expository study of one of the most eschatologically dense books of the Old Testament. MacArthur approaches Zechariah with a pastor's heart and a scholar's mind. The commentary covers Zechariah's role in comforting the Israelites after their return from Babylonian exile and his prophetic visions that forecast significant events in both near and distant futures.

MacArthur's treatment of Zechariah's prophecies is thorough and thoughtful. He traces how the prophet's messages span from the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem to the coming of the Messiah and the end times. MacArthur connects Zechariah's ancient prophecies with future eschatological events, such as the coming of Alexander the Great, the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, the tyranny of the Antichrist, and the battle of Armageddon. MacArthur's interpretation is heavily Christological, consistently pointing readers to the fulfillment of these prophecies in Jesus Christ.

The focus on Christ in the book of Zechariah is particularly compelling. MacArthur highlights key messianic prophecies, including Christ's entry into Jerusalem on a donkey, His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver, and His sacrificial death. Additionally, MacArthur delves into the future return of Christ to the Mount of Olives and the establishment of His earthly kingdom. This focus on the Messiah not only aligns with the traditional Christian interpretation but also provides a cohesive narrative that ties the Old and New Testaments together.

Summary

The MacArthur Old Testament Commentary Series stands out for its scholarly excellence, precision, and clarity. MacArthur's methodical approach ensures that each verse is examined within its historical, grammatical, and theological context. His commitment to expository preaching is evident throughout, as he seeks to unveil the text's meaning in a way that is both academically rigorous and spiritually enriching.

These commentaries are not just for scholars or pastors but are also intended for lay readers who seek to deepen their understanding of Scripture. MacArthur provides practical applications alongside theological insights, encouraging readers to reflect

on their own lives in light of the biblical truths presented. This dual approach ensures that the volumes are both informative and transformative, aligning with the publisher's goal of bringing the transformative truth of God's Word to His people.
These two introductory volumes from the series are crafted with the same attention to detail as the New Testament Commentary series. Whereas the New Testament volumes feature red hardback covers with dust jackets, the Old Testament series comes in matching blue hardback covers and dust jackets, equally elegantly designed. I also appreciate that the text blocks are smyth-sewn, allowing the books to lay flat when open, and that they use highly opaque cream paper, which enhances the overall reading experience.

Overall, *Jonah & Nahum* and *Zechariah* are a solid introduction to the MacArthur Old Testament Commentary Series. These volumes are valuable resources for Bible study and expository preaching—must-haves for any Christian library!

Naselli, Andrew David. *How to Read a Book: Advice for Christian Readers.* Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2024. 206 pp., $21.95 Hardback.

Reviewed by Daniel Clouthier, Assistant to the Executive Director, John MacArthur Publishing Group.

Andrew Naselli currently teaches systematic theology and New Testament at Bethlehem College and Seminary. In addition to that, he also serves as one of the pastors of The North Church in Mounds View, Minnesota. Both positions readily qualify him to speak authoritatively on the subject of his book *How to Read a Book: Advice for Christian Readers*. With an endless supply of material to read yet a limited amount of time in one's life, the author seeks to advise Christians how they might take their reading to the next level for the glory of God.

Sharing the same title as a familiar work written by Mortimer Adler and Charles van Doren, Naselli's book is distinctly Christian.[1] He distinguishes the two works by noting seven features: 1) his is written by a Christian, 2) to Christians, 3) while being broader in scope (Adler and van Doren focus on reading for increased learning whereas he gives emphasis to entertainment), 4) as well as being more accessible, 5) concise, 6) personal, and 7) relevant. In light of his aim, this work stands as both a charge to *tolle lege* ("Take up and read") while also offering encouragement for those who desire and/or need to read yet struggle to do so in any effective manner.

The main body of the book divides into 4 chapters with each addressing a different question related to the pursuit of reading: why (13–22), how (23–86), what (87–138), and when (139–158). The reader may or may not prefer Naselli's fond affection for numbered lists which direct the entire flow of the book. So structured in this fashion is the whole of the book that a careful study of the Expanded Table of Contents might suffice for reading the rest of the book. Love it or hate it, this style

[1] Adler, Mortimer J., and Charles Van Doren. *How to Read a Book*. Revised and updated edition (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972).

effectively isolates the various topics so that the reader can easily refer back to this book for its insights into specific areas of discussion.

Taking on the question of why you should read in chapter one, Naselli sets forth three reasons to convince the reader that it is worth the effort. First, Christians are to read to live. He connects this reason primarily to the reading of Scripture. Reiterating the teaching of Jesus, that "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt 4:3–4; Deut 8:3), Naselli highlights the need in the believer's life to truly live. Moving on, he argues that one should also read to grow. The reader is shown six ways that the practice helps them mature: 1) intellectually, 2) in their vision of reality, 3) spiritually, 4) emotionally, 5) in their communication, and 6) in their vocation. The last reason he presents as to why one should read is for the enjoyment of it. In Piper-esk fashion, Naselli's Christian hedonism motivates this point showcasing the glory of God in our satisfaction in Him. This section gives a very basic yet straightforward argument that should leave the reader convinced and also motivated to read, asking how they might do it better. To which the following chapter gives attention.

As in any process of learning a new skill, focusing on its various components will in time improve one's overall performance. When it comes to skillful reading, he gives seven aspects that make it up: 1) reading carefully, 2) reading at different levels, 3) reading systematically, 4) reading repeatedly, 5) reading without distractions, 6) reading with eyes to see and ears to hear, and 7) reading with serious joy. Chapter 2 is the heart of the book and presumably the reason why most people made the purchase as it bears the title's name. This section alone is worth the price of admission. Drawing on his personal experience, Naselli provides gems of insight for the aspiring skilled reader. Perhaps the most beneficial portion in this chapter for this current author was the explanation of reading at different levels (survey, macro, and micro). The quick evaluation of survey-level reading is also referred to as "pre-reading" (53). While some may hesitate to consider this as reading, Naselli argues several reasons as to why this is a legitimate form of reading that everyone should integrate. What liberation comes as he encourages the reader that it is not necessary to read every single word of a book! Bringing in a more focused approach, Macro-level reading builds on surveying. In this process you read every word, but in an accelerated manner. Lastly, micro-level reading delves even further into a text and incorporates annotations, of which he provides a helpful sampling of his own notetaking process.

Armed with the know-how, Naselli next addresses what should be read. Given the limited supply of time in life, readers should wisely determine what they should invest their precious time into reading. At the heart of his recommendations is the goal of personal development for the glory of God. It should be no surprise that Bible tops the list yet stretches from the various branches of theology to history, and even to fiction. His case for the presence of fiction literature one's library should be appreciated, as it should be seen as a gift from God to enjoy. In short, read for joy.

He closes his book with a couple helpful appendices. Of note among those is his section explaining how he uses social media. This unique section should be of great use to the modern pastor who prayerfully considers his presence online.

The benefit that comes from listening in on a voracious reader's approach and reading hacks that he has picked up over the years are many and will serve the church

well. An easy read, this book is commended to you as a great tool to help readers tackle the daunting task that stands before them. With the abundance of material that is worthy of being read, Naselli's work shows the necessity of using one's time wisely and choosing wisely what is to be read, knowing that what you read influences you.

Cooper, Tim. *When Christians Disagree: Lessons from the Fractured Relationship of John Owen and Richard Baxter*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2024. 184 pp., $18.99 Paperback.

Reviewed by Karl Walker, Associate Editor, The Master's Seminary.

Tim Cooper's *When Christians Disagree: Lessons from the Fractured Relationship of John Owen and Richard Baxter* plunges into the quarrel between two ministerial icons of 17th century England. Cooper, a professor of church history at the University of Otago, has written a much larger work on Baxter and Owen, and here reduces that work into a book palatable for the lay person.[2] Renowned for their ministry in the pastorate and with the pen, Owen and Baxter's contentious relationship offers the observer a wealth of wisdom for navigating disagreement. Cooper's analysis, though exposing the glaring weaknesses of both men, does not seek further division. Rather, his aim is the promotion of unity, "hop[ing] their conflict can help us understand and manage our own difficulties with each other so that we might be… 'of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind' (Phil 2:2)" (7).

Cooper begins the narrative reminding the reader of who John Owen and Richard Baxter were: two good men (ch. 1). These men had much in common: they suffered greatly for Christ, pastored faithfully, and wrote extensively, of which we benefit even today. Cooper discourages their pronounced disagreement from hindering our reception of either of their ministries. And yet at the same time, it is precisely the fruitfulness of their ministry that issues a warning call to Christians everywhere. Since even these two faithful ministers were susceptible to bickering, quarreling, and strife, readers should learn from their example to more wisely steward their differences.

Chapters two through four recount preliminary factors that shaped Owen and Baxter's conflict. Experience (ch. 2), personality (ch. 3), and theology (ch. 4) pushed them apart prior to their first interaction. Baxter and Owen both lived through the English Civil War of the mid 1600's, though it affected them quite differently. Baxter's ministry to profane soldiers nurtured a desire to counter antinomianism, a primary concern in his writing and correspondence. Furthermore, Baxter's proximity to much of the fighting exposed him to many of the horrors war brings. Owen, however, was much removed from these experiences. Ministering in a location secluded from significant fighting, Owen was free from many of the effects of war and able to celebrate the war's theological 'accomplishments.' He interpreted the

[2] Tim Cooper, *John Owen, Richard Baxter, and the Formation of Nonconformity* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2011).

same event, not as a blight upon the nation, but as a glorious triumph in moving England away from Arminianism and Socinianism. He sought to preserve the theological gains brought about by the war. Yet for Owen, these theological battles were also intensely personal. Though the full details of his inner turmoil remain unclear, Cooper suggests that Owen's struggle concerned his enjoyment of the assurance of salvation. One might see how the doctrines of Arminianism and Socianisim would only have exacerbated Owen's personal angst. These two divergent aims, Baxter confronting Antinomianism and Owen countering Arminianism and Socinianism, combined with opposite personalities paved the road to disagreement.

Chapters five through seven summarize the encounters between Owen and Baxter, from their first point of contact (ch. 5), to their repeated collisions (ch. 6), to the way their memory of past events shaped their final interactions (ch. 7). Owen and Baxter's first point of contact was through print, not face-to-face. It was this medium, the written word, that fueled many of the head-on collisions that were to come. Their in-person meetings were no better than those on the page. These short exchanges were characterized by presumption, ignorance, and strangely enough, accident. As Cooper sifts through the layers of animosity, irony, and bitterness, he concludes that Owen and Baxter's relationship is paradigmatic. "Those who are the closest to each other have the bitterest disagreements—the smallest differences assume an overlarge importance, while outsiders look on and wonder what all the fuss is about" (122). And thus, Cooper concludes with five suggestions for the reader to assist those embroiled in strife. Christians in conflict should look for a wise choice of mediator, concentrate on their commonalities, heed the Scriptures that exhort us to unity, humble themselves, and recognize the obscuring nature of proximity.

Upon assessing this book, several points are worthy of reflection. First, Cooper's presentation of this historical controversy is highly commendable. The contents of Baxter and Owen's relationship span many years, cover a variety of theological issues, and are found throughout numerous writings. However, Cooper has effectively distilled the complexities of their disagreement into a clear, readable summary. The reflection questions at the end of each chapter make the book suitable for usage in a group setting, particularly applicable to leadership teams in the local church. Each chapter is laid out in a structured fashion, often examining Baxter and Owen separately, and then bringing them together in comparison. This permits the reader to clearly see each man in his own right, and what may have contributed to their disagreement. Though Cooper's ordering of the content may slightly obscure a linear timeline, he includes a side-by-side chronology at the end of the book that greatly assists the reader in grasping the flow of their disagreement. Furthermore, though Cooper seeks the benefit of the present reader, he avoids mapping Baxter and Owen's controversy onto any specific disagreement among Christians today. His reluctance to force specific applications strengthens his argument and permits better reflection on the current issues of our time.

Second, Cooper's narrative places a high priority on experience in shaping the disagreement between Baxter and Owen. The English Civil War of the 1600's played a significant role in Baxter's theology, while Owen's theology was constructed from his personal turmoil. To be clear, Cooper is not suggesting a fatalistic approach to disagreement that brandishes experience as the end-all excuse for disunity. He

tempers his emphasis on experience by noting the role of our actions: "This is not to say that we are merely passive victims of the outside world: we are also shaped by the choices we ourselves have made" (38). However, Cooper's argument leaves one wondering how the Scripture shapes our theology in relation to personal experience. Additionally, it seems a distinction should be made between Baxter and Owen's theology, and their theological opponents. Elsewhere in the book, Cooper concedes that Owen and Baxter's theologies were not mutually exclusive. But at times his explanation of their disagreement zooms in on their theology rather than their theological opponents.[3] Might it be seen that Baxter and Owen's theological opponents (Antinomianism vs. Arminianism and Socianism), rather than their theologies, were shaped by their experiences, leading to their separation? In respect to Cooper's analysis, one's theological opponents are often opposite to one's theology. But a clearer distinguishment between the two may have assisted the reader in analyzing Baxter and Owen's disagreement.

Finally, the reader must accept that Cooper's book raises thought-provoking questions without providing the answers one may desire. *When Christians Disagree* spotlights a negative example (Baxter and Owen) emphasizing what one should avoid, rather than highlighting positive behavior to emulate. In turn, the reader may wonder: How should I respond to someone with an opposite personality? What should I do when my experiences are drastically different than the person I disagree with? It is only by inference from the negative that Cooper may offer suggestions for Christians to move forward in the midst of conflict. This method has an inherent limit. It cannot provide the hope that comes through success. Surely, one may learn from another's mistakes, but without seeing the resolution of conflict fleshed out, he may be left to his own pursuit through trial and error. This reiterates the benefit of a central component of the book: the reflection questions. Engaging with this book in Christian community should prove fruitful for those seeking to formulate how they might respond when Christians disagree.

Dirks, Paul. *Is There Anything Good About Hell? Our Discomfort About Hell and Its Ultimate Good*. NP: Decretum Books, 2021. 229 pp, $19.95 Paperback.

Reviewed by John Tucker, Pastor of Providence Baptist Church, Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada.

Paul Dirks, author of *Is There Anything Good About Hell?*, pastors in British Columbia, Canada, a hotbed of social and theological liberalism. Dirks is a champion of biblical values, notably on sexuality and gender, on which he has written extensively and has addressed the Canadian Senate. With this book he sets out to

[3] The reader should compare Cooper's headings of chapter 4 ("Baxter's Theology of Salvation" and "Owen's Theology of Salvation") in *When Christians Disagree* with the headings of chapter 2 ("Owen v. the Arminians and Socinians" and "Richard Baxter v. the Antinomians") in his fuller work on this same topic, see Tim Cooper, *John Owen, Richard Baxter, and the Formation of Nonconformity* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2011). Cooper intends these two chapters to be parallel, see Tim Cooper, *When Christians Disagree: Lessons from the Fractured Relationship of John Owen and Richard Baxter* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2024), 158.

address one of the most misunderstood and maligned doctrines in society today, the doctrine of hell. This societal misunderstanding and maligning have infected the visible church, leading to misgivings which, the author laments, has led many to deny the doctrine of eternal punishment. Dirks was initially motivated to write this book by the discomfort many Christians have with the doctrine of hell, even among the theologically Reformed. This sentiment stirred Dirks' desire not to prove the *existence* of hell, but rather to defend the *goodness* of hell, a more important task since this doctrine is essential to the biblical doctrine of God.

In chapter 1, Dirks outlines the doctrine of hell, helpfully defining the concepts of Sheol and Gehenna. He points out that the positive reference to Sheol as the intermediate state is tied to hope in the resurrection. He provides a survey of the New Testament material pertaining to hell with a focus on the teachings of Jesus. With clear biblical exegesis Dirks proves definitively that hell is the corporeal, conscious, eternal punishment as the necessary consequence for sin. He highlights the essential link between hell and the gospel—Jesus Christ suffered infinite agony under the wrath of God for our infinite sin as an eternal being of infinite worth.

After summarizing the doctrine of hell, Dirks divides the remainder of the book into two parts. Part 1 (chs. 2–4) addresses our discomfort with hell, and in part 2 (chs. 5–10) he sets out to prove the goodness of hell. In chapter 2, his exegesis shows that our discomfort first begins with a misunderstanding of the love of God. This misunderstanding produces a failure to reconcile the apparent paradox between hell and the love of God. Similarly, in chapter 3 he examines the discomfort with seemingly 'good' people being sent to hell. While properly showing that human beings retain the image of God and are beneficiaries of common grace, Dirks reminds the reader that human beings are not, in themselves, good. In defining sin as privation, he emphasizes the disparity between the goodness of God and sinful humanity. Hell is necessary because of the radical difference between "a good person and a person who does good things" (45). In chapter 4 Dirks charitably allows that there is a "sort of validity" (50) to the question "how can a just God allow people who do evil into heaven?" However, he counters this question by revealing it to be a misunderstanding of God's justice and righteousness. Any objection to the doctrine of eternal punishment is corrected in light of God's verdict on the believer as well as on the unbeliever. This verdict is not based on their works but on faith in Christ and His work.

With part 2, Dirks begins to prove the goodness of hell directly. First, Dirks demonstrates the motivational nature of hell (ch. 5). The horrors of hell provide an impetus to flee from sin to Christ despite the criticisms of some theologians that a fear of hell actually detracts from the beauty of worshiping God in His own right or confuses the doctrine of justification by faith. Dirks' argues that the depravity of unregenerate man requires hell. Even believers, Dirks explains, are motivated by the biblical teaching on hell.

Next, he demonstrates how evil necessitates hell from the point of view of the victim (ch. 6). He focuses on man as the victim of sin. Ultimately, sin against man earns the wrath of God because of the value invested in man as God's image-bearer. This leads to a discussion of the love of God that necessitates eternal punishment in hell (ch. 7). His love is holy and just. For God to be God, He must hate evil and evildoers. Because of God's greatness, sin deserves a fitting punishment (ch. 8). Here

Dirks takes up Anselm's "infinite honour-infinite sin" defence of hell (133). Sin is infinitely wicked because it is committed against the infinitely holy God. All sin is ultimately against *God* as David says, "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight" (Ps 51:4).

Chapter 9 examines the relationship between the doctrine of hell and the mercy of God. In doing so, Dirks focuses his attention on an exposition of Romans 9. Rather than exploring the apparent injustice of God's condemnation of the wicked, Dirks rightly zeroes in on the fact that Romans 9 is a monument to God's mercy on the elect. Chapter 10 brings the book to a close, tying together several of the main themes.

In summary, Dirks succeeds in his stated purpose, to demonstrate the goodness of hell. He does more, proving not just the *goodness* of hell but also the *necessity* of hell. He does so in a manner that is biblical, gospel-saturated, logical, winsome, and clear. The book is well-researched with an impressive bibliography, drawing from the teaching that spans church history, including the early Church Fathers, the Scholastics, the Reformers, the Puritans and modern theologians. Illustrations are compelling and drawn from a wide range of sources. He addresses several influential writings on hell that have wrongly nudged the church away from a biblical understanding of hell, countering them with numerous passages of Scripture.

That being said, this reviewer has two key criticisms of this book. First, Dirks' use of theological language is at times ambiguous or incomplete and may distract the reader from Dirks' primary purpose of defending the goodness of hell. Several examples are of note. Dirks writes, "More general evils like disease and death, earthquakes and tsunamis, also did not originate with God. God is good, and it follows that He does good" (35). Though this statement is not a major point in his book, this claim undermines his thesis and goes against the testimony of Scripture regarding God's providence. If Dirks is claiming that earthquakes, tsunamis, and sickness do not originate from God, but come from man's sin in the Fall, his above statement needs clarification in its wording. Scripture does testify that God causes these things to occur, often as a display of judgment upon sin: "I form light and create darkness; I make well-being and create calamity; I am the Lord, who does all these things" (cf. Amos 3:6; Lam 3:38; etc.). Furthermore, if the use of earthquakes, diseases, and other phenomena to judge humanity do not originate from God because these are not good, then how could God's ultimate judgment of sinners, hell, also be good? However, because God does cause these things to occur as judgments upon sin, they manifest His goodness and are in keeping with the 'goodness' of hell.

Elsewhere, Dirks states concerning the Trinity, "the Son's personal subordination to the Father in a filial or relational way is a truth" (192). Furthermore, in the footnotes Dirks rejects the position that Jesus' statement in John 14:28 ("The Father is greater than I") should be attributed to the humanity of Christ (192), claiming a similar position belonged to John Owen and Jonathan Edwards. If Jesus is not making a statement of his human nature, in what sense is the divine Son inferior to the Father? And how does this support the goodness of hell? Again, Dirks presents a complex historical-theological issue in brief terms, and in a manner not clearly related to his thesis.

A second issue the reader may encounter is the occasional overstatement regarding the goodness of hell. For example, Dirks writes, "the final state, including hell is a helpful and glorious vantage point from which to view everything else…the

whole tenor and teaching of Scripture demands it" (181). Certainly, the reader should live his life in view of his end, but is it a stretch to say that this is the lens whereby he views everything else? What does it look like to view everything through this lens? Could viewing all of life through the lens of heaven and hell distract the reader from a God-centered view of all of life?

Nevertheless, with these caveats in mind, the book is a helpful tool to silence voices raised against the biblical doctrine of hell. The author graciously and logically addresses common misunderstandings and misconceptions, in a manner sympathetic to human nature. It also serves as a tool to help overcome misgivings among Christians who desire to submit to the biblical testimony of hell but have a natural aversion to its horrors. In the light of the testimony of Scripture regarding the attributes of God seen most clearly in the cross of Christ, those misgivings give way to worship.

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RECOMMENDED READING BY THE MASTER'S SEMINARY FACULTY

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The following books are recommended by The Master's Seminary faculty for pastors, shepherds, students, and all Christians. Some works are academic in nature, while others are devotional; but they all are edifying and instructive for the life of a believer seeking to know Christ more and to be more like Christ.

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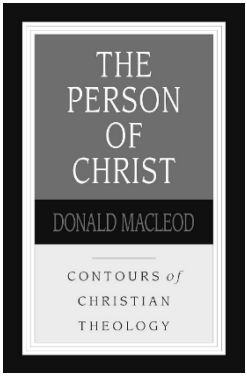
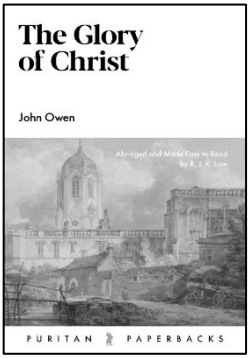


The Person of Christ

by: Donald Macleod

Macleod overviews Christology and its related issues in a clear, readable manner that proves effective for the student of Christology.

Macleod, Donald. *The Person of Christ*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998.

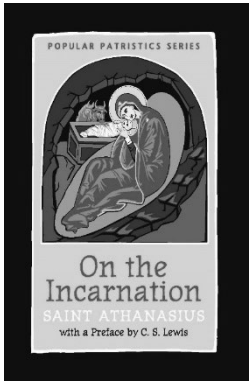


The Glory of Christ

by: John Owen

Owen exposits John 17:24 and helps the reader behold the glory of Christ.

Owen, John. *The Glory of Christ*. Edinburgh, Banner of Truth Trust, 2021.

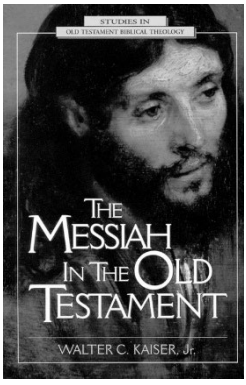


On the Incarnation

by: Saint Athanasius

Athanasius' *On the Incarnation* remains a classic for every serious student of Christology and is paired with an excellent foreword by C.S. Lewis on the value of reading old books.

Saint Athanasius. *On the Incarnation*. Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011.

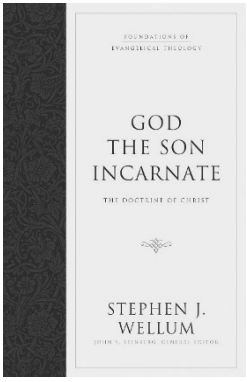


The Messiah in the Old Testament

by: Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.

Kaiser opens up the richness of messianic theology in the Old Testament with precision and clarity.

Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. *The Messiah in the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.

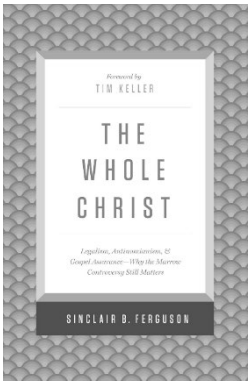


God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ

by: Stephen J. Wellum

God the Son Incarnate demonstrates the foundational truth that Jesus Christ is God the Son, showing this both from Scripture and history.

Wellum, Stephen J. *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016.

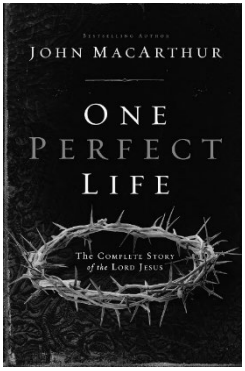


The Whole Christ

by: Sinclair Ferguson

The Whole Christ brings the Marrow Controversy into the realm of the present, showing how the doctrinal discussions of the past remain important today, for both the heart of the gospel and the believer's assurance of Christ.

Ferguson, Sinclair. *The Whole Christ*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016.

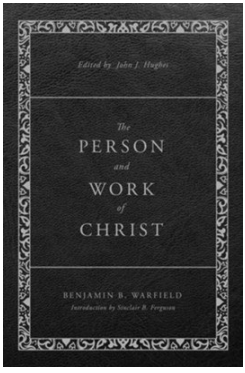


One Perfect Life

by: John MacArthur

One Perfect Life takes the reader on a biographical tour of the life of Jesus Christ, from the beginning of the Scriptures to their conclusion.

MacArthur, John. *One Perfect Life: The Complete Story of the Lord Jesus*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2012.

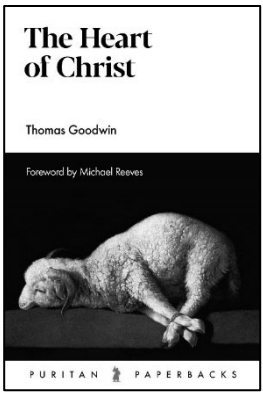


The Person and Work of Christ

by: Benjamin B. Warfield

The Person and Work of Christ displays Warfield's robust theology and love for Christ as he outlines the doctrine of Christology.

Warfied, Benjamin B. *The Person and Work of Christ.* Philipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2023.

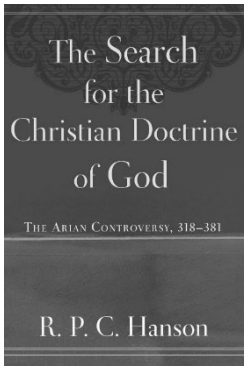


The Heart of Christ

by: Thomas Goodwin

Thomas Goodwin's *The Heart of Christ* demonstrates the abundant love and compassion of the Savior that comes to us as fallen sinners beset with weakness.

Goodwin, Thomas. *The Heart of Christ*. Edinburgh, Banner of Truth Trust, 2021.

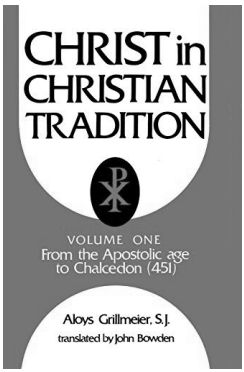


The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God

by: R. P. C. Hanson

For a serious student, this semi-classic study offers a good discussion on the Christian Doctrine of God and the Arian Controversy.

Hanson, R. P. C. *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006.

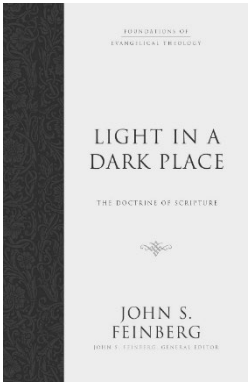


Christ in Christian Tradition

by: Alois Grillmeier

Christ in Christian Tradition discusses the church's study of Christ and the deity of Christ from the Apostolic Age to the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451).

Grillmeier, Alois. *Christ in Christian Tradition: Volume 1: From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon*. Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1975.

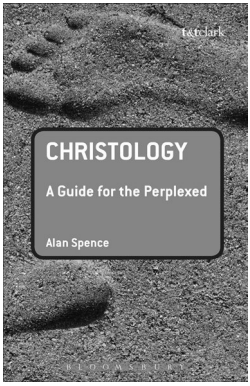


Light in a Dark Place

by: John S. Feinberg

Light in a Dark Place offers an extensive treatment of the doctrine of Scripture from an evangelical, inerrantist, and literalist perspective.

Feinbeg, John S. *Light in a Dark Place: The Doctrine of Scripture*. Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018).



Christology: A Guide for the Perplexed

by: Alan Spence

Introducing the topic of "Christology," this text defines the term, traces the early church's discussion of the subject, and examines a selection of key modern scholars on the study of the person of Christ.

Spence, Alan. *Christology: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: T&T Clark, 2013.